Edited by Christina Maags and Marina Svensson

Chinese Heritage in the Making

Experiences, Negotiations and Contestations

Amsterdam University Press

IIAS International Institute for Asian Studies

Chinese Heritage in the Making

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Note on transcription and translation

Chinese names are written with the family name first. In this volume we also use this practice throughout the chapters of the book. Yet, for the sake of structural uniformity, we use the Western style order in the Table of Contents, indicating the family name last.

1 Mapping the Chinese Heritage Regime

Ruptures, Governmentality, and Agency

Marina Svensson and Christina Maags

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Abstract
The chapter introduces the reader to the edited volume. It explores cultural heritage policy and practice in China by making use of concepts and theories from both heritage studies and China studies. Reviewing the state of the art, there is a need to examine the development of the Chinese authorized heritage discourse as a tool of governmentality against the backdrop of local contestations, negotiations and appropriation. The chapter familiarizes the reader with the various sections of the book which draw attention to the plurality of local forms of contestations unfolding in a bottom-up manner.

Keywords: cultural heritage, China, authorized heritage discourse, governmentality, contestation

Critical heritage studies and China

This edited volume takes as its starting point the critical approach to heritage studies promoted by the Association of Critical Heritage Studies. Initiated in 2010, the association held its first conference at the University of Gothenburg in 2012. In its manifesto, the association makes an appeal to 'question the received wisdom of what heritage is, energize heritage studies by drawing on wider intellectual sources, vigorously question the conservative cultural and economic power relations that outdated understandings of heritage seem to underpin and invite the active participation of people and communities who to date have been marginalized in the creation and management of "heritage"' (ACHS 2012). To achieve this aim, the association argues that 'truly critical heritage studies will ask many uncomfortable

questions of traditional ways of thinking about and doing heritage, and that the interests of the marginalized and excluded will be brought to the forefront when posing these questions' (ACHS 2012). Without claiming that previous work in heritage studies has not been critical, we agree with Winter (2013) and others in arguing that critical heritage studies should go beyond criticizing heritage policy or practice and focus more on critical issues of the time. By this we mean '*critical* issues which face the world today, the larger issues that bear upon and extend outward from heritage [...] such as cultural and environmental sustainability, economic inequalities, conflict resolution, social cohesion and the future of cities' (Winter 2013: 533, emphasis in the original).

Since the association's manifesto, scholars have continued to elaborate on what critical heritage studies actually means. Winter (2013, 2014) has, for example, also criticized the Eurocentric bias in heritage studies and argued that we need to be open to different understandings from other societies, and that this should influence how we theorize cultural heritage. One needs to understand how heritage production is shaped by particular political and socio-cultural contexts and address the major global social and cultural shifts. Winter thus makes a call to 'provincialize', or we could say 'de-Westernize', heritage studies. Other scholars, such as Waterton and Watson (2013) in their discussions on a 'critical imagination' in heritage studies, have differentiated between theories *in*, *of*, and *for* heritage. While theories *in* heritage focus more on the objects of heritage and matters of authenticity, conservation, interpretation, and visitors to heritage sites, theories *of* heritage study heritage as a system of production and combine representational theory with discursive analysis in order to understand the political nexus of heritage. Theories *for* heritage focus on 'the role played by the personal, the ordinary and the everyday, within spaces of heritage, whether they are physical, discursive or affective' (Waterton and Watson 2013: 551). A critical approach to heritage studies thus asks us to go beyond disciplinary boundaries and understandings of heritage and take a broader, non-Western, interdisciplinary, and context-based perspective to heritage that pays particular attention to power relations and marginalized voices in different societies.

We hope that this volume can contribute to the growing field of critical heritage studies and address the calls to develop stronger theoretical frameworks and perspectives that build on a deep engagement with non-Western societies. We therefore set out to explore cultural heritage policy and practice in China, making use of concepts and theories from both heritage studies and China studies. In the following we will further

analyse our use of some central concepts such as the Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD), while paying close attention to its configuration in the Chinese case and ruptures over time. We share the view that heritage is always in the process of 'making', and thus should be understood as a 'verb' rather than as a 'noun' (Harvey 2001), and therefore aim to scrutinize the heritagization process and what heritage discursively and materially does to objects, places, and people. This also requires that we focus on the social and political construction of heritage for contemporary needs, heritage as a site of negotiations and contestations over identities, memories, and place-makings among different actors and stakeholders with different social and cultural capital and agency, leading us to also analyse heritage as a tool of governance and address the concept of governmentality. In line with recent works within heritage studies, we pay attention to performativity, emotions, sentiments, and people's affective engagement with heritage, and engage in more bottom-up analyses of how people appropriate, negotiate with, and challenge the AHD. Furthermore, we explore whether and how the Internet and social media today provide space for multiple and more diverse voices and heritage from below.

The People's Republic of China (PRC) is a highly relevant case for a critical heritage studies approach due to its recent and dramatic 'heritage boom' and rapid socio-economic changes that give rise to new challenges and contradictions. The explicit political use of heritage makes it compelling to analyse power relations, governmentality, and issues of negotiations and resistance. The Chinese case, however, also alerts us to the complexity of any attempts to 'de-Westernize' heritage studies as it illustrates both the universal pull of the language of heritage and thus the globalizing forces inherent in heritagization processes, while also reminding us of the fact that countries such as China are increasingly leaving their mark on the global heritage regime through an active involvement in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Whilst it might be tempting to talk about heritage with 'Chinese characteristics', one needs to remember that global and local forces interact and may be difficult to disentangle (Harrell 2013: 287). Furthermore, ruptures in the Chinese AHD have occurred due to ideological shifts and socio-economic developments. Heritage production in China is shaped by its communist political system as much as by its pre-communist past. 'China' itself also needs to be scrutinized as there are many different views on heritage within the country that illustrate regional, cultural, and ethnic differences as well as gaps between 'heritage professionals' and the general public. Heated debates and contestations today take place in Chinese society but attempts

to base views on heritage in the Chinese tradition and history do not necessarily sit well with a Chinese state that still, at least on a rhetorical level, calls itself Marxist.

The Chinese state, albeit still ruled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), is characterized by increasing political, institutional, and societal fragmentation. The impact of the market economy and globalization has made the country depart radically from the old-style type of communist system of the Mao Zedong era. The starting point for the 'heritage turn' in the 1990s is to be found in ideological shifts and the CCP's search for a new form of legitimacy beyond communism (Denton 2005; Long 2012; Madsen 2014). There is a growing pride in the country's long history and rich traditions, affirmation of erstwhile condemned cultural values, huge investment in heritage protection, and promotion of a culturally based nationalistic discourse. The new vocabulary and ways to conceptualize the past in terms of cultural heritage (*wenhua yichan*) has changed how historical sites and cultural traditions are imagined, valued, and interpreted. But this does not mean that all aspects of the country's past and its traditions are now embraced. There is selectivity in the choice of sites and practices elevated to heritage status, attempts to govern and control cultural and religious practices through the heritage discourse, and continuing tensions between a state-led national discourse and bottom-up celebrations of local cultures and identities.

The nationalistic rhetoric and rediscovery of heritage sites and practices, however, finds a deep resonance among large groups of people. The ideological vacuum and sense of a lack of values in society, coupled with large-scale displacements due to migration and urbanization, growing inequalities in the wake of the economic reforms, and the influx of Western popular culture, have led to a growing sense of uncertainty that has stimulated individuals' search for their roots, nostalgia for the past, and interest in local history and traditional culture. Many Chinese citizens are deeply concerned about perceived threats to Chinese culture and the destruction of the rural and urban historic built environment. This concern and interest in some ways mirrors heritage movements elsewhere in the world that also have been spurred by rapid socio-economic changes and anxieties in the face of modernization and globalization (Dicks 2003; Germundsson 2005).

The critical heritage studies approach is well suited and attuned to China studies since scholars have long engaged in critical studies of CCP ideology, cultural policies, and the fragmented nature of the Chinese political system – issues that are of relevance in order to understand cultural heritage policy and management. Many scholars have drawn attention to the importance of

CCP ideology and ideological shifts for understanding heritage polices (see e.g. Denton 2014; Oakes 2013; Madsen 2014; Silverman and Blumenfield 2013). Several authors in this volume, including, for example, Cooke and Zhang, also address ideological shifts and their impact on the evaluations, interpretations, and management of historic sites. In addition, the fragmented authoritarian system alerts us to variations and discrepancy between national and local policies and between different institutions (Lieberthal and Oksenberg 1988). The chapters by Graezer Bideau and Yan, as well as by Maags, address how hierarchies and fragmented power structures shape heritage policies; whereas Cui's chapter is a particularly striking example of how individual political leaders and a strong tradition of 'rule by men' shape the heritage landscape. However, it is important not to privilege a state-centred approach since nowadays there is more scope for civil society and individual citizens to explore and celebrate local traditions and history. Heritage-making processes, however, often privilege elites and the middle class in their cultural and leisure activities (Light et al. 1994), a section of the populace which has grown significantly in China over the last decade (Li 2011). Yet, although the state and elites have a privileged access to and voice in heritagization processes, ordinary citizens, local communities, and marginalized groups have more abilities to express their views, negotiate, appropriate, and resist the AHD or its implementation, as discussed in Blumenfield, Chan, Cui, Graezer Bideau and Yan, Maags, Svensson, and Tam.

The authorized heritage discourse: Western roots and new actors

Smith (2006) is credited for having developed one of the most prominent concepts to emerge in the field of heritage studies in recent years. She argues that the international heritage regime, embodied in universal conventions, policies, and laws, produces an AHD which 'establishes and sanctions a top-down relationship between expert, heritage site and "visitor", in which the expert "translates"' this discourse into national policies and laws (Smith 2006: 34). Since the AHD is based on a Western material understanding of heritage, international experts have obtained the right to determine what qualifies as heritage and how it should be protected, thereby marginalizing vernacular understandings of heritage (Smith 2006: 34-35). Henceforth, scholars have talked about a 'discursive turn' in heritage studies (Harrison 2013). Whereas others such as Hafstein (2012) argue that 'cultural heritage creates a discursive space in which social changes may be discussed and it provides a particular language for discussing them [...] at the same time,

the terminology of heritage is a mechanism of power: it curtails expression by defining the sort of things that it makes sense to say' (Hafstein 2012: 507). To date, a number of works have incorporated the concept of AHD into their analysis in order to criticize and contest the dominance of Eurocentric notions of heritage in the international realm (Wu and Hou 2015) and demonstrate how actors counter this dominance by developing alternative discourses or heritage from below (Haldrup and Bærenholdt 2015; Robertson 2012).

Some scholars have however criticized the concept of AHD for de-emphasizing the role of the nation state and the influence of local power structures. Askew (2010), for instance, has noted that the claim that 'the so-called 'Authorized Heritage Discourse' (for which UNESCO is the principle global-level purveyor) is Eurocentric and crypto-imperialist is both redundant and a conceptual red herring: it misrecognizes the real locus of power and exploitation in the global heritage game which is the nation-state and not any dominant global institutional structure or discourse of heritage classification' (Askew 2010: 21-22). In a similar vein, scholars have pointed out the existence of different national authorized heritage discourses and, for example, how the official Chinese AHD comprises a mixture of the international AHD and Chinese indigenous concepts and discourses (see Nitzky 2012a; Wu 2012b; Yu 2015; Zhu 2015). Although the AHD is a useful tool to understand how global heritage values have developed and shaped policies, laws, and practices, it tends to ignore how countries develop their own specific versions of AHD and the mixture of local and global values, or why and how different countries embrace the UNESCO discourse.

While Smith criticized the strong focus on tangibility in the Western-dominated AHD, it appears that a new AHD focusing on the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) has emerged and shaped heritage policies since 2003, yet exhibits many of the same problems as well as creating new ones. Smith (2015), for instance, notes that 'Rather than opening Pandora's Box, the development of the ICHC has tended to add yet another category to established international understandings of heritage (natural and cultural), and has yet to fundamentally redefine the conceptual frameworks within which heritage is understood' (Smith 2015: 133-134). In this context, it also needs to be acknowledged that non-Western countries such as Japan, South Korea, and China have been heavily involved in this shift and are co-producers of the new emerging AHD (Hafstein 2009: 96-99). Since ratifying the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICHC) in 2004, as the sixth country worldwide, China has had a

dominant position within the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, handing in the most nominations over the years, sending the largest delegations to the UNESCO meetings, and in general enlarging its influence within the Committee by collaborating with other BRICS countries (Meskell et al. 2015: 9-10). China today has the second largest amount of world heritage sites (48) and the largest amount of ICH practices (38) listed worldwide (UNESCO 2016a; UNESCO 2016b). China is also stepping up its heritage diplomacy efforts by organizing ICH festivals (UNESCO 2015) and taking the lead in inscribing the Silk Road on the list of World Heritage Sites, together with Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan (UNESCO 2014).

The development of a Chinese authorized heritage discourse: Ideological ruptures and new global aspirations

More attention needs to be devoted to how individual countries develop their own AHD, and how they reflect local conditions, ideologies, and aspirations. China has developed a unique AHD that has undergone many ruptures, shifts, and striking changes since 1949. While many of them reflect domestic concerns, China's global aspirations and increasing involvement in UNESCO have had a deep impact since the 1980s. Cultural heritage fulfils many functions. It is linked to political goals and serves as a resource for political legitimacy and soft power, but it is also regarded as an economic asset and used to boost local economic development.

When the CCP obtained political power in 1949, it challenged and refuted the historiography, cultural manifestations, and heritage policies of the old political and economic elites. The heritage of those that the CCP identified as 'class enemies', such as capitalists, landlords, lineages, and different religious groups, was destroyed, desecrated, and condemned. The remaining historic sites and cultural artefacts were then reinterpreted and rewritten through an ideological and political lens that defined them as feudal, backward, and superstitious. They were sometimes only preserved because they could serve as monuments of the 'bad' old days of feudalism, colonialism, and capitalism. During the Mao Zedong era, sites associated with revolutionary events and figures and collections of revolutionary objects were privileged. The attacks and destruction of old cultural artefacts and sites reached a feverish height during the Cultural Revolution, although sites and collections considered of national importance, including the Forbidden Palace, were spared on orders from the highest leadership. The new economic policy implemented in the 1980s made the CCP turn

away from the class struggle and revolutionary rhetoric of the past. This ideological shift entailed more tolerance of religious beliefs and traditional cultural practices, as well as a re-evaluation of China's past. The country's rich cultural heritage now became a source of national pride and much work was put into listing, protecting, and restoring hitherto neglected sites and buildings (Gao 2008: 20-36). When we look at lists of heritage sites from the late 1980s onwards, we see how the proportion of revolutionary sites has diminished, giving way to imperial sites, and how the concept of heritage has also expanded to include vernacular buildings in the countryside, for example, ancestral halls and whole villages, as well as industrial sites and more recent buildings.

Generally speaking, we can detect a development over time within the official cultural heritage discourse, from an almost exclusive focus on the revolutionary heritage in the Mao Zedong period, to a focus on China's imperial past and a more culturally based patriotic heritage narrative in the 1980s, to a discovery and celebration of more diverse heritage in the 1990s that also includes vernacular and industrial heritage; and finally to the adoption of the concept of intangible cultural heritage since 2003. This development can be traced through studying shifts in ideology and cultural policy that manifest themselves in different heritage and museum policies, sets of heritage listings at the national and local level, and in institutional and legislative changes (Denton 2005; Silverman and Blumenfield 2013; Svensson 2011). However, the CCP's revolutionary heritage remains important for ideological reasons and shapes narratives of patriotic education in museums and different sites (Denton 2014; Long 2012; Wang 2012).

One of the most dramatic shifts has occurred with China's signing of the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention in 2003. China has become an enthusiastic champion of intangible cultural heritage with 38 practices on the UNESCO list, including seven on the list of threatened practices (UNESCO 2016b), 1372 items on the national list, and 1986 national-level transmitters (for a discussion on ICH and transmitters, see Blumenfield, Maags, and Svensson). China had undertaken an extensive and impressive documentation of cultural practices, established new institutions in charge of nominating and supervising these practices, and also adopted several policies and a new law in order to better manage intangible heritage at different levels of the administrative system (on China's intangible heritage system and specific items, see Bodolec 2012; Maags and Holbig 2016; Obringer 2011; Kuah and Liu 2017). There is certainly a bias in the selection and nomination process at different levels and much competition between different regions. As several authors

have pointed out, the adoption of the intangible heritage discourse means that many cultural practices, including religious rituals that were seen as 'superstitious' practices in the past, are now celebrated as heritage (Gao 2014; Liang 2013). In this heritagization process many of them have been reconstructed and reinterpreted, and some have had their religious aspects downplayed or ignored. Showing the political uses of heritage, the ICH law of 2011 states in Article 4 that: '[t]he protection of ICH […] is conductive to enhancing the Chinese national cultural identity, to safeguard national identity and national unity and to protect social harmony and sustainable development'. Heritage protection is thus part of an attempt at national revival, most recently formulated as the China Dream under Xi Jinping, and the construction of a 'spiritual home' (*jingshen jiayuan*) of the Chinese nation where a pre-Communist past, somewhat ironically, is increasingly important for the CCP's legitimacy.

The dramatic shifts and ruptures in how heritage has been understood, valued, and interpreted are tellingly illustrated in Cooke's chapter on the Nationalist Party (Guomindang) legacy and ethnic warlords, as well as in Zhang's chapter on colonial heritage. How the Chinese AHD is produced, circulated, and implemented at different levels, and how it is appropriated, negotiated, and resisted by individuals and communities, is addressed in the chapters by Blumenfield, Chan, Cui, Maags, and Svensson. The attraction of UNESCO listing for the central government and local governments reflects both ideological, i.e. soft power, and economic interests. Local governments' attempts to gain international recognition, complex bidding processes, and diverse outcomes for local communities and individuals are discussed in the chapters by Blumenfield, Laukkanen, and Svensson (for other discussions on World Heritage Sites and ICH in China, see Hevia 2001; Liang 2013; Obringer 2011; Wang 2010; Zhu and Li 2013).

Heritage and governmentality

China has established an extensive heritage management system with national and regional inventories of heritage sites and cultural practices. The State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH) administers China's large amount of cultural relics and tangible cultural heritage, whereas the Ministry of Culture has established an Intangible Cultural Heritage Department to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage. Their work is supported and regulated by different laws, regulations, and policies. Whereas experts and intellectuals are involved in surveys on local heritage and also advise

on policy formulation and management, local communities and cultural practitioners are largely excluded from the heritage-making process (Maags and Holbig 2016) as discussed, for example, in the case of Beijing in Graezer Bideau and Yan and Yunnan in Laukkanen.

Heritage listings and management is not an innocent and non-political celebration of heritage and culture, but a selective process that leads to hierarchies and exclusion. It can furthermore be used as a tool of governance to control and manage tradition, cultural practices, and religion, and to steer people's memories, sense of place, and identities in certain ways. Several scholars (Hafstein 2014; Beardslee 2015; Combe 2015) have pointed out that the use of culture and intangible cultural heritage can be a softer and less visible way of 'rendering individuals governable'. The listing, reification, and celebration of certain cultural practices can thus be a tool of governance, especially when individuals and communities are excluded from decision-making but still come to internalize the validation of the selected practices and behaviours. In the context of China, ICH could be seen as a new form of governance and a way to control religious and ethnic communities in particular (Kang 2009; Liang 2013; Oakes 2013; Silverman and Blumenfield 2013). The ambivalent official attitude to religion and ethnic cultures are well illustrated in the chapters by Laukkanen on Tibetans in Yunnan and Cooke on minorities in Qinghai.

In order to understand negotiations between various state and non-state actors on different scales or levels, Bendix et al. use the concept 'heritage regimes', defined as 'a set of rules and norms regulating the relations between a state-government and society' (2012: 12). The term 'regime' draws our attention to the interplay between the international heritage regime, manifested in international conventions and policies, and the national governance structures responsible for implementing international conventions according to domestic procedures (Bendix et al. 2012: 12-13). In the context of China, Oakes (2013) has pointed out that local governments frequently appropriate heritage as a tool of governance to enhance social cohesion and promote modernization and development. Harrell (2013) also sees heritage policy as 'part of the modernizing effort, which in turn is part of China's continuing process of nation-building' (2013: 287). Yet, as 'heritage preservation emerges amid a complex and often contradictory mixture of global perspectives on heritage preservation, state traditions of cultural regulation, and local yearnings for modernity and improved standards of living' (Oakes 2013: 380), it simultaneously creates many instances of contestation, negotiation, and conflict among the different stakeholders involved.

Contestations, negotiations, and appropriation: Plural voices and diverse interests

It is widely recognized that heritage is a social construction and a site of contestations due to the multiple forms, meanings, values, and emotions associated with heritage sites and practices. Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) argue that heritage-making processes are always contested by different stakeholders and therefore 'dissonant' in nature. With the notion of dissonance they draw our attention to the fact that 'heritage creation is controversial in a number of respects [...] [as it] involves a discordance or lack of agreement and consistency [...] [and] a state of psychic tension caused by simultaneous holding of mutually inconsistent attitudes or the existence of a lack of consonance between attitudes and behavior. [...] At its simplest, all heritage is someone's heritage and therefore not someone else's' (1996: 20-21). Silverman (2011) argues that a paradigm shift has occurred since the heritage literature now 'regards heritage as contested, recognizes the role of power in the construction of history, focuses on the production of identity, emphasizes representation and performance, and preferentially analyzes formerly colonial states and societies and their subaltern populations' (2011: 5). Heritage contestations are not only cultural or political in character but also occur over economic benefits since heritage today is an important economic asset for both governments and individuals (Ashworth 2014). Several authors in this volume, for example, Blumenfield, Laukkanen, and Maags, discuss whether and how individuals and local communities benefit economically from heritage status and the contestations that inevitably also occur.

Heritage is, however, also a discourse that can be used as a resource for identity politics, social mobilization, and resistance. The heritage turn in China has created the scope for more bottom-up debates on national and local history and traditions, and also encouraged new actors to become involved. As a plurality of stakeholders seeks to gain a say in what historical remains become heritage and how they are used, windows of opportunity may open up spaces for 'heritage from below' (Robertson 2012) that contest official sanctioned discourses and practices. Here it is imperative to ask which actors are involved, and whether we see new interpretations and forms of engagements, or whether and how different actors are co-opted within or appropriate the official heritage discourse.

The growing importance of heritage in Chinese cultural, political, and economic life has given rise to a range of actors and stakeholders involved in heritage-making and negotiating the AHD. They include experts and

scholars, often working in close cooperation with government bodies, civil society organizations, informal networks of enthusiasts, transmitters, who as a new group personify and embody ICH, and local communities. These groups and roles cannot always be neatly separated but are in reality often blurred and converge as individuals take on multiple roles or move between different positions. These individuals and groups are today debating, performing, and consuming a diverse cultural heritage. Individual citizens and local communities are, for example, embracing the heritage discourse when celebrating their own histories, identities, and traditions, or when seeking legitimacy for their cultural practices, as discussed by Chan in the case of the Hungry Ghosts Festival in Hong Kong. Experts who work within, or at times for heritage bodies, as well as scholars, authors, artists, journalists, and other vocal individuals with a strong social and cultural capital, often speak out on behalf of heritage preservation and could be described as heritage 'middle-men' (Beardslee 2015). Several scholars have drawn attention to the role of intellectuals and journalists in heritage preservation debates in China (Nitzky 2013; Svensson 2012a), as also discussed in the cases of Beijing (Graezer Bideau and Yan), Datong (Cui), Yunnan (Blumenfield), and Taishun (Svensson) in this volume. In some cases, citizens are resisting the AHD or maintaining vernacular heritage narratives and practices outside of the official discourse (Yu 2015; Zhang and Wu 2015). However, the difficulties for local communities to maintain their own understanding and control of local heritage in the face of powerful new stakeholders are illustrated in Laukkanen's chapter on Yunnan and Cooke's chapter on Qinghai.

Performativity, emotions, and affect: Beyond representational understandings of heritage

Smith (2006) argues that heritage is essentially a performance of reminiscences that are filled with personal emotions and memories (2006: 66-67). Harrison also reminds us that it is 'important to bring the affective qualities of heritage "things" more squarely back into the critical heritage studies arena [...] [and to explore] its corporeal influences on the bodies of human and non-human actors, and the ways in which heritage is caught up in the quotidian bodily practices of dwelling, travelling, working and "being" in the world' (2013: 112-113). There is also a growing focus on emotions and affect within heritage studies (Waterton and Watson 2013; Waterton 2014; Crouch 2015). These works alert us to the centrality of feelings, emotions,

and affect in people's engagement with heritage, and how heritage is evoked, felt, and experienced. The emotional, embodied, and affective engagement with heritage is obvious in many of the chapters in this book. The strong emotional sentiments and responses to heritage are evident in the heated debates on urban developments that took place in Datong (Cui) and Beijing (Graezer Bideau and Yan; Tam). The affective and embodied responses to heritage are also evident in the way people from Taishun relate to their heritage (Svensson), and how Tibetans in Yunnan experience their heritage (Laukkanen).

Tangible and intangible heritage: Problematic dichotomies and contested issues

The international heritage regime for a long time emphasized tangible cultural heritage and has only recently included the concept of intangible cultural heritage as a special category. The resulting dichotomy, however, creates many problems, since, as several scholars have pointed out, 'all heritage is intangible' (Smith 2006: 3) and material objects first need to be endowed with values in order for them to become heritage (Kuutma 2009: 7). Bortolotto (2007) nevertheless reminds us that the conceptualization of heritage is deeply embedded in historical processes. She argues that '[r]ather than considering the two categories of "tangible" and "intangible" as opposed, it seems in fact more appropriate to consider them within the framework of a constructivist approach as the answer to particular historical situations and needs' (Bortolotto 2007: 39). The distinction between tangible and intangible heritage is thus historically and artificially constructed, but it continues to influence heritage policy and management.

As the concept of intangible cultural heritage can be seen as an East Asian 'alternative' to the Western-dominated AHD, it appears to be of particular importance to address this conceptual and practical divide when studying China. After having used the terms 'folk culture' (*minjian wenhua*) and 'minority culture' (*minzu wenhua*) for decades, China's adoption of the ICH Convention also resulted in the domestic appropriation of the concept of 'intangible cultural heritage' (*feiwuzhi wenhua yichan*) and 'transmitters of heritage' (*chuangcheng ren*). These concepts have paved the way for a new view and appreciation of many cultural practices to the extent of providing protection of traditional cultural practices that previously were regarded as 'superstitious' and 'feudal' (Gao 2014). There

are still practices that have not received heritage status, whereas other religious practices may be reinterpreted and their religious aspects ignored or downplayed in the heritagization process, as discussed by Chan, Cooke, and Laukkanen in this volume (for other examples, see Gao 2014; Liang 2013; Chen 2015).

The dichotomy between tangible and intangible heritage is maintained in China through the domestic institutional system that entails a separation in management of these two categories of heritage. The problems caused by this and other dichotomies in the UNESCO system, such as the division between natural and cultural heritage, are discussed by Laukkanen in particular. Many of the other chapters in this volume also illustrate how it is impossible to separate tangible and intangible in the way individuals and local communities relate to heritage. Although the UNESCO ICH convention and other documents pay great attention to the involvement and ownership of local communities, this does not always happen. Transmitters are, for example, often singled out and treated more as objects in safeguarding programmes, passively passing on ICH, rather than as subjects and agents free to practise their skills and develop and recreate ICH (Beardslee 2015). They are thus often deprived of agency and voice, with government bodies, experts, and heritage middlemen speaking on their behalf and wielding the power to decide what should be listed as ICH and how it should be defined and preserved. The ICH as such rather than the individuals/transmitters tend to become the main focus and their individual rights to develop their crafts might be violated. The mixed experiences and new problems as a result of ICH policies, including issues of inclusion and exclusion, rivalry between transmitters, and difficulties to sustain or innovate and develop local crafts, are discussed in more detail in the chapters by Blumenfield, Maags, and Svensson.

Chinese cultural heritage: An emerging research field

The rapid development and importance of heritage in Chinese cultural, social, economic, and political life has led more scholars to study this phenomenon and its various dimensions. Several scholars have addressed heritage institutions and administration, policies, and the legal framework (Dutra 2004; Du Cros and Lee 2011; Shepherd and Yu 2013; Svensson 2011; Huo 2015). A number of studies have analysed the rapid development of museums and the different types of museums and exhibitions (Ashton 2013; Denton 2005; Denton 2014; Pan 2008; Nitzky 2012b; Song 2008). A great deal

of attention has been devoted to the growing heritage tourism industry (Sofield and Li 1998; Nyíri 2006; Yan and Bramwell 2008; Su 2011; Su and Teo 2011), issues of ethnicity and heritage (Xu et al. 2006; Shepherd 2007; Kang 2009; Light 2008; Chio 2014), and the complex heritagization process of religious practices and sites (Chen 2015; Gao 2014; Le Mentec 2006; Liang 2013; and authors in Oakes and Sutton 2010). Other studies have looked at heritage practices more generally in rural (Messmer and Chuang 2013; Svensson 2006; Svensson 2012b; Oakes 2013; Zhang and Wu 2015; Zhu and Li 2013) and urban China (Fan 2014; Lee 2016; Yao and Han 2016), and also addressed special issues such as the environmental dimensions of heritage (McLaren et al. 2013). Several studies have focused on World Heritage Sites in China (Hevia 2001; Wang 2010; Zhu and Li 2013), and a growing number of scholars have in recent years addressed the Chinese ICH system and different cultural practices (Bodolec 2012; Chen 2015; Daly 2010; Gao 2014; Kuah and Liu 2017; Liang 2013; Light 2008; Obringer 2011; Wong 2009). A few scholars, notably Zongjie Wu and Song Hou, have written extensively on the global authorized heritage discourse (Wu and Hou 2015) and have also tried to elaborate on a Chinese version, identifying indigenous Chinese values and terms associated with traditional culture such as *guji* (ancient vestige) (Wu 2012a; Wu 2014; Hou and Wu 2012), whereas others such as Zhu (2015) have discussed how authenticity is understood in the Chinese context. The edited volume *Cultural Heritage Politics in China* by Blumenfield and Silverman (2013) was an important milestone that addressed a wide range of heritage issues, including heritage management practices, tourism and heritage, World Heritage Sites, ethnicity and heritage, and museum developments.

Few studies to date, however, explicitly relate to theories emerging from the critical heritage studies body of work in recent years, and many issues and perspectives on the rapidly developing Chinese heritage field are still missing. This volume aims to address some of the gaps, connect more firmly with recent theoretical developments within heritage studies, as well as build on insights from China studies and previous studies of the Chinese heritage. Our special contribution is our attempt to analyse the authorized heritage discourse in China and adopt a more bottom-up perspective that pays closer attention to how individuals and local communities negotiate with, appropriate, and, in some instances, challenge the authorized heritage discourse. We also aim to untangle contestations over memories and places, and illustrate ruptures and contradictions in heritage-making in China across time and space. In addition, we address the problems resulting from the dichotomy between intangible and tangible, and cultural and

natural elements. Another contribution is the volume's special emphasis on the role of public debates and new media in heritage imaginations and engagements.

The authors have long experience of conducting research in China, including in some cases having worked within the conservation sector and/or been involved in activism and public debates. They represent different fields such as history, anthropology, heritage studies, architecture and conservation, China studies, and political science. This breadth is especially valuable in order to understand the complex social and political contexts of cultural heritage contestations and manifestations in China today. The authors' different disciplinary backgrounds are also reflected in their use of different methods and ways to discuss and write heritage, ranging from historical studies to more ethnographic studies. The volume has been organized into three themes.

Section I: Reimagining the past: Ruptures and contested histories, memories, and identities in contemporary society

The new appreciation of erstwhile neglected or criticized aspects of China's past and traditions has led to a rediscovery and rewriting of many sites and places within the heritage discourse. Sites and practices that were interpreted as backward, feudal, superstitious, and exploitative during the Mao Zedong era have now been given more positive interpretations and upgraded to heritage status. The changing and multilayered readings of sites and cultural practices over time, and among different individuals and communities, draw our attention to the socially and politically constructed nature of cultural heritage. Ideological shifts, current political and economic objectives, and the existence of diverse and plural voices in society thus shape heritage discourse and policy as well as how sites are imagined and experienced. This section focuses on the evolving and sometimes contested interpretation of individual sites, neighbourhoods, and cultural practices among different actors, and the differences between the Mao Zedong era and the reform period.

Cooke's chapter addresses how the interpretation and meaning of one particular site, Ma Bufang's residence in Xining, Qinghai, has evolved and changed over time. The site has, like so many other heritage sites, emerged from oblivion during the reform period. After having been labelled a 'negative example' and used to teach class struggles, it has been listed as a protected site and turned into a public museum. Due to the site's

multifaceted history and function as a residence of a Sino-Muslim warlord, it is deeply embedded in complex issues of ethnicity, religion, nation-making, and political struggles. This renders the site not just a site of the past, but also a site that speaks to difficult and contested issues in contemporary society. These complexities are also evident in how the site today is narrated, interpreted, and experienced. As Cooke shows in her study, the ethnic Hui culture is embodied within a national narrative, at the same time as the orthodox political heritage discourse coexists with other sub-narratives, silences, and contradictory signs and untold stories. The analysis of Ma Bufang's residence reminds us of the contingent, evolving, and contested nature of many heritage sites in China, and that they need to be understood in the light of both historical and contemporary issues.

China's opening up to the world has also meant a search for, or an imagining of, a more cosmopolitan past and heritage, and attempts to portray China as a multicultural society in order to attract both foreign investment and tourists. Zhang's study focuses on the former Italian concession in Tianjin, which during the Mao Zedong era was interpreted as a humiliating example of imperialism on Chinese territory but has now become a symbol of the city's cosmopolitan heritage. The 'Italian-style exotic district', its new name, is branded as reflecting authentic Italian architecture despite the fact that it in part contains reconstructed new buildings. The area has been re-evaluated as a result of ideological changes and economic reforms. The colonial legacy is now a valuable asset for Tianjin in its city branding, and the stories told are no longer that of imperialism and humiliation but of modernization, cosmopolitanism, and friendship with Italy and other foreign countries.

The rapid urban transformation in China since the early 1990s has led to demolitions of whole neighbourhoods, uprooting local communities, and inner-city developments that have resulted in gentrification and the loss of local memories. At the same time, however, historic buildings and traditional environments, even if reconstructed, are highly valuable in city branding and tourism promotion. Graezer Bideau and Yan discuss the complex and evolving relationship between official and local narratives and memories in the Gulou neighbourhood in Beijing. Their study addresses the lived and embodied experience of heritage and the local community's attachments to the neighbourhood. It also analyses the role and uneven power of different actors, including local communities, heritage activists, and the local government, in urban redevelopment and heritage management. They provide insights into the arguments and views on the neighbourhood and its heritage among different actors and the public debates on the topic.

Section II: Appropriations, negotiations, and contestations: Transmitters, religious practitioners, and local communities

The heritage boom in China is partly driven by the central state and by local governments that are motivated by both ideological and economic considerations. The top-down heritagization process has, however, given rise to new stakeholders who may have their own agendas and express different views. At the same time, the language of heritage has also opened up space for individual citizens and local communities to celebrate and safeguard their own traditions and local history. Individual citizens and communities are experiencing, performing, and documenting heritage in a more bottom-up way, sometimes outside of the state narrative, at the same time as many actors try to capitalize on the official heritage discourse in order to gain legitimacy for their own history and traditions. This section discusses the complex linkages between top-down heritage policy and bottom-up imaginations, and different attempts to appropriate the heritage discourse. The authors discuss different actors, their capacity for voice and agency, how and why they appropriate the official heritage narrative, and the emergence of new conflicts, both among these actors and in their relationship with the fragmented authoritarian state.

Maags studies the impact of the two main intangible heritage policies on individuals and communities in the cities of Jiujiang and Changzhou. Although these policies are aimed at supporting local traditions and individual cultural work, her findings show how the local implementation of these policies has brought about division and hierarchies among local stakeholders. Only a limited number of local traditions and cultural practitioners may be inscribed on governmental safeguarding lists and thus obtain state funding and support. Furthermore, inscription often depends on good connections to heritage experts and officials. Local stakeholders, such as cultural practitioners who aim to become an official representative ICH transmitter or locals who strive to have their local tradition enlisted individually, employ official heritage discourses and heritage expertise to enhance their agency and obtain legitimacy in the heritage-making process. As a result, competition for inscription leads to contestation and conflicts between members and between local communities. In identifying actors and their relationships within this local web of heritage stakeholders, Maags's chapter demonstrates how local non-state stakeholders are not passive but active participants in competing for heritage status, seeking to obtain a 'piece of the pie', as well as potentially influencing local identity construction and locality branding efforts.

Chan discusses the actors involved in recasting the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival in Hong Kong into a piece of national cultural heritage. The Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival is an important festival that has witnessed numerous transformations over the years. The local community has been able to keep the festival alive for many generations without any support or recognition from the Hong Kong government. The motivations for the bottom-up work among some local communities to have it inscribed as cultural heritage were multifaceted and complex. Chan's study shows that, on the one hand, it reflected nostalgia for a traditional lifestyle and an attempt to gain recognition for their cultural traditions and identities. But, on the other hand, among some segments of the Chaozhou community it was also a deliberate attempt to use heritage status to create stronger ties with Chaozhou communities on the mainland and express support for the mainland government. The struggle for heritage recognition in this case thus took place within the larger framework of Hong Kong identity politics and pro-China politics.

Blumenfield discusses how local communities in Yunnan are navigating heritage policies and whether, and to what extent, these policies may change people's lives and identities and the cultural practices themselves. She provides several examples and case studies that show different experiences and negotiations with the AHD. Her study of Moso weavers in Walabi village in Yunnan shows the intricate and complex ways heritage is understood and impacts on the local community. The label 'intangible cultural heritage', or 'transmitter of intangible cultural heritage', neither guarantees protection nor commercial viability for time-consuming handicraft. Blumenfield's chapter turns our attention to what heritage 'does' or 'does not' do to individuals, communities, and their cultural practices and products. It alerts us to the difficult tensions between transmission, innovation, protection, and commercial use, and whether and how local communities have a say in the protection and development of their heritage.

Laukkanen's chapter addresses religious as well as ethnic identity and heritage in a Tibetan village in the Meili Snow Mountains, which is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Three Parallel Rivers. Her chapter shows the complex interplay and artificial distinction between natural and cultural heritage in UNESCO's work and its impact on a local community. Although the mountains are only listed as a natural heritage site, they have deep religious significance for the Tibetan community who regard them, especially Mount Khawa Karpo, as holy mountains. The new heritage status and the preservation policy thus serve to erase and ignore the mountains' long-standing cultural significance and meaning for the local

community. The listing and natural park status is also problematic since it seems to favour tourists' experiences at the expense of local communities' participation in and management of the area.

Section III: Public debates and new forms of engagements: Voices, emotions, and new platforms

Different actors play different roles and have different levels of power in the heritage field. Their social and cultural capital, discursive strategies, and ability to use the media also influence whether their voices are heard. Cultural heritage debates are highly mediated and visualized thanks to the growing importance of the Internet and social media and the ubiquitous use of images. Online platforms open up new arenas that enable individuals to come together to debate and circulate their views and experiences, and engage with and react to the official heritage discourse, policies, and individual protection programmes. Heritage experts and government bodies today need to take the public's views into account and new relationships among heritage stakeholders have emerged as a result. The new platforms encourage engagements that strengthen old communities as well as create new heritage communities. Many Chinese citizens are today interested in celebrating, experiencing, performing, and documenting the heritage in a more personalized way through their own images and texts outside of the heritage institutions. We see new performative celebrations of individual memories and local cultural heritage, as well as strong emotions and affective engagement with heritage that reveal underlying anxieties in society and the role heritage can play in strengthening identity and regaining local and national pride.

Cui analyses the role and vision of one remarkable political leader, Geng Yanbo, who served as the mayor of Datong during the period 2008-2013. Geng's vision and strong charisma shaped the city's heritage policy and radically changed the urban fabric during his term in office. This intriguing case shows the importance of individual leadership, the role of heritage in urban development and city branding, and the complex understandings of heritage among different actors. Geng embarked on an ambitious renovation programme that also included moving, changing, and 'improving' many historic buildings, and even constructing 'fake' historic buildings. Although many aspects of his work were strongly criticized by heritage experts and state bodies, including SACH, which called for several projects to be brought to a halt, they were at first not able to stop Geng, who also

received strong support from local citizens. The debate was carried out both in traditional media and on the Internet, including social media platforms such as Sina Weibo. The supporters and Geng himself saw the programme as an attempt at cultural revival, and argued that it would improve the cultural and historic quality of the city. Very different views and interpretations of what heritage is and how preservation should be carried out were thus at the heart of the debate. The case reveals how expert views, political visions, and public sentiments are complex and sometimes clash. It also illustrates how influential and powerful individual political leaders can be in an authoritarian system.

Tam discusses another case of a heated public debate on heritage and preservation that, however, took place on a smaller scale, involved other actors, and revealed a different power asymmetry. Her chapter focuses on the revitalization of the Zhizhu Temple in Beijing. The temple has not been a site for religious activities since 1949 and was then used for many different purposes, including as factories. Although it was listed as a Beijing Municipal Protected Site in 1984, it was not restored until 2007. After many years of neglect, a company leased the temple and, with the approval of the Beijing Bureau of Cultural Heritage, started to renovate it in order to turn it into an upmarket hotel, a restaurant, and an art gallery. The renovation earned the company a UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards of Cultural Heritage Conservation in 2012. Criticism was, however, voiced in both official media and by individual citizens over the fact that a former temple was used for secular purposes and had become a 'private club'. The case and debate illustrates both complex and unclear regulations and different views and visions among different actors on how to preserve and reuse heritage sites. It also illustrates the important role of the media in how heritage debates are framed, and the strong emotions heritage may inspire among many citizens.

Svensson provides another example of citizens' affective engagement with the cultural heritage, both online and offline. Her chapter focuses on how the Internet and social media have created new forms of engagements with heritage that are more individual and performative in character. She discusses the network Taishun (later China) Covered Bridges, which got its first online presence in 2000 when the founder set up a website. What started out as a website and loose network of a small number of friends and enthusiasts has now developed into a registered organization with a presence on social media. While most of the core group are from Taishun, the larger network also gathers experts and enthusiasts from different parts of China. They engage with the local heritage in different ways, documenting local history and traditions, calling for the protection

of sites, and creating awareness on heritage issues more generally. Their engagement online also exhibits some new features as heritage has become more performative, visual, and participatory in nature. The use of social media means that people can share information, comment on each other's postings, and upload images and news in real time. This bottom-up network is not pushing for the recognition of a different kind of heritage, and it has quite good relations with the local government and heritage officials, but it shows stronger affective engagement and reveals how people are able to incorporate, reflect upon, and perform heritage in their everyday life.

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Section I

Re-imagining the Past: Contested Memories and Contemporary Issues

2 Telling Stories in a Borderland

The Evolving Life of Ma Bufang's Official Residence

Susette Cooke

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Abstract
Many heritage sites have emerged from oblivion during the reform period, among them the former residence of the Sino-Muslim warlord Ma Bufang in Xining. Once a PLA barracks and class struggle education centre, it is now a protected heritage site, museum and tourist attraction, whose multifaceted history implicates it in complex issues of ethnicity, religion, nation-making, and political contestations as relevant to the present as to the past. State orthodoxies of history and heritage coexist with sub-narratives, silences, contradictory signs and untold stories, as site managers navigate challenging dilemmas of interpretation and meaning of the site: What is the story at the Ma Residence, and whose story can be told there?

Keywords: ethnicity, religion, Hui, tourism, memory

Regime change came suddenly to Qinghai Province, in the final stages of the civil war between the Nationalists and Communists. Ma Bufang, Governor of Qinghai under the Nationalists,[1] implacable foe of the Communists, and semi-autonomous ruler in his frontier domain, held out till the bitter end. On 27 August 1949, the day after his main forces surrendered to the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in Lanzhou, General Ma left his

* Research for this chapter was supported by funding from the Australian Research Council for Discovery Project 1092962, 'China's Tibetan Buddhist Margins'. Findings are based on fieldwork in Qinghai and visits to the Ma Residence in 1995-1996, 2002 and 2010-2013.

1 The terms 'Nationalists' and 'Guomindang' are used interchangeably in this chapter to refer to the Chinese government under the Nationalist Party (Guomindang), 1928-1949.

Official Residence in Xining in a US-supplied plane, bound for Chongqing. By 5 September the PLA First Field Army had reached the walls of Xining, and marched into the city the next morning. Overcoming local resistance around Xining, by the end of the month the PLA commander had set up the Qinghai Province People's Military Administrative Committee to replace the former Governor's administration. Ma Bufang, with close members of his household, military and government staff, and over a hundred cases of gold and silver, was by then in Hong Kong, never to return to Qinghai (Qinghaishengzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 1987: 513-514, 520; Chen 1996: 22-24; Cui et al. 1999: 641-642; La and Ma 2009: 202).

This pivotal moment, as the Sino-Muslim[2] warlord left Qinghai and the PLA moved in, marks an interface between two worlds, and between two pasts and potential futures. When Ma Bufang's regime met its end at the hands of the Red Army, its subjects not only faced a future different from that which Ma Bufang had been constructing, but a totality of change they could scarcely have envisaged from their vantage point on China's northwestern margins. In the new world of Communist China, material and mental transformation required, not least, that they would see and narrate past, present, and future in new ways, too.

The state enterprise of history construction and reconstruction in post-imperial China was crucial to Republican and Communist legitimation of their regimes and the contours of the nation they sought to govern. The task required imagination and political dexterity. Borders, territory, demography and culture all presented dilemmas for the Chinese nation-state builders, who assumed the right to determine and narrate the national past and, after the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) took power, increasingly reinforced the state's unilateral authority over this task. In China's ethno-culturally non-Han border regions, notably Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, and Tibet, a discourse of their inalienable historical belonging within the Chinese nation supported the more tangible integration activities of civil and military state agencies. In Qinghai, where a non-Han power dominated a multi-ethnic population on the eve of the Communist victory, perspectives on the new nation-building process diverged among the region's peoples as much as with the national centre. Fitting Qinghai into the national grand narrative

2 The term 'Sino-Muslim' can include all followers of Islam in Qinghai, other than Tibetan and Mongol Muslims, before their official classification into several different nationalities (*minzu*) by the PRC during the 1950s. The Ma clan belonged to the largest Muslim nationality, the Hui (*Huizu*). For a fuller examination of ethnonyms for Muslims in the Northwest, see Lipman 1997: xx-xxv.

contended with multiple collective memories, views of the past, and the reality of resistance to the new political order.

Recent scholarship on the public narration of China's past in museums and at memorial sites emphasizes the core nation-building role these institutions perform in the People's Republic of China (PRC), a function inextricably linked with political legitimation of the Party's leadership of the state and the nation (Denton 2014; Varutti 2014). Through these institutions, state orthodoxy on the evolution of the Chinese nation reaches a vast audience, via the efforts of Chinese officials involved in culture work who must respond to the Party's changing ideological concerns. But successive politicized reconstructions of China's history, embedded in policies, campaigns, academic work, education, and museums, have not eradicated alternative memories and historical tellings (Watson 1994). Disjunctures of public-private, official-vernacular memory remain, in the shadows of society or individual and collective minds, or sometimes in concrete form, like Ma Bufang's Official Residence (Ma Bufang Gong'guan).

Sites like the Ma Residence – substantial architectural structures of historical significance – have gradually been emerging from oblivion, or public invisibility, since the Party turned from revolution to reform, and serve as one kind of barometer for measuring changing attitudes to past society and history in China today. In recent years, they have found a new lease of life in the embrace of the burgeoning domestic tourism industry, underwritten by government support because as state-owned sites they require government approval to be opened and used in this way. Tourism has become a major economic focus for many local governments in China, including in Qinghai where it was declared a 'pillar industry' in provincial planning in 2003 (Qinghai Provincial Government 2003). The 'heritage turn' in Chinese society today intensifies the cultural and economic value of such sites, yet successful as they are proving to be in drawing tourist interest, they embody challenging complexities for those now managing them, and who are responsible for their representation to the visiting public.

Narrative at the Ma Residence: Dilemmas for heritage site management in a contested borderland

Ma Bufang, one of a family of Sino-Muslim warlords who emerged in the late Qing and consolidated their power in the Northwest through the Republican era, built his Official Residence in Xining in 1942. Fortuitously surviving the revolutionary-era destruction of old buildings, the Residence evidences

a substantial past that must be explained to a contemporary audience in the discursive setting of twenty-first-century China. It sits, however, in the 'political minefield' of the landscape of modern Chinese history (Denton 2014: 9), embroiled in the vexed contestations of ethnicity, religion, identity, and power that have beset region and nation in the making of contemporary China. The past embodied by the Ma Residence is deeply implicated in the still unfinished process of national integration in China's Northwest, where current state-building projects and ethno-religious sensitivities do not coexist without friction (Leibold 2007; Bovingdon 2010). In the state's search for a 'useable past' (Denton 2014: 14) at this heritage site, the national grand narrative contends with the physical evidence of an alternative non-Han power base in China's northwestern borderlands on the eve of the birth of New China. If museums in China use the past to illustrate the present (Mitter 2000: 280), to what extent is the Ma Residence 'useable', and for whose purposes?

The provincial-level Xinlu Cultural Relics Administrative Office (*Xinlu wenwu guanlisuo*), which manages the Ma Residence, holds the curatorial advantage of an extant site, virtually intact,[3] but whose architectural uniqueness and locational context inherently give shape to multiple, and powerfully symbolic, narratives. The story there potentially stretches to extremes of interpretation. At its broadest and most extravagant, it tells how Sino-Muslims, under the warlord Ma clan and especially Ma Bufang in Qinghai, carved out a territory for themselves within the formal boundaries of the Republic of China, and nearly changed Inner Asia. But can this story be told in a state where the discourse of national unity, ethnic unity, and sovereign territory is paramount domestically and internationally, taught in schools, work units, and religious institutions as patriotic education, where intellectual endeavour is permeated with these orthodoxies, and peaceful expression of alternative national perspectives is punishable under the Criminal Law Code? Moreover, these events happened at a time when the Chinese government of the day was in a state of high anxiety about national sovereignty and territorial integrity, including in the Northwest, concerns which continue to inform PRC government policy there 60 years later. At the other extreme, can the narrative presented at the site seamlessly meld the Ma Bufang Residence into the state's orthodoxy of historical continuity and inclusive national formation for all nationalities?

3 The Ma Residence is frequently noted – in literature and at the site – as the most complete Republican structure in Qinghai.

Current official terms classify the Ma Residence as a 'cultural relics protection unit' (*wenwu baohu danwei*), a 'tourism scenic precinct' (*lüyou jingqu*), and a 'museum' (*bowuguan*). State officials charged with its major restoration in 2004 extended its identity to a 'national treasure old residence' (*guobao laozhai*), creatively captioning their site on its main entrance sign as 'the story of a lifetime' (*yibeizide gushi*), or 'the story of a generation'. This label sidesteps declarative statist 'political storytelling' (Denton 2014: 16), focusing instead on an important political personage and his historically-significant residence, a strategic management choice for navigating the rough waters of acceptable historiography of a Chinese border region. Through this form of 'museumification' the state culturally and politically appropriates and transforms a private space into a public locus (Varutti 2014: 73). The approach has successfully attracted Han tourists who roam its courtyards in increasing numbers, and visiting high officials reportedly make it an obligatory stop in their Xining itinerary.[4] But how is the 'story of a lifetime' to be told at this site?

This chapter explores that question in the context of three key contingencies: The geo-historical ground of its telling, its temporal settings before and after Liberation, and its ethnic dimensions. In other words, how to tell stories in a borderland region of the PRC – in this case Qinghai – with its particular ethno-cultural mix, persistent socio-cultural disaggregation, and sporadic volatility? What is the story at the Ma Residence, and whose story can be told there? In the following sections I explore critical factors of place, time, and ethnic dimension that inform this story in this borderland and produce the dilemmas that make it hard to tell at the Ma Residence site.

The Ma Residence in context: Region and history

If the Ma Residence is 'the story of a lifetime', it is more widely the story of a region, of the end of empire, and the making of a modern Chinese nation-state, and ultimately of geopolitical transformation in Inner Asia. The Northwest[5] was a cultural frontier where influences from China, Central Asia, Mongolia, and Tibet converged over many centuries (Ekvall 1939; Lipman 1997). Under the Qing and the Republic, state activity there worked towards the gradual incorporation of this periphery into the

4 Personal communication from site management staff, November 2011.

5 The region may be identified as the 'Northwest' from a Chinese geographical perspective, but is typically named and situated in other ways by other regional inhabitants.

Chinese political mainstream, a process in which the Ma clan played a key role in the area covered by today's Qinghai, Gansu, and Ningxia Provinces (Hunsberger 1978; Leibold 2007; Lin 2007). During the Republic each of these provinces became associated with a powerful branch of the Ma clan, in Ma Bufang's case, Qinghai, which in his lifetime transitioned from a region on the outer edge of Gansu to a full province in its own right. Over centuries, diverse peoples had moved along the Gansu Corridor into China's northwestern borderlands, including Muslims from Central Asia and the Middle East, who formed a substantial segment of the regional population by the Ming and Qing periods. Travellers passing through Gansu and Ningxia in the early twentieth century describe their sense of being in a distinctively Muslim Northwest, so marked was the presence of Sino-Muslim communities and the local authority of Ma family warlords (Gu 1949; Pickens 1936; Teichman 1921). Most of Qinghai, however, lay beyond the edge even of the Muslim Northwest. Although the 'Qinghai Mas' ruled from the city of Xining, and its adjacent districts along the Huang River (Huangshui) were farmed primarily by a mixed population of Han Chinese and Sino-Muslims, the rest of Qinghai was the domain of Tibetan and Mongol pastoralists, whose cultural and political affinities lay outside a Chinese or a Muslim framework.

The Ma clan came to prominence at a time of violence in the Northwest. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the region was devastated by successive uprisings characterized by brutal conflict among Sino-Muslim and Han Chinese communities and the Qing state.[6] Several members of the Ma family of Hezhou (Linxia)[7] in southern Gansu received high military posts in the local Qing administration for their services in suppressing unrest, among them Ma Bufang's grandfather. By the late nineteenth century they had started, in effect, 'a small dynasty of their own' (Lin 2007: 119). Ma Bufang's father Ma Qi took control of Xining at the fall of the Qing dynasty, and after 1915, supported by his official status within the new Republican government, he began to lay the groundwork for a virtually independent fiefdom within the boundaries of the new Chinese state (Hunsberger 1978; Cooke 2008). When the Nationalist government in Nanjing made Qinghai a separate province in 1928, they appointed Ma Qi as Governor, followed by his brother Ma Lin, then his son Ma Bufang in 1938.

6 See Lipman 1997: Chapter 4, and for further references to the uprisings.

7 Today's Linxia City, which remains a prominent Hui ethno-cultural centre as the seat of the Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture.

Ma Bufang thus inherited his position through his family's power, and like Ma Qi set about building a territorial power base for himself and in anticipation for his son, Ma Jiyuan. In this aim he was energetic and successful on many fronts, relying fundamentally on his political and military strength but economically sustained by trade monopolies and resource extraction. He initiated region-building modernization projects such as road construction and literacy programmes – social and infrastructural activities largely replicated later, with ideological modifications, by the CCP. His aggressive expansion into Tibetan and Mongol lands beyond Xining would have ramifications in Qinghai's ethnic relations long after his regime's end. Remote from the Chinese heartland, unchallenged by Nationalist armed forces within his territory, and filling key military and civilian posts with ethnic and family loyalists, Ma Bufang maintained his authoritarian personal rule while other warlords were neutralized or defeated (Hunsberger 1978: Chapter 9). By the 1930s he had consolidated his power in Qinghai as no other political leader in the region had been able to do, perhaps since the seventeenth century Mongol prince Gushri Khan. Contemporaries began calling him the King of the Northwest (Xibeiwang).

Yet Eurasian geopolitics, the war with Japan, and the presence of Communists in parts of the region forced the Nationalist government to elevate the importance of the Northwest in its nation-building strategy and regime survival (Leibold 2007; Lin 2007). As the Nationalists strengthened their political and military position in the region, Ma was drawn into a closer, if uneasy, relationship with Chiang K'ai-shek.[8] Providing the Nationalists with valuable troops to fight the Japanese, Ma then supported Chiang in the civil war with the Communists, to whom he was bitterly hostile (Hunsberger 1978: 112-117; Chen 1986: 129-143; Yang 1986: 161-162). But in 1949 the Nationalists lost the battle for China to the Communists. The Red Army defeated Ma's main troops in Lanzhou and took Xining in September that year, garrisoning the Gong'guan. Qinghai became a provincial administration within the newly-founded PRC. Chiang K'ai-shek and many of his government, including Ma Bufang, fled to Taiwan. Thus Ma's regime fell quickly, although it was fiercely defended by mostly Hui armed loyalists for some years into the 1950s. Ma spent the rest of his life outside China, first in Egypt as ambassador for the Republic of China, then in Saudi Arabia, where he died in 1975.

8 Ma Bufang was appointed head of the Guomindang in Qinghai in 1938 (Hunsberger 1978: 103).

Ethnicity and politics in the borderland

Ma Bufang lived in an era of war, regional and local violence, nation-building and regime contestation, as post-imperial China struggled to consolidate itself as a modern sovereign nation. For the Nationalists, as for the CCP, this process meant full incorporation of vast multi-ethnic border regions like Qinghai into the Chinese world. For the past thousand years, as a political and ethnic transition zone between China and Tibet, Qinghai has consisted essentially of two cultural and economic environments: The pastoral world of Tibetans and Mongols across most of the region, and the Sinic agricultural sphere centred on Xining, a demarcation reflected in the principal ethno-political contestations in regional history. But in the late Qing and Republican periods, Qinghai's position on the edge of the Muslim Northwest became salient for regional power relations. The deadly Han-Hui conflicts of the late nineteenth century ironically propelled the Muslim Ma clan to prominence and built a stronger Muslim element in Qinghai's population through forced resettlement of Hui from Shaanxi and Gansu, part of the Qing solution to ethnic problems in the Northwest. The Ma's status, and actual power, brought a new ethnic factor into the power nexus which subverted the historical Sino-Tibetan contestation: A Hui clan supported by ethno-religious loyalists now dominated the regional political process, in the name of the national Chinese state. This new ethnic order (Bulag 2002: 44), evident in the physical structure of the Ma Residence, spearheaded that state's incorporation of the borderland and its peoples more swiftly and, once the CCP took over, more durably than had ever happened before.

The Hui preeminence in Republican Qinghai remains unsettling for the grand narrative of nation-building and Qinghai society today, where ethno-politics is never far from experiences in everyday life. Qinghai's ethnic communities hold collective memories of inter-ethnic conflict pre-dating Ma Bufang's regime: during his rule, fault lines deepened and brought tangible consequences in the post-1949 order. Despite their regional power and certainly because of it, the Qinghai Hui, who composed 15 per cent of the provincial population, received scant dispensation for their nationality in the Communists' ethnic autonomy system (Cooke 2008: 410-411). Armed resistance by Ma loyalists into the 1950s caused heavy losses in Hui communities (Chen 1996: 37-45; Cooke 2008: 408) and a continuing perception among the Han of their violent, oppositional nature. Their political and social capital was thus severely reduced in the province where both had been ascendant. For Tibetans and Mongols,

memories of violence and loss under the Ma regime merge with contemporary Hui-Tibetan economic conflicts (Horlemann 2015; Fischer 2015), and with recognition of Ma Bufang's role in bringing their territories under a Chinese political administration. The ironies of the state-formation process in their region are not lost on Tibetans and Mongols. In particular, they recall Ma Bufang's extraction of a huge payment in silver for releasing the newly-recognized 14th Dalai Lama, a native of northeastern Qinghai, for his enthronement journey to Lhasa in 1937 (Lin 2006: 113-114). For the CCP, fierce and ideologically indefensible resistance to their nation-building efforts in Qinghai came from ethnically non-Han peoples, who frequently perceived the transformative campaigns launched after 1949 as destructive actions by a Han state.

All these ethnic contestations, contradictions, and disunities are supposed to have ended with Liberation and the establishment of the PRC, and after 60 years Qinghai's multiple nationalities purportedly enjoy ethnic harmony in a consolidated Chinese nation. Yet Xining's streets are filled with posters urging 'nationalities unity' (*minzu tuanjie*), and state agencies concerned with 'nationalities work' (*minzu gongzuo*) have expanded. Disjunctures in the historical narrative and the place of ethnic relations within it permeate Ma Bufang's legacy and the Party's inheritance in Qinghai, not least at the Ma Residence where alternative understandings of place, past, and present intersect, complicating the work of its managers.

The Ma Bufang Official Residence

Even ten years ago, as restoration work began on the Ma Residence, Xining had the feel of a frontier town. Twenty years ago, before the determined high-speed structural change of the Great Western Development policy (*Xibu dakaifa*) had set in,[9] a palpable sense of worlds beyond it clung around the unruly long-distance bus stations filled with people who were not Han Chinese, and blew across the city as dust-laden winds from Inner Asia's high desert and steppe. Domestic tourists had scarcely ventured here, repelled by the harsh environment, the 'backward' local conditions, and a perceived muted threat from the local non-Han people. But Xining is in the process of upgrading to a thriving Han-friendly urban centre, captioned

9 For Great Western Development, or the 'Open up the West' campaign, see Goodman 2004a: 317-334.

the 'Summer Capital' (*Xiadu*) to attract visitors and new residents to a location where ethno-cultural diversity manifests as tamed, packaged, and safely accessible. Its life as a 'frontier town' is receding as the tide of Chinese development engulfs it in urbanization, consumer commerce, and dominantly Han demographics.[10]

For centuries, however, Xining really was a frontier town, gauged from the perspective of any of the peoples on whose political or cultural periphery it lay. Situated on a tributary of the Yellow River on the northeastern edge of the Tibetan Plateau, Xining has historically been the last outpost on this margin of Chinese civilization and control as well as a ruling city of non-Chinese states. Situating Xining on the Sino-Tibetan transition zone foregrounds the major forces contending in the greater region for 1400 years, but oversimplifies the multiplicity of peoples and cultures who interacted in its immediate environs for even longer, and into the present. After Liberation its diversity was flattened to serve the revolutionary goals of socialist construction and perhaps above all, its belonging within a Chinese nationalist state. For the majority of Chinese it conjured a dark vision of forced labour camps and harsh conditions on a remote, inhospitable, and unfamiliar periphery. International visitors did not generally stay there long either. Xining's history, however, is 'as rich as any American frontier town' (Gaubatz 1996: 55). If little of its evocative past remains evident and much was destroyed, some is now being recovered, including Ma Bufang's Residence.

Of Ma Bufang's several *gong'guan* at locations across Qinghai, only his finest and last-built survives.[11] His primary residence had been in White Jade Alley (*Baiyüxiang*), near Xining's main city wall inside the Muslim quarter. Xining's historical Muslim quarter had existed since the Ming period as a separate walled suburb appended to the Chinese city's eastern wall. Today, minus its wall, it remains a highly distinctive precinct of Muslim residential and commercial life centred on the Dong'guan Great Mosque (*Dong'guan qingzhen dasi*) (Cooke 2008: 402). Ma built his ambitious new Residence outside the East City wall at Zhoujiaquan,[12] edging but not within the Muslim quarter, appropriating a large stretch of land which contained the Xiao Spring (*Xiaoquan*) used by passing caravans

10 The Han comprised 74 per cent of the Xining Municipality population in the 2010 China Population Census.

11 Sources vary on the exact number from at least four (Jiang 1981: 99) to eight (Chen 1986: 281).

12 The place name 'Zhoujiaquan' is preserved in the name of the small police post (*paichusuo*) at the main gate of the Residence site.

and famous for its pure water.[13] A solid surrounding wall enclosed orchards and fine trees in an area more extensive than now remains. Construction started in June 1942 and was completed a year later. No structure like it existed anywhere else in the province, with its solemn grey-brick walls inlaid in parts with subtle filigree designs derived from Islamic art. A series of seven compounds surrounded by dedicated-use buildings formed the basic layout of the complex, reminiscent of traditional Chinese courtyard houses (*siheyuan*) but modified by the needs of a large Muslim household and the feudalistic trappings of its powerful head: reception halls, household supervision offices and staff accommodation, military guard quarters, stables, kitchens, gardens,[14] a grain mill and oil press to supply the family compound.[15] The Residence enclosed the Xiao Spring for its exclusive use. Household offices and family apartments for Ma Bufang, his son and their wives lay at the inner core, connected to another building accommodating female family members, maids and guests,[16] all behind the section which served Ma Bufang's public but personal role as the most powerful man in Qinghai. Here, on the northern side of the complex facing the Huang River and the North Mountain, the outer courtyard and its structures reflected the nexus of Ma Bufang's powers, in scale, style, and separation. He received national-level guests like officials from the Nanjing government in the Residence's most famous building, the Jade Hall (*Yushiting*), faced with tiles made from jade quarried in Qinghai's Xinghai and Huzhu counties. Non-Han leaders from Qinghai – Mongols and Tibetans – were received in a room specially designed to accommodate their cultural practices, but at the other end of the expansive courtyard opposite the Jade Hall.

13 According to a stele at the site, the spring was excavated and restored after the *gong'guan* became a tourism precinct. It still supplies exceptionally pure water. The Xiaoquan Elementary School in the neighbourhood and nearby commercial enterprises incorporate its name.

14 The South Garden, overlooked by Ma Jiyuan's Chinese wife's rooms and originally filled with orchards, exotic plants and trees, is much reduced in size from the original and has not yet been fully restored. Locals remember it as a place where children played into the 1970s. Temporary residences built there were removed during restoration.

15 Three interconnecting western courtyards were for household and military attendants. The northwestern compound housing male servants and carters, though restored, currently serves commercial rather than heritage purposes. In 2006 it was a Muslim teahouse, then became an international youth hostel in 2012. A piece of revolutionary heritage built in the 1950s in the gardens on the eastern side of the *gong'guan* has also been preserved: The Wu'aitang, now used as a supermarket.

16 This impressive two-storeyed wooden building follows the more traditional Sino-Muslim architectural style of the Northwest. The ground floor now houses the Qinghai Folk Customs Museum. Ethnic handicrafts shops and the restored quarters of Ma family female relatives and guests occupy the upper-storey rooms.

Figure 2.1 Graphic of layout of the Ma Bufang Official Residence at site entrance

Photograph by Susette Cooke

The Residence is hard to classify stylistically, unless as vernacular Sino-Muslim architecture for the élite in the Northwest. Its design and use of valuable regional materials make it unique, combining traditional Hui, Han and Sino-Western elements into a harmonious whole, decorated with the jade tiles on inner and outer walls and ceilings that give the Residence its most exceptional characteristic. Both Han Chinese and Islamic principles were used in aligning the various courtyard buildings (Song 2008: 16; Yang 2010: 110). Ma apparently worked on the draft design and layout, then placed the project under military supervision and brought in fine craftsmen from the Muslim Northwest's artistic centres, Lanzhou and Linxia. Hundreds of soldiers and workers from surrounding counties were requisitioned to work on the construction, whose final cost is said to have been 200,000 silver yuan, not including the local corvée labour (Jiang 1981: 99).

On the advice of several provincial scholars, Ma named his new home 'Fragrant Cottage' (*Xinlu*), and invited the Chairman of the National government, Lin Sen, to provide the calligraphy for the name plaque above the main gate. Chiang K'ai-shek also provided an inscription, 'Fragrant Virtue through the Generations' (*Shide qingfen*), dispatched via a special messenger

from Nanjing (Song 2008: 16; Jiang 1981: 99). Such personal courtesies between the de facto ruler of Qinghai and the Nationalist government's leaders signified the political currents of 1943, as the Northwest loomed larger in the Guomindang's national strategy and Ma consolidated his regional leadership within the borders of the Republic. Ma's pragmatic political allegiances and his regional identity combined easily in his new Residence. His fundamental religious and cultural affinities shaped the life inside the compound, while admitting influences that now infiltrated the borderland's politics and socio-economic environment. Some of these were artistic and practical, but others reflected insecurities of the times. Secret underground passages provided storage for valuables and escape routes for the family. High stout walls, resident guards and provision for self-sufficiency gave the Residence fortress-like capacities.

Ma Bufang built his Official Residence just as the Nationalists launched their most confident strategic undertakings in the Northwest. Remotest of the Muslim warlords, he was implicated in the international and domestic forces that shook the region, but not overwhelmed by them until the very end. Signs of the times permeate the architecture and artefacts displayed at the restored site: portraits of Nationalist leaders, a Russian-style fireplace, American technology and army vehicles, Chinese calligraphy presented to Ma by important Nationalist officials, Sino-Muslim religious inscriptions, his son's wife as a modern Chinese bride in a white Western-style wedding gown.[17] Among the objects contemporaneous with Ma himself, there are no signs of the Communist force critical to the struggles and outcomes of the era. These appear only from the time of his regime's defeat, mostly as photographic images of the victorious Communist army and cadres, and cheering ethnic minorities in the Liberation of Qinghai exhibition. Ma Bufang's notorious hostility to the CCP receives graphic portrayal elsewhere, at the West Route Army Memorial Hall,[18] below Xining's South Mountain. In counterpoint to the Residence exhibition's telling of regime change as Liberation, the post-Ma government in Qinghai was occupied for over a decade, eliminating armed resistance to the new order, from Hui and other Muslims loyal to the Ma regime and Tibetans and Mongols opposed to the sweeping changes imposed in their territories.

17 Ma Jiyuan's wife, Zhang Shunfen, was a Han Chinese woman from Nanjing, whom he met while studying in Chongqing. As Ma Jiyuan had already made a traditional arranged marriage within the clan, he married her as his second wife (Yang 1986: 235-236). Yang gives her name as Shunfang, but Shunfen is used at the Ma Residence site.

18 *Zhongguo gongnong hongjun xilujun jinianguan* (Chinese Worker Peasant Red Army's West Route Army Memorial Hall).

Incarnation and evolution

The Ma Residence enjoyed life as domicile and citadel for the Ma family for only six years, until their escape before the Red Army's occupation of Xining in September 1949. Remarkably, it survived the bouts of destruction after 1949 that obliterated much of China's built heritage, whether politically-motivated like the Cultural Revolution or the result of zealous development policies of the reform era. Much else in Xining was torn down in the 1950s – notably the city walls – and even 1990s construction currently bears the ominous demolition sign *chai* throughout the East City District (*Chengdongqu*). Essentially the state saved it for its own use. At Liberation, the victorious First Field Army garrisoned the Residence and retained it as a Qinghai Military Region office after 1954. Faded photographs displayed at the site show political commissars at the Xiao Spring in 1950, and Field-Marshall Zhu De reviewing the troops there during his 1958 inspection tour of Qinghai. Soon afterwards the army transferred the site to the Lanzhou-Qinghai Railway Office, then during the Cultural Revolution, labelled as 'teaching material by negative example' (*fanmian jiaocai*), it was opened as a 'class education exhibition centre' (*jieji jiaoyu zhanguan*) for holding class struggle sessions. In 1979, reflecting the reform era's more tolerant turn towards socio-cultural activities, it was converted into the Qinghai Provincial Museum, and in 1986 declared a provincial-level cultural relics protection unit. In this guise it was difficult, if not impossible, to locate the site by reference to the *Ma Gong'guan*: no such name appeared on city maps, and district locals denied knowledge of it.[19] In 1996 the provincial Party Committee declared the Museum a 'patriotic education base' (*aiguo jiaoyü jidi*).[20] By the turn of the twenty-first century, however, its life as a museum was usurped by construction of a glamorous new Provincial Museum,[21] in the flourishing new heart of Xining taking shape under Great Western Development. Although many of the buildings were now locked and inaccessible, neighbourhood Hui made use of the empty but degraded compound for community activities – a kindergarten, growing vegetables, rubbish recycling, and the inevitable temporary housing and flimsy

19 This was my experience during trips to Xining in 1995-1996 and 2001-2002. See Cooke 2008.
20 Many sites in the PRC received this designation during the 1996 Patriotic Education campaign. I saw no sign of this classification at the Ma Residence during visits 2010-2013. Ma's regime is covered at the West Route Army Memorial Hall in Xining, a patriotic education base.
21 Opened in 2001: see Qinghai Provincial Government Work Report 2002.

shopfronts along the street frontage.[22] The site's fate seemed uncertain, or at least in limbo (Cooke 2008).

Forces animating socio-economic life in China's heartland – commerce and state-sponsored cultural tourism – came to the Ma Residence's rescue, additionally spurred by the state campaign to transform China's ethnic borderlands (Ma 2000). In multi-ethnic Xining, a city where few historical sites had survived, local officials realized they had a treasure for harnessing heritage with development, and in 2004 the Qinghai provincial government decided to restore the Ma Residence as an open tourist site. Unlike the case of the Zhizhu Temple in Beijing (Tam, this volume) with its many extant historical buildings, the local state saw preservation as within its interests. Despite the solid survival of the bones of the complex, this required a massive restoration project involving the highest provincial leadership, the Xining city government, and state and private business funding. The Qinghai Provincial Culture Bureau (*Qinghaisheng Wenhuating*), as chief supervisory office, expressly appointed a director from the region with a background in local history and museum curation, and subsequently engaged the '*guobao laozhai*' category to 'carry' the 'story of a lifetime'.[23] The central government took an interest: representatives from the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (*Guojia Wenwuju*) visited Xining to inspect the work. As in the original building of the Residence, the work was not without disruption for locals. Part of the 1.86 million yuan invested in the restoration was used to relocate people living in and around the site.[24] By May 2006 restoration was complete: opened to the public, the site was awarded a 3A National Tourist Attraction rating by June, upgraded to 4A by November 2007.[25] Prominent signage in Xining's eastern sector guides tourists to the site whose identity and location were until recently hidden. Most recent tourist maps show its location at 13 Weimin Alley (*Weiminxiang*), and the Xining municipal government website lists it as a key tourist attraction.[26]

The current incarnation of the Ma Residence is likely to remain integrated into tourism development for the foreseeable future. In that context, its life has to some extent turned back to reflect its original purpose and time, in ways that synchronize with the contemporary policy environment.

22 According to an on-site photo exhibition on the restoration, since 1943 over 20 work units had used the *gong'guan* premises for offices and residences.

23 Site management staff personal communication, November 2011.

24 Xie 2006: 49, confirmed by site management staff, November 2011.

25 4A level is awarded to sites with 30,000 or above overseas tourists per year; 500,000 tourists in total per year.

26 http://www.xining.gov.cn/html/74/331577.html.

The complex has been divided into four principal sections: The space of the Ma family's domestic life and public ceremonial; the exhibition on Qinghai's Liberation; the Qinghai Folk Customs Museum (*Qinghai minsu bowuguan*), and spaces offering commercial opportunities.[27] Usages sometimes overlap, but essentially they allow the management to address a requisite political, cultural and commercial agenda at a state-run heritage site. Discreet curatorial choices have made room for further imaginings, however: much at the Residence is visible but unexplained. As it manifests today, the *Gong'guan* is a place of orthodox political storytelling but also of silences, contradictory signs and symbols, untitled images, compromises made at key points. Perhaps above all it evidences an alternative order and way of life that existed in the borderland until these were overturned in 1949. The ambiguities of that history severed the site from identification with its original self for many decades, yet recoverable later in terms of a protected heritage site where 'the story of a lifetime' may be told.

Heritage protection and its meaning are nevertheless contingent on time, place and policy. Interpretive voices are constrained by the *Gong'guan's* position as a sensitive site in a sensitive region within an authoritarian state, where entanglements of ethnicity and political power continue to complicate ascriptions of heritage there. Ma's Residence, until 2004 delinked publicly from its existence as the Hui warlord Ma Bufang's seat of power, now sits in a potentially contested space for heritage classification, although audible local disputes over the *Gong'guan's* meaning as heritage, which would involve more tortuous issues than alternative usage of heritage buildings (Tam, this volume) or urban heritage planning (Graezer Bideau and Yan, this volume), remain off limits at present. The following section considers narrative and sub-narrative at the Residence today.

Stories and heritage at the Ma Residence

This chapter began by construing the defeat of Ma Bufang's regime in 1949 as a rupture between two pasts and therefore two potential futures. In the nearly seven decades since then, overwhelming change has come to the

27 Commercial ventures observed over 2010-2013 have included a mixed souvenir and local products shop at the entrance to the Residence, an upscale art and rocks outlet in the southern hall in the main family courtyard, arts and crafts shops for each of Qinghai's minority nationalities in upper-storey rooms in the Folk Culture Museum, a Tibetan thangka exhibition, and the teahouse-now-youth hostel in the northwestern compound (see note 15).

territory he ruled, as Qinghai Province becomes more fully absorbed into the Chinese socio-economic body. That process includes the obligatory discourse of national and ethnic unity, formulated in Qinghai's case with mandatory reference to its historical and present existence as a multi-ethnic, multicultural region of China. Not surprisingly the multivalent ethno-cultural definition does not allow for diverse interpretations of its political past, let alone a differently imagined future. The violent stoppage of 1949 inevitably left behind precarious sensitivities in local society: ambiguities and dissonances embedded in the physical fact of the Ma Residence cannot be addressed candidly on the streets of Xining. Dilemmas of the Ma Bufang story that arise from the alternative nature of his regime make everything about him and his time and place hard for the party-state to tell *except* in its own terms. For all its efforts and enabling capacities to send its message, it's still hard for the state to recognize, let alone address, interpretations beyond *its* orthodoxy on Ma and his time.

Yet the Ma Residence, reconfigured as a heritage site telling 'the story of a lifetime', does transmit a variety of messages paralleling the state narrative, above all, the strength of Sino-Muslim identity, culture and political status in that time and place. The ethnic culture dimension of the Ma story constitutes the most outstanding aspect of space and display at the site, but its ethno-political complications portend questions about the past that may be unsettling and unsettled in the present. What was the nature of the Ma regime and what is its relation to current state and society? How these questions are answered at, and by, the *Gong'guan* site reflects openings and limits for the 'useable past' in contemporary China's heritage environment in a multi-ethnic borderland.

Given the highly political contestation implicit in the existence then removal of Ma's regime, political commentary at the site, exclusively statist as it is, could be considered restrained, either by curatorial preference or the understanding that everybody knows the main story. The state's voice enfolds the site into the grand narrative of Liberation and national belonging in the 'Liberation of Qinghai' exhibition housed in an inner courtyard hall, the only sustained explanation of its historical political context. For Chinese visitors the historical moment and meaning are part of a familiar tale, with photographs of pre-1949 Xining and early Liberation scenes providing local specifics. Spare textual accompaniment covers only the first few years of CCP activity in Qinghai, limited perhaps by available imagery from the time as much as the sensitivities of regional consolidation (Chen 1991: vol. 1, 46-50; Chen 1996: 149-166; Cooke 2008: 408), and the annexation of the Residence itself by Party military

Figure 2.2 Young Chinese tourists at the Jade Hall

Photograph by Susette Cooke

authorities. The Republic of China, the state formation in which Ma Bufang and other Muslim warlords of the Northwest conducted their political lives, is represented in display items without commentary: portraits of key political figures like Sun Yat-sen and Chiang K'ai-shek immediately recognizable to Chinese visitors, the Nationalist flag, official delegations from Nanjing, and lesser official and military players in the Ma Bufang saga. Portraits of Ma and his family members simply appear alongside those of prominent national personages, as co-participants in the era of Nationalist government.

Lodging the Ma regime inside the Nationalist government provides a safe Chinese state-centric narrative framework, uncontroversial for state officials or the majority of visitors. Most of these are observably domestic Han tourists and Sino-literate Taiwan and Hong Kong compatriots,[28] for whom the site and its displays are a visual discourse on the Chinese state at the frontiers, suggestive of national power, nostalgic past times, and

28 This composition of tourists was evident on all my visits to the site, and confirmed by site management staff in November 2011.

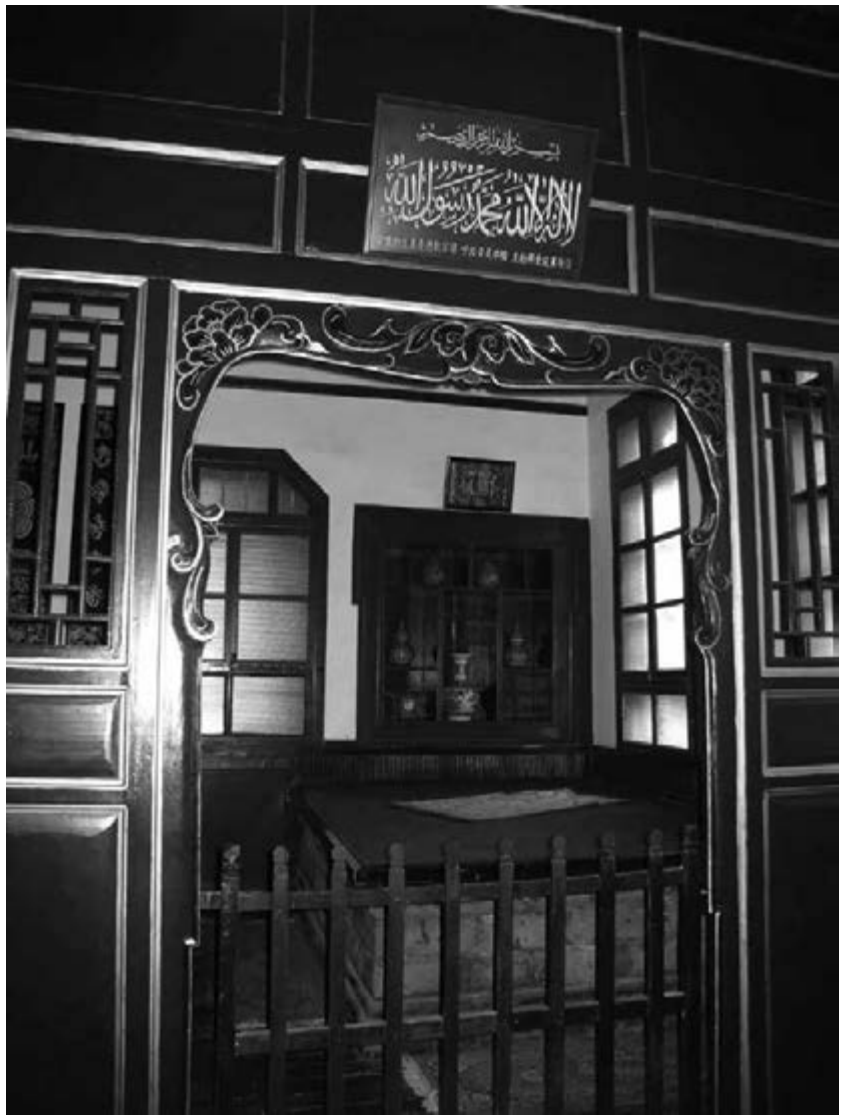
the frisson of other-cultural worlds. Despite the management's relatively soft-voiced politics at the site, the given context is still a Chinese national one. Reassessment of the Republican period in terms of nostalgia for its social and cultural accoutrements has, besides, been on the rise in the PRC for several years and may be safely expressed at historical sites. Aside from its political meaning, the Ma Residence offers a rare glimpse into élite life on a remote margin of the Republic, keenly enjoyed by domestic tourists as witnessed on all my own visits. In my experience the object of their greatest fascination is a small photograph of Soong Mei-ling, Madame Chiang K'ai-shek, who accompanied her husband as part of a Nationalist government delegation to the Northwest in 1942 (Qinghaishengzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 1987: 448-450; Yang 1986: 169-170). People may wish to recover their own cultural past, real or romanticized, as much as the history of an exotic region.

For the Hui, the Ma Residence narrates an alternative story at once more complicated and more critical: Their ethnicity's moment of ascendancy in this borderland, under their own strongman, the most powerful man in Qinghai. The site itself of course testifies to the centrality of Ma Bufang in this scenario, officially recognized in the captioning of his lifetime's story. Inside, especially in the living quarters for his son and for himself and his wife, he is apparent as a Sino-Muslim man of substance, leading a comfortable and cultured domestic life emphatically representative of Islamic principles.

Authenticity of this representation is not in question, as most artefacts now on display were recovered from among original items at the site, saved and kept in locked storage since the Cultural Revolution. Hui community groups were consulted about the correct display of religious exhibits, although no Hui were on the management staff in late 2011.[29] Culturally the site principally belongs, and has been allowed to belong, to the Hui. On the other hand, its political meaning cannot transgress the state's narrative of multi-ethnic and Chinese national unity. Like other minority nationalities in the PRC who must keep silent about ideologically unacceptable interpretations of their past, Qinghai Hui cannot voice a collective consciousness of the Ma era other than negatively, due to Ma's fierce anti-Communism, the real existence then armed defence of his regime, and memories of destructive social, economic and religious policies that followed Liberation (Chen 1991: vol. 1, 46-50; Chen 1996: 149-166; Goodman 2004b: 387; Cooke 2008: 408).

29 Information from informal conversations with site management staff, November 2011.

Figure 2.3 Ma Bufang's bedroom in the west wing of the inner courtyard



Photograph by Susette Cooke

Contradictions of the rupture of 1949 nevertheless haunt the Residence. Its very solidity and design suggest Ma anticipated the long-term continuation of his regional position. The rich vernacular traditions expressed in its architecture and interiors suggest connection to a strong social basis. At the least, it is evidence of a place and a way of life locally impressive in its time.

By way of explanation at the site, his regime's abrupt demise is elided with the state's master narrative of the Chinese nation via its fate at Liberation, but the visual wealth of the exhibits evokes other perspectives on what was happening on this borderland. At the restored *Gong'guan* the Hui have got some of their history back by the now public visibility of Ma Bufang's imposing stronghold. On the street, however, communicated references to Ma remain muted and evasive among local Hui residents, who sometimes allude to his social welfare projects and religious principles,[30] but generally choose to protect a relatively favourable present by circumventing a contentious past. Some speak of him as 'a sincere religious man' or simply 'a Guomindang official': A common response is 'we don't talk about that time'.[31] Memories around the Ma Residence are therefore both stirred and repressed. While not in their hands, the restoration affords the Hui a kind of recovery from negative critique and the destructive aftermath of the end of the Ma regime. In a time of local survival and revival for their ethnic group, their collective memories centred on the site may be more about success than trauma, with its respectful showcasing of their culture and Ma's importance, and state recognition of his residence as protected heritage. The most potent Hui story manifests daily outside the walls of the *Gong'guan*, in the flourishing cultural, religious, economic and social life of the Hui community.

Heritage and memory around the site potentially belong to Qinghai's other minority nationalities, too – Tibetans, Mongols, Tu and Salar – who as subjects of the Ma regime were also affected by its rise and fall.[32] Although they have been accorded cultural representation at the Qinghai Folk Customs Museum housed in the former women's quarters, their own sub-narratives have no active voice at the present-day site. The persistently unintegrated frontier peoples – Tibetans and Mongols – have their place as 'ethnic minority guests' submitting to the Centre in Ma's specially-modified reception room opposite the Jade Hall, safely inscribed into Chinese history, without reference to violent encounters with the Ma clan's mostly Sino-Muslim armed forces

30 Such expressions echo works by reform-era Hui scholars, who expand on these aspects but give only the barest details of the end of regime at Liberation. See, for example, La et al. 2009: 91-104.

31 Reluctance to talk about past Hui experiences has characterized my conversations with Hui citizens since I first visited Qinghai in the early 1990s. This is the case for events occurring before and after the founding of the PRC in which they feel negatively implicated, such as the 19th-century Muslim uprisings and the Ma regime, or damaged by state policies, such as the democratic religious reforms of 1958 and the Cultural Revolution.

32 All these nationalities were granted areas of titular regional autonomy in Qinghai under the PRC: only the area around Xining, approximately 2 per cent of the provincial area, does not have ethnic autonomy status.

(Hunsberger 1978: 79-86; Horlemann 2015). Ethnic Han people, who have lived continuously in the Xining districts for seven centuries and developed a distinctive localized culture, are not represented at the Museum,[33] which in all other respects mirrors state narrative and ethnic policy in the province, complete with text expounding Qinghai's harmonious ethnic relations through history. Long-term Han residents I have spoken to in Xining reflexively call Ma Bufang a *tu huangdi* (local despot), who provides local renown but who, for them, was properly overthrown by the new Chinese state.[34]

As for the central subject of the 'story of a lifetime', the site's management has had to negotiate the rehabilitation of Ma Bufang as a powerful individual figure from a locally significant non-Han ethnicity, who was embedded in the Republican administration and so the Chinese state, but at the same time was a foe of the CCP and, in Marxist terms, a class enemy of people of all nationalities. These elements, including his links via the Nationalists with their American allies, are not absent but are to some extent moderated by sparse (or no) explanation, and the observable domesticity and religiosity of the *Gong'guan* as a family home. There are even hints of cross-straits reconciliation with the Ma family in a photo of Ma Jiyuan, his wife and other Nationalist officials in Taiwan,[35] visited by the popularizer of Qinghai folk music and old acquaintance of the Ma family, Wang Luobin. By letting the exhibits speak for themselves, nationalist discourse is represented and Hui sensitivities are not irked. As mentioned earlier, stories of Ma Bufang's more violent relations with the Communists and some of Qinghai's peoples are told at the monumental West Route Army Memorial Hall, a Red Tourism enclave in Xining's south.

Useable history: Concluding remarks

Unravelling the 'story of a lifetime' is not occurring only at the Ma Residence in its role as a heritage and tourism site. As significant historical figures

33 The Han are listed among Qinghai's nationalities (*minzu*) in the general introductory text at the Museum, but presumably cannot be represented among cultures of minority nationalities (*shaoshu minzu*) because they are members of China's 90 per cent Han majority. The PRC's ethnic classification system has yet to escape from the majority-minority binary.

34 Informal conversations during visits to Xining, 1995-2013. Some have read works by Han authors on the Ma clan, who spare no details alleging Ma Bufang's despotic record (see, for example, Chen 1986: 280-288).

35 See also reference to contacts among Ma family members in Taiwan and the Mainland, under the PRC government's early reform-era reconciliation policy (Yang 1986: 256-257).

are extracted from oblivion or one-dimensional evaluation in orthodox state historiography, Ma Bufang has been appearing in popular revisionist history, mostly as historical fiction (Gu 2012; Ma 2012). A certain melancholic romanticism attaches to his son Ma Jiyuan, whose attributed modernist and Sino-cultural attitudes evoked other potential futures (Yang 1986: 233-236; Mi 1995: 700; Ma and Fan 2008: 190-195). Some of these more imaginative visions contrast with orthodox evaluations of Ma as primarily a local despot or semi-feudal warlord,[36] or instigator of lurid violence towards Communist prisoners.[37] Serious local history is now being produced in Qinghai by academics and independent writers, so we may expect to see more on Ma Bufang and his regime's place in regional and national history. Contemporary Hui scholars in Qinghai emphasize his social welfare programmes and contributions to the Anti-Japanese War and national unification, but avoid political critique.[38] Radical re-assessment of his regime and its place in modern China still seems a long way off.

Tourism is political, especially in the PRC, as officials running the Ma Residence as an open tourist site well understand. State and sub-state storytelling at the *Gong'guan* navigate tensions between official claims and vernacular memories by a prismatic appropriation of its past, so that reflective visitors may walk away with a sense of nested stories, even within a Han-centric nationalist framework. This view, too, falls within the management's understanding of their site's political, cultural and commercial agendas. The overwhelming majority of its visitors are Han; Hui seldom go there, other Qinghai ethnic minorities scarcely at all.[39] Hui community response to the Ma Residence in a sense happens off-site, in the resurgence and dedication to their own culture, values and social life in Xining's East City District neighbourhoods. Its prominence as a 4A-level national tourist site makes the Hui presence in the Northwest visible and powerful in a former era which, while not yet allowing for an alternative Hui-centric telling, still offers a form of recovery of their past. Local social actors as well as the state can, for their own purposes, find a 'useable past' at the *Ma Gong'guan*.

36 La et al. cites ten major works on Ma Bufang and the Ma clan published between 1986 and 2006, including Chen 1986 and Yang 1986 cited in this chapter (La et al. 2009: 259). They contain valuable historical research without contravening the state's ideological conventions regarding the Ma regime.

37 See http://tags.news.sina.com.cn/Ma Bufang for examples.

38 See officially sponsored publications La et al. 2009; La and Ma 2009; La and Ma 2014.

39 The ethnic composition of visitors was clearly observable on all my visits to the site, and also confirmed in conversations with management staff.

Officials responsible for the restored Ma Residence have told stories in their borderland by using their resources skilfully, responsive to state mandates and to the social landscape that literally surrounds them. At this macro-level their choices resonate at heritage sites in other ethnic minority areas of China, but conditions vary significantly among them, and within them. In Qinghai, ethno-political contestation weighs heavily in the exercise of state policy, including in the life of the Ma Residence as seriously as local conditions demand.

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3 From a Symbol of Imperialistic Penetration to a Site of Cultural Heritage

The 'Italian-Style Exotic District' in Tianjin

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Abstract
The chapter focuses on the former Italian concession in Tianjin, which during the Mao Zedong era was interpreted as a humiliating example of imperialism on China but has now become a symbol of the city's cosmopolitan heritage. The 'Italian-style exotic district', its new name, is branded as reflecting authentic Italian architecture despite the fact that it contains reconstructed new buildings. The area has been re-evaluated as a result of ideological changes and economic reforms. The colonial legacy is now a valuable asset for Tianjin in its city branding, and the stories told are no longer that of imperialism and humiliation but of modernity, cosmopolitanism, and friendship with Italy and other foreign countries.

Keywords: Italian concession, Tianjin, colonial legacy, city branding

In recent years, in response to the changing political, cultural, and economic situation in China, and in line with a shift in heritage policies, the Tianjin municipal government has come to view the former concessions within the city, along with their foreign-style architecture, as valuable cultural and architectural heritage. The buildings and gardens in the former concessions, once viewed as a symbol of imperialistic incursion into China, are today looked upon as architectural heritage, tourist attractions, and economic opportunities, and have received official patronage and heritage status (similar new interpretations have been made with respect to ethnic heritage

and heritage associated with the Republican period as discussed by Cooke in this volume). The fact that Tianjin was once forced open to foreign powers and became a treaty port has been turned into a celebratory point by local officials and is now seen as a strong indication of the city's long-standing struggle for modernization and internationalization. Tianjin, which has also been in economic eclipse, overshadowed by cities such as Shenzhen, Guangdong, Shanghai, and Chongqing during the reform era, is now eager to uncover a way to 'sell' itself. The local authorities therefore claim that the foreign-style architecture has added more international flavour and status, architectural diversity, as well as cultural variation to Tianjin.

This chapter looks specifically at the former Italian concession in Tianjin, which has received special official attention and extensive architectural reconstruction. It explores its transformation into a cultural symbol of Tianjin and examines the reasons behind the official reconfiguration of Tianjin's former colonial site into a rediscovered and reinvented cultural heritage site of the city. Around 2000, the Tianjin municipal government, together with the government of the Hebei District where the former Italian concession was located, decided to launch a massive urban project to reconstruct and renovate the concession. Renamed 'Italian-Style Exotic District' or 'Italian-Style Town', as inscribed in English on a tablet displayed at the entrance, it is now showcased as an emblem of the city's historical openness. Indicative of not only the city's cultural diversity but also of its unique identity, the new flamboyant name for the former concession intentionally eradicates the area's association with its colonial past, along with the historical humiliation and imperialist domination. The use of the term *fengqing* (exotic) in the renovated Italian section's Chinese name *Yishi fengqingqu* (Italian-Style Exotic District) is also intriguing in that it evokes a sense of the exotic and the novel. In a way, it appears to voluntarily impose Edward Said's orientalism to the newly reconstructed site, only this time it is the foreign that appears fantastic and mysterious in the middle of the Chinese scene (Said 1978: 94). The Italian section is thus 'colourful and exotic'. As Shirley Ann Smith puts it, 'The Sino-Italian collaboration will re-create the memory or the reflection of Italian Tianjin in an enhanced contemporary version, perhaps more tasteful than Caesar's Palace or The Venetian Resort in Las Vegas. The 'real' new Italian concession will be doubtless better than the old. Tourists (Chinese and Europeans) will be able to fulfil their own projected images in the new reality' (Smith 2012: 156).

A careful study of the renewed importance and reinvented status of the former colonial concessions in Tianjin can further illustrate the fluctuating political and cultural ethos in the post-Mao state. Focusing on the fluid

Figure 3.1 Advertisement promoting the former Italian concession as exotic

Photograph by Hong Zhang

official views towards the former concessions and on the revitalized cultural and economic importance attached to foreign architecture within the former concessions in Tianjin, the chapter examines the local authorities' new definition of cultural assets and heritage and its new-found interest in what were once reckoned as imperialistic relics and products.

Historical background

The modern city of Tianjin has evolved with multilayers of culture and economy embedded in its diverse landscape. Its unique features are rooted in its geographical location, internal stimuli, and external pressure, which made possible its eventual political and economic ascendance in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Located about 120 kilometres southeast of the national capital, the city of Tianjin, historically known as the Gateway (*men hu*) to Beijing, is one of four centrally administered province-level municipalities in China and the second largest city in north China today. The city has a long history. It has borne different names, from

Zhigu Village to Haijin Town, before assuming its current name, which means 'heavenly ford'. During the early Ming dynasty, Zhu Di, Prince of Yan, forded the rivers there to embark upon an epic power struggle with his nephew, the then Ming emperor, for the imperial throne. Having won the war, Zhu Di, the new Yongle Emperor, designated the name 'Tianjin' to the city, indicating a place where the Son of Heaven had made the crossing. The Yongle Emperor proceeded to set up several guard stations in Tianjin, adding a military population of 16,800 to the city. Therefore, Tianjin was often referred to as Tianjin Garrison (*Wei*) (Bun 2001: 14-15).

Tianjin's physical features played an important role in the development of the city. Its proximity to the political centre of Beijing, its complex river system, and its status as a port city all featured prominently in its eventual rise to pre-eminence. Being at the northern end of the Grand Canal, the city had for centuries functioned as an important conduit for the transhipment of foodstuffs from south and central China up the canal to the capital of Beijing and to other places in north China. Situated about 35 miles from the head of the Gulf of Bohai, Tianjin provided the nearest sea outlet for ocean-going ships and was a leading port in northern China. With the exception of the Yellow River, the most important waterways of north China were centred in Tianjin. Nine rivers converged there to form the Hai River, the most famous river that runs through the city. The Hai River nourished the city and witnessed its growth. It meanders into the estuary of the sea. Tianjin was also the closest point where foreign ocean-going ships could approach the Qing capital of Beijing. The economically convenient location turned the city into a major commercial centre in north China that served Beijing and places beyond.

Despite its location as a hub of the water transport network and despite the active commercial activities the city had experienced, Tianjin only rose to political and economic prominence just over a hundred years ago, during the late nineteenth century. Its rise was closely related to the political turbulence and outside impetus that took place in China in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Treaty of Nanjing (1842), which concluded the Opium War between China and Great Britain, ushered in a new era for imperial China and forced open a number of Chinese coastal cities as treaty ports for foreign residence and enterprises, among other terms. The Convention of Peking of 1860, which concluded the Second Opium War fought between China and Anglo-French powers in 1856-1860, sealed the fate of Tianjin and turned it into a treaty port and opened it up to foreign consulates and entrepreneurs. Great Britain, France, and the United States were the first Western powers to obtain concessions in Tianjin. Following

China's humiliating defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, Germany and Japan extracted concessions from the city. The suppression of the anti-foreign, anti-Christian Boxer Movement by the International Expeditionary Force of eight countries in 1900 witnessed the establishment of Russian, Italian, Belgian, and Austro-Hungarian concessions in Tianjin. Thus, between 1860 and 1902, nine foreign powers established concessions in the city and transformed it into the largest treaty port in the north and the second largest in China. A relative latecomer to the treaty port system, Tianjin nevertheless turned out to be an ultimate treaty port (Rogaski 1999: 30).

Foreign concessions in Tianjin

The concessions were essentially leased foreign enclaves called 'renting zones' or *zujie* within Chinese cities, but they were not subject to Chinese jurisdiction and enjoyed special privileges. In other words, they functioned like foreign territories within a Chinese city, and the ultimate authority within a concession rested on its resident consul.

The arrival and the extended stay of a small yet significant group of foreigners added a crucial new dimension to the cultural, political, and economic landscape of Tianjin. Meanwhile, imperialist incursions in the aftermath of the First and Second Opium Wars and the devastating large-scale domestic rebellion known as the Taiping Movement forced the Qing government to respond to the severe challenges to the state. The ensuing Self-Strengthening Movement, also known as the Foreign Affairs Movement, represented the first serious official endeavour to learn from the West in order to deal more effectively with the threat the Western powers posed. A number of prominent pro-reform Qing officials were appointed as governor-generals of Zhili (now Hebei) Province centred in Tianjin. These officials carried out significant infrastructural reforms in the city and turned it into the focus of their modernization enterprises. For example, the city became the forerunner of modernization reforms with the appointment of the famous Qing official Li Hongzhang as governor-general of Zhili in 1870, a position that Li retained for the next 25 years. At the time of Li's appointment, the Self-Strengthening Movement in the form of adopting foreign military technology became acceptable to the rulers in Beijing, and Li turned Tianjin into the centre of his experiments in north China and launched a number of major projects, including the construction of the first and largest military factory in north China – the Tianjin Machine Factory – and the development of a variety of industrial

enterprises (Hershatter 1986: 29). Therefore, Tianjin of the late Qing dynasty was not merely a passive recipient of foreign penetration and treaty port systems, but figured prominently in China's modernization efforts and could proudly claim a number of 'firsts' in modern Chinese history: The first railway built by the Chinese – the track between Tianjin and Tangshan; the first modern postal service, as well as the first set of stamps – the dragon stamps; the first newspaper – *Dagong Bao*; and the first mint, etc. (Luo 2005: 29-40). Because of its status as a treaty port and its physical proximity to Beijing, Tianjin enjoyed great official attention and presence. In the context of foreign concessions and Chinese official initiatives, Tianjin assumed new political and economic significance and was transformed into a city spearheading the quest for modernization in north China.

The coexistence of foreign powers' presence and activities with internal modernization ventures, along with the interaction between the two, forged a new identity for Tianjin. The juxtaposition of Western and Chinese residents helped to create a unique city with both strong foreign flavours and indigenous cultural identity. The combined efforts moved Tianjin out of the shadow of Beijing and turned it into a pillar of modernity and into a city that was more modern in its facilities and infrastructure than the capital of Beijing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

As the first country to open a concession in Tianjin, Great Britain extracted the largest zone on the south bank of the Hai River. France and the United States soon followed the British lead and set up concessions on the same side of the river. After the conclusion of the Sino-Japanese War, Japan and Germany also established concessions in Tianjin, with the German concession next to the American one and the Japanese concession adjacent to the French one, creating a two-mile-long foreign settlement along the south bank of the river (Rogaski 1999: 34). The crushing of the Boxer Uprising in 1900 by the International Expeditionary Force of eight countries led to the landing of over 20,000 soldiers in Tianjin. In the aftermath of the suppression of the Boxer Uprising, foreign states were able to wield more power and influence by either expanding existing concessions or demanding new concessions in Tianjin. Between 1900 and 1902 an international commission, known as the Tianjin provisional government (*Dutong yamen*), was in control of the city. Under this foreign administration, the walls surrounding the older part of the city were demolished while various public works projects were completed ('Old Tientsin, New Tianjin' 2015). Russia, Italy, and Austria-Hungary, the countries that participated militarily in the suppression of the Boxer Uprising, were able to obtain

concessions on the north bank of the Hai River.[1] Belgium, although not physically part of the expedition, managed to gain a concession south of the Russian one. In 1902, the United States gave up its concession to Great Britain, but still maintained a military garrison there.[2] The juxtaposition of foreign-controlled concessions turned Tianjin into a so-called 'hyper-colony' (Rogaski 1999: 34).

The cluster of concessions adjacent to one another created a situation unique to Tianjin. The main avenue following the zigzag of the Hai River cut through several concessions, thus travelling down the avenue could be a surreal experience. The account by John Hersey, who was born in Tianjin and spent his early years there with his missionary parents, probably provides the most vivid description: 'What a weird city I grew up in. For three or four Chinese coppers, I could ride in a rickshaw from my home, in England, to Italy, Germany, Japan, or Belgium. I walked to France for violin lessons; I had to cross the river to get to Russia, and often did, because the Russians had a beautiful wooded park with a lake in it' (Western 1985: 344). An American soldier of the 15th Infantry Regiment stationed in Tianjin illustrates the distinctive amalgamation of foreign nationals in the concessions this way: 'In one block one may see an Englishman, a Frenchman, and an Italian soldier, a dozen Japanese soldiers, a Jewish drummer, an American expatriate, and a Russian [...] of the lower class and a Capuchin Monk' (Zhang and Liu 2013: 99). Foreign expatriates in Tianjin longed to create in the concessions a replica as close as possible to their home country. Hence, they often named the roads within their concession after the famous landmarks and personages of their own country. Accordingly, the name of a main street traversing different concessions would change from 'Rue de France' in the French concession to 'Victoria Road' upon entering the British concession, and then to 'Kaiser Wilhelmstrasse' in the German concession (Zhang and Liu 2013: 90). In 1890, the completed Commerce Building within the British concession was named Gordon Hall, after the British officer Charles 'Chinese' Gordon, who distinguished himself as the leading officer of the 'Ever Victorious Army' in the suppression of the Taiping Movement and who also laid out architectural plans for the British concession. In 1897, a newly built road within the British concession was named Gordon Road (Baike.baidu.com 2016).

1 When World War I ended, Germany and Austria-Hungary lost their concessions in Tianjin.

2 The American concession was small in the beginning. In 1880 it was placed under Chinese jurisdiction. Then in 1902 the British took it over and made it part of the British concession. However, the United States maintained a permanent garrison in Tianjin until Pearl Harbor.

England, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Austria-Hungary, Russia, the United States, and Japan all held concession territory in Tianjin at one time or another, and all except for the United States designed their sections based on their home country's architectural style. The proliferation of concessions changed the landscape of Tianjin, and the banks of the Hai River were dotted with a diversity of architectural styles of eight countries, referred to as 'a European architectural enclave' by a contemporary architectural historian (Lewis 2003: 84) or 'a Disneyland-like exhibition of world architecture and design' by another scholar (Rogaski 1999: 34). As historian Maurizio Marinelli puts it, 'Each concession developed its residential area for the expatriates of the colonial power (and in some cases for wealthy Chinese citizens), using building styles that were reflecting, reproducing and imposing the stylistic traditions of each individual country' (Marinelli 2007: 137). Foreign powers also established modern facilities within their concessions, complete with drainage, lighting, schools, hospitals, a police force, prisons, and barracks (Lieberthal 1980: 3; Lewis 2003: 84). With trade as their top priority, foreign entrepreneurs transformed rural districts on both banks of the Hai River into a flourishing economic centre. Meanwhile, the rise of the new economic hub also led to the corresponding economic decline of the old commercial centre in the old city located south of the foreign concessions.

In the aftermath of the Boxer Uprising, foreign powers gained the right to set up barracks in the concessions in accordance with the Boxer Protocol and turned Tianjin into a city with the largest number of foreign soldiers in China. With the exception of Austria-Hungary, eight foreign powers established headquarters in Tianjin for their troops in China (Zhang and Liu 2013: 99). Consequently, foreign soldiers of different nationalities could often be seen in Tianjin, a further testament to the deep penetration of foreign powers into China. As scholar John Western claims, 'Garrisons and drill groups have ever been a fundamental facet of the morphology of the colonial city. They stand for its ultimate explanation and the ultimate sanction of the colonial system' (Western 1985: 342). Even though both Chinese and foreigners could own or lease property and reside inside the concessions, foreign military barracks served as a powerful symbol of imperialist infiltration into China and as an ever-present reminder of the political and military impotence of the Qing government.

The concession area of eight countries was large in size, far surpassing that of the old city of Tianjin. Members of the Chinese new commercial middle class, attracted by the relative security, quietness, and modern facilities

in the concessions, also made their homes there. In the wake of the 1911 Revolution which ended the Qing dynasty, many former Qing officials and members of the imperial family chose to live in Tianjin and built villas in the concession area. During the chaotic warlord period, a number of resigned or retired political or military leaders also established residence within the concessions. The newly-built villas no longer followed exclusively the foreign styles, but adopted a combination of Western and Chinese designs, leading to the appearance of a new hybrid style of architecture, which added further to the architectural diversity in Tianjin. Over 800 buildings of foreign styles, known as *xiao yang lou* (small foreign villas), have survived to this day, providing a unique outlook over the most prosperous region of the city (Luo 2005: 168).

The Italian concession in Tianjin (1901-1947) was the only Italian representation of colonialism, not only in China, but also in Asia. In 1901, after signing the leasing contract with the Chinese government, Italy acquired 771 *mu* (or 447,647 square metres) situated between the Russian and Austro-Hungarian concessions, making the Italian concession one of the smallest among the concessions in Tianjin. The only concession that was even smaller was the Belgian concession, with 747.5 *mu* of land (Tianjin Haihe Yishifengqingqu Guanweihui n.d.: 19). As a late addition to the group of concessions in Tianjin, the Italian concession had a rather bumpy start since the area contained a lot of low-level wetland, a cemetery, and a large number of lower-class Chinese, mainly salt labourers. The drainage and the levelling of the wetland and the removal of the cemetery and the Chinese population within the area required a substantial amount of financial resources and human effort. The Italian Consul General, Vincenzo Fileti, a lieutenant who participated in the Italian expedition against the Boxers and who served as Consul General of the Italian concession from 1909 to 1919, played a key role in securing funds and transforming the Italian concession into a 'success' story. The building construction within the concession followed a strict building code by exclusively producing Italian-style buildings while eliminating all indications of anything Chinese (Marinelli 2007: 134). Also, Fileti was known to insist that the blueprints for buildings within the concession be adopted once only, thus ensuring that the buildings were of varied styles (Shang 2008: 135). After about 20 years of effort, the concession was dotted with a diversity of Italian architecture which has remained the basis of the reconstructed 'Italian-Style Exotic District' today, although some later buildings also reflected the architectural styles of other European countries. Furthermore, after many well-known and wealthy Chinese

moved into the Italian section, some villas with both Italian and Chinese styles started to emerge.[3]

The Italian concession was not really a profit-making enterprise, thus the financial resources derived from properties within the concession was key to its self-sustaining operation. One scholar explains the inconsequential economic value of the Italian concession this way: 'The Italian China trade was negligible at the time. Shortly after the acquisition of the Tianjin concession in 1901, it was all but forgotten by the administration in Rome. In time, it became a "far-away sentinel of the Italian civilization", as Mussolini phrased it pathetically later, and lost all but symbolic purpose of Italian policy makers' (Urosevic 2013: 1070). Nevertheless, it was this small and seemingly insignificant former Italian concession that has gained special official recognition and has been transformed into one of Tianjin's most important cultural and historical symbols today.

The fate of former concessions in Tianjin

The German, Austro-Hungarian, and Russian concessions came to an end soon after the end of World War I, while the Belgium government returned its concession to the Chinese government in 1931 since it was not making a profit and thus served little economic purpose. The rest of the concessions were returned to China when or soon after World War II ended. When the CCP came to power in 1949, it proceeded to obliterate new China's link with its colonial/imperialist past. From its formation in 1921, the CCP had espoused the ideology of anti-imperialism, which targeted Japan during China's war with Japan and the United States during the Civil War. National Communists at heart, Mao Zedong and his followers were acutely conscious of China's humiliations of the past century. With the unfolding of the Communist victory in China, the CCP leaders, especially Mao Zedong, laid out general principles regarding the new government's foreign policy. Eager to restore national confidence and to assert China's independence, the Communist leadership intended to make clear its difference from the previous supine Manchu and Nationalist regimes and to end the privileges enjoyed by the foreign powers in China. The issues of equality and mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty functioned as the fundamental principles in defining new China's relationship with the rest of the world (Zhang 2002: 151). Domestically, besides launching anti-imperialist rhetoric

3 For a more detailed description of the construction process, see Marinelli 2011: 80-109.

and slogans, in Tianjin as well as elsewhere in treaty ports, a most tangible way of erasing the city's association with its humiliating past was through name changing. Thus, Rue de France in the French concession was changed to Liberation Road and Victoria Road and Victoria Park in the former British concession assumed the new names of North Liberation Road and North Liberation Park, respectively.

On the other hand, ideology, however powerful, can still be subject to practicality. It would make little sense to tear down the well-constructed buildings, which soon functioned as the offices of various local government agencies and provided shelter for Chinese in need. When John Hersey visited his birthplace in the 1980s, he found the house he grew up in was occupied by seven households. Nevertheless, during the early years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) when anti-imperialist/bourgeois rhetoric and actions reached its peak, architecture with more glaring foreign symbols in the former concessions became primary targets of young Red Guards. For example, some Red Guards climbed to the top of St Joseph Cathedral (known in Chinese as Xikai Church) in the former French concession, the largest Roman Catholic Church in Tianjin, established in 1916, in an attempt to destroy the bronze crosses on top of the three prominent-looking domes. In addition, in their ensuing attack on the cathedral, Red Guards proceeded to destroy the cathedral's domes. The church sustained more damage as a result of the Tangshan earthquake of 1976. Repairs and renovation to the cathedral began in 1979, a few years after the Cultural Revolution came to an end. The church was officially opened to the public in 1980 and has resumed regular religious activities since then. In 1991, this large Catholic Church was added to both the Tianjin cultural relics protection list and the historical-style architecture special protection sites list ('Xikai Church' 2016).

Kiessling Restaurant, the first Western restaurant in Tianjin, had been able to keep its original name even after it became a state-owned restaurant in the 1950s because of the decades-long fame it had enjoyed. However, this prominent Western-sounding name, apparently associated with Western/imperialist infiltration into Tianjin in the eyes of revolutionaries, was immediately singled out during the violent years of the Cultural Revolution and was renamed Workers-Peasants-Soldiers Cafeteria. It was not until some long-standing employees of the restaurant successfully petitioned Premier Zhou Enlai in the politically more moderate years of the early 1970s that the crude name was changed back to its original one. In a similar vein, the Five Great Avenues (*wudadao*), occupying the most important part of the former British concession area, also suffered much damage during

the Cultural Revolution when Red Guards raided one residential house after another searching for anything bourgeois. Having raided a residential building, they would place a red flag on its rooftop indicating its occupation by revolutionaries. The residents would then be driven out (Feng 1999: 11).

In the 1980s, when the potent authoritarianism of the Maoist era started to recede and China was opening up to Western influence, patriotic education remained an important political theme. Consequently, Tianjin local theatres still put on plays that reveal strong anti-imperialist sentiments. One such play was called 'Burning Down the Wanghailou Church'. The play centres on the anti-missionary riots and the burning of the Wanghailou Church, a Catholic church run by the French missionaries in the former French concession, by the people of Tianjin, whose outbursts of anger and action were ignited by the alleged mistreatment of Chinese orphans by French missionaries and by the shooting of a Chinese official clerk by the French consul in 1870 (Schoppa 2011: 63-64).

Under the continuing influence of the revolutionary rhetoric, Chinese writings published in the 1980s and 1990s in relation to the former concessions in Tianjin were often quick to point out the debilitating effects of the former concessions on Tianjin, focusing on topics such as their infringement of Chinese sovereignty, their privileged status under extraterritoriality, their control of the Chinese economy, and their sinful environs for smuggling, opium dens, and brothels (Wan 2013). As one scholar from Tianjin typically argues, the former concessions were a 'glaring symbol of the semi-colonial status of Tianjin and a manifestation of foreign imperialists' attempt to divide China'. Thus, 'the humiliation and oppression that modern Tianjin once experienced have been deeply implanted in the memory of the people of Tianjin and will never be forgotten'. He further claims in a sensational tone that the former foreign concessions had not only served as the breeding ground for foreign imperialists' running dogs and slaves but also acted as a hiding place for displaced Qing nobles, warlords, and bureaucrats in their conspiracy to divide and control China (Yang 1994: 39-40). Along these lines, many writings published in the immediate years following the Cultural Revolution continued to describe the concessions in a negative light.

Shifting perceptions and the reconstructed former Italian concession

During the last few decades, China has transformed itself from an isolated nation with a rigid command economy into a free market economy closely

integrated with the global economy. China's economic reform and increasing openness in the decades following the end of the Cultural Revolution and the Mao era have brought about far-reaching political, cultural, and social changes in the country. Post-Mao China largely represents a repudiation of the value system, political stance, and cultural symbols exemplified during the peak years of Maoist China. The pace of change has quickened significantly in the aftermath of China's then paramount leader Deng Xiaoping's southern tour in 1992, which marked a watershed not only in China's market reform but also in its cultural transformation (Zhang 2013: 168).

The end of the Mao era, along with the demise of Marxist ideology, has compelled the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to seek new moral ground for political legitimization. As Richard Madsen claims, the CCP no longer even pretends to uphold communism, but seeks to gain legitimacy through new channels such as reviving the Confucian notion of social harmony and stability, and projecting itself as the guardian of China's intangible and tangible cultural heritage (Madsen 2014: 58). Similarly, in the new ideological and cultural contexts, virulent anti-imperialist rhetoric of the revolutionary era has vanished, while relics from China's semi-colonial past, manifested vividly through the existing foreign architecture in the former foreign concessions in port cities, have assumed new importance: in recent decades, many have been renovated to represent China's diverse cultural heritage. Consequently, reconciling the CCP's relatively recent anti-imperialist outcry with its contemporary celebration of the physical display of former imperialistic penetration into China often presents a contested, paradoxical, and ambiguous area. As Madsen posits, 'it is no simple task then to fashion a new vision of the Chinese nation by drawing upon its cultural heritage. The heritage generates many contradictory meanings that can as easily intensify as overcome the built-in political and economic contradictions of a hybrid "socialist market economy"' (Madsen 2014: 69).

In his book on museum studies, Kirk Denton underscores the idea that history is subject to reinterpretation and reinvention by investigating how the 'representations of the past are changing in the new political and economic climates of postsocialist, neoliberal China' (Denton 2014: 9). To seek political hegemony, the CCP continues to render itself in a way that marks its rise to power and continuation in power inevitable (Denton 2014: 9). Similar to the shifting representation in museums and memorial sites, changing official perceptions on the former colonial concessions in China's treaty ports also function as a 'particularly visible and public space through which to discuss issues of memory, politicized constructions of the past,

globalization'(Denton 2014: 9) and a reconstruction of national and local identities.

However, in the craze to modernize China in the era of economic reform, the Chinese government has also been keen to fill cities with skyscrapers and demolish old architecture deemed to diminish the cities' modern appearances. In the process, a number of old buildings with intrinsic historical value have either been obliterated or faced the threat of disappearance (compare Cui's discussion on developments in Datong and Grazer Bideau and Yan on Beijing in this volume). Furthermore, the central government has increasingly delegated financial responsibility and designation of cultural sites to local authorities. Therefore, it is often at the latter's discretion to make critical decisions regarding whether historical sites deserve conservation, preservation, renovation, and promotion, or demolition. In the case of the city of Tianjin, the local officials have authorized the destruction of a number of age-old neighbourhoods and districts of historical value, such as the old urban district known as Southern City or *Nanshi*. These actions on the part of the local government have been met with serious concerns and even verbal protests from people conscious about the conservation of historical sites. For example, the famous writer Feng Jicai, a native of Tianjin, has been a strong advocate for preserving traditional culture and conserving old districts of Tianjin and has long been vocal in protesting against the demolition of historical architecture and settlements of long tradition, in an effort to protect and rescue Tianjin's historical houses (Zhang 2001: 56). Feng claims that a good number of these old buildings were not merely old houses, but were 'vehicles for traditional culture. If you regard a city as having a spirit, you will respect it, safeguard it, and cherish it. If you regard it as only matter, you will use it excessively, transform it at will, and damage it without regret' (Wheeler 2004).[4]

Meanwhile, within the context of globalization, city branding, commercialization, and tourism promotion, the Tianjin municipal government promotes especially the city's former concessions with their foreign-looking architecture as they not only add exotic colour, distinctness, and diversity to the city, but also boost tourism and commercial ventures. As one scholar states, globalizing forces 'inherent in the shift from production to consumption are influencing changes in the built environment and in their local cultures. This is most acute in places of heritage value where the local culture with its built heritage is being transformed into a product for tourist consumption.' Consequently, 'traditional historic places are undergoing a

4 For an in-depth discussion of Feng's efforts to preserve historical buildings, see Hua 2001.

redefinition and reinterpretation of their cultural heritage in order to be competitive and attractive' (Nasser 2003: 467). In this new milieu, a conflict exists 'between preserving the past for its intrinsic value and the need for development in response to changing societal values' (Nasser 2003: 467). The local government has singled out the former concession sites, especially the relatively well-kept Italian concession and the British concession areas, for special investment and renovation. The two famous historical sites among others in Tianjin, known as the Italian-Style Exotic District (*Yishifengqingqu*) located largely in the former Italian concession and the Five Great Avenues (*Wudadao*) situated in the former British concession are now celebrated cultural/historical tourist attractions in Tianjin.

In the late 1980s, eager to attract business ventures and tourism to Tianjin and to accentuate Tianjin's cultural and historical uniqueness, the then mayor of Tianjin and head of the Hebei District, which houses the former Italian concession, became immensely interested in transforming the former Italian concession into a new cultural and historical icon of Tianjin. However, lack of financial resources for the potentially huge project presented a major challenge. The mayor and the district head thus made more than ten trips to countries in Europe and to Italy, in particular, hoping to procure their investment for the project, but to little avail. In 2003 Tianjin had a new mayor, Dai Xianglong. An influential official with strong connections to China's national banks, Dai was able to obtain a huge loan for Tianjin's various urban construction projects. A lion's share of this loan was invested in the restoration and refurbishment of the Italian town in the Hebei District, which acquired primary and special recognition among the restoration projects in Tianjin. The former concession gained special consideration especially because of its central location along the Hai River, the large number of residential homes with gardens that once housed famous historical figures such as Liang Qichao (statesman and scholar) and Cao Yu (playwright), and its diverse architectural styles with distinct Italian flavours.

The renovation project involved an enormous amount of work. The original Italian concession had more than 300 historical buildings. During the reconstruction process, only about 130 buildings survived as a good number of them, deemed too small or insignificant or in poor shape, were dismantled. Moreover, during the Cultural Revolution, many residents with what were regarded as dubious political backgrounds were driven out of their spacious houses, which had been immediately occupied by multiple families. Over the years and especially as a result of the 1976 earthquake, many buildings and facilities in the area suffered damage and local people

managed to build their own temporary housing there, which led to the construction of various types of irregular-looking shelters. For many households, temporary shelters turned into permanent ones. Thus, when the renovation project began in earnest in 2003, the former Italian concession appeared chaotic and disorderly. The renovation project started with the removal and relocation of numerous families and factories/shops that had made their way in the area. The relocation cost in 2003 alone amounted to 600 million yuan (Wang Jing: 2005). The case of Tianjin, similar to the case of Datong discussed by Cui in this volume, reveals the important role one powerful individual official can have in the heritagization and branding process in contemporary China.

The renovation process was complex and expensive. For example, the famous former two-storey residence of Liang Qichao containing his elegant Yinbing Room were among the highlights of the former Italian concession. Designed by an Italian architect in the early twentieth century, Liang lived and worked there for fifteen years. Due to the fame that Liang and his Yinbing Room enjoyed, Liang's residence was chosen to be the first example of Italian-style architecture to be restored by the Tianjin municipal government in 2001, even before the general renovation of the Italian section began. At the time, not only was the residence in terrible shape, but it was also occupied by more than ten households. The local government spent around 20 million yuan on the relocation of the residents inside and the reconstruction job. The renovated Residence and Yinbing Room were open to the public in 2002 and attracted many visitors (Wang 2005; Tian 2010). Meanwhile, they also received the status of 'Historical and Stylistic Architecture of Tianjin'.

Hai He Construction and Development Investment Company and FLIGHT (fulaite) Construction Company in Tianjin, as well as the Italian SIRENA Consulting Company were major players in the restoration project. SIRENA was selected mainly because it had accumulated experience in restoring historical sites in Naples, Italy (Wang 2005). However, the rebuilding of the Italian section also met with criticism as it appeared to cater mainly to business or commercial interests. Also, for several years while the Italian section was under construction/reconstruction, the area was often referred to as a ghost town since local residents were relocated and no business enterprises were in operation. At night, the entire area was in total darkness. Nie Lansheng, a professor at the College of Architecture at Tianjin University, maintains critically that, 'it seems the major goal is not to protect the original buildings, but to adapt to tourist interests'. An American businessman working in Tianjin at the time also commented that 'to change the original pattern on a massive scale and to destroy a large

number of buildings have led to the disappearance of the city's richness and growth' (Zhong 2009: 1-7).

The newly rebuilt Italian section centres on Marco Polo Plaza and Dante Square. Originally, in the middle of Marco Polo Plaza stood a stone column, on top of which was a bronze statue of the Goddess of Peace holding a sword. The statue was removed after the Communist takeover. During the Cultural Revolution, the stone column was pasted with revolutionary slogans. In the end even the stone column disappeared. Upon receipt of the first tranche of loans, the Committee of the Italian Exotic District decided to first restore the statue, perceived to be the most important symbol of the plaza, by using old photos as a reference for its reconstruction. The committee tried to recreate an exact replica of the stone column and the statue standing on top of it. The only change made was that the goddess would hold an olive branch instead of a sword. Li Xinjing, who worked for the Hai He Company at the time, explains that 'back then when the company started working on the statue, it did not think it was acceptable for the people of Tianjin to have a foreign statue holding a sword because they were still sensitive to the past insults. However, it would be fine today as we Chinese are now more self-confident' (Zhong 2009: 5).

Even though the origin of the former Italian concession represents part of a humiliating modern history for Tianjin, in particular, and China at large, it assumed a new identity and significance in post-Mao China when modernity, globalization, and commercialization became some of the key elements of Chinese society. Consequently, the Tianjin municipal government was eager to find innovative ways to move Tianjin in the new direction and elevate the city's national and international prestige and reputation. Deliberating more in terms of city branding and the benefits associated with heritage commodification and economic promises, the local government then found in the former Italian concession an excellent way to promote tourism, commercial ventures, and Tianjin's status as an internationally oriented city. Consequently, the concession has been singled out for extensive destruction, renovation, and reconstruction, mainly because the former Italian concession was well planned originally and the buildings within the concession were relatively well preserved and of diverse designs, thus giving the appearance of a seemingly miniature or small Italy within Tianjin.

Upon gaining control over Tianjin in January 1949 when the People's Liberation Army defeated Nationalist troops in a famous military campaign, CCP officials proceeded to erase the city's symbols of imperialism. To relinquish the colonial past of the Italian area and as a way to demonstrate the new government's firm takeover of imperialistic powers' former possession of Chinese territories, the original Italian names for buildings and streets were

Figure 3.2 Marco Polo Plaza

Photograph by Hong Zhang

all changed to Chinese ones. Consequently, Marco Polo Road took on the new name Minzu or National Road and Dante Avenue assumed the name of Ziyou or Liberty Avenue. In post-Mao China, the local authorities intended once more to dissociate the area from its colonial past, albeit for a completely different reason. Therefore, the new name 'Italian-Style Exotic District' or 'Italian-Style Town' as the Chinese translation states, disguises the fact that the rebuilt site derives from a former concession and was controlled and run by the Italians for half a century. Also, some of the old names, such as Marco Polo Plaza and Dante Square, have been restored to give the rebuilt Italian section an aura of authenticity. The reconstruction of the Italian section began in 2002 and was largely completed in 2005. It was then opened to the public. In 2011, it was officially designated as a four-star tourist attraction, and in 2013 the Tianjin municipal government named it a historical and cultural heritage site.

In an effort to highlight the cultural importance of the Italian section and to encourage tourism and commercial investment/ventures, the local authorities carried out intensive and extensive promotional initiatives. For example, before and after the Italian section was opened to the public, in different districts in Tianjin small triangular flags with the words

'Italian-Style Exotic District' were tied to electric poles all over the major city streets for the purpose of advertisement.

Catering to the new political, commercial, and cultural atmospheres and responding to the Tianjin municipal government's call for promoting the international image of the city, and to the vested interests of the Hebei District, a number of local writers were called upon by the Committee of the Italian Exotic District to write on a variety of topics related to the Italian section in order to broaden the site's appeal. In the promotional pamphlets and books on the area, such as *The Exotic Style of the Italian Street* and *A Glance Back at One Hundred Years and the Return of the Italian Style*, writers from Tianjin unanimously praise the reconstruction and renovations of the former Italian concession. In the Preface of one such book, writer Fang Xuan states that due to the far-sighted leadership of the Tianjin government, related agencies have focused on the protection and preservation of historical architecture in the city. As tourism gains extraordinary importance today, historical buildings and sites are now a significant part of tourist resources. Nowadays, leaders with vision focus on turning existing historical buildings into a precious treasure. He further claims that 'to build the Italian Exotic Area on the basis of the former Italian Concession site is a move that benefits the country and benefits the people' (Fang 2001: 2). Meanwhile, to elevate the status of Marco Polo Plaza, one local writer, Yang Zhijiu, who contributed a short piece entitled 'Bravo to Rebuild Marco Polo Plaza' to the said book, puts it this way: 'The reconstruction of Marco Polo Plaza will enhance the friendship between the Chinese and Italian people, stimulate not only the friendly communication between the two peoples, but also the economic and cultural exchanges between China and Italy and between China and other countries in the world' (Yang 2001: 1-3). Another well-known scholar, Luo Shuwei, who specializes in the history of Tianjin, glorifies the achievements and contributions of Vincenzo Fileti, Consul General of the Italian section between 1909 and 1919, in an article entitled 'Fileti and the Opening up of the Italian Concession in Tianjin' (Luo 2001: 4-8).

The officially authorized publication, *A Glance Back at One Hundred Years and the Return of the Italian Style*, also contains much sensational language. For example, the book claims proudly that the reconstructed Italian section has breathed new life into the hundred-year-old architecture and that its original organizers and builders have bequeathed a fond memory of history to the people of Tianjin (Tianjin Haihe Yishifengqingqu Guanweihui n.d.: 5). In an attempt to shape or engineer tourist perceptions, the same book also suggests that a trip to the Italian town represents an authentic and memorable experience. Thus, Marco Polo Plaza, Dante Square, and the monumental

fountain are described as reflecting authentic Italian art and architecture (Tianjin Haihe Yishifengqingqu Guanweihui n.d.: 8). Singing the praises of the Italian section, one writer asserts that a visit to the Italian district would make one feel truly in the midst of nineteenth-century Europe. 'Surrounded by exquisite bars and a serene environment, while sitting on the wooden benches and listening to saxophone playing would situate one in Italy indeed' (Zhongguo Weiyide Yizujie 2016). To explain the ubiquitous flower beds within the Italian section, the tourist guide claims that that is the way they appear in Italy and that the Italian town in Tianjin would like to recreate exactly the same environment to ensure an authentic experience for tourists and visitors.[5]

To further enhance the significance of the new Italian section, local writers in Tianjin typically list and discuss notable Chinese individuals who once resided in the Italian concession. Many prominent Chinese, including famous scholar and reformer Liang Qichao, well-known playwright Cao Yu, and a number of renowned politicians, military leaders, writers, and entrepreneurs, chose to live in the concession at one time or other due to its serene setting and unique architecture. When describing the Italian-style town, a number of writers use the word 'charming'. One writer asserts that 'the Tianjin municipal government has made the decision to turn this charming historical site into the Italian exotic area. This marvellous decision will not only preserve culture, history, and a taste of Italy, but will also open a new page of our times. It will promote tourism and business prosperity, and bring about a vigorous and youthful age for this ancient section.' He further claims that 'the outstanding consequences created by this move will be everlasting' (Cui 2001: 35).

Interestingly, the new perceptions of the Tianjin government regarding the former Italian concession seems to be in line with the original Italian claims about the goal of the concession, that is, 'to encourage and expand the commercial relations between the two countries, and export and diffuse the best image of urban, architectonic, and artistic culture at that point of time to a country so far away from Italy like China' (Marinelli 2007: 131). In an effort to highlight the city's rich historical past, new Chinese writings gloss over or mention as a side note the ignominious origin of the Italian section, in particular, and the foreign concessions at large. Thus, the official writings invariably maintain that even though the inception of foreign concessions represented China's historical humiliations, including the blatant infringement of Chinese sovereignty, economic invasion, and spiritual enslavement, they have nevertheless reshaped the landscape of Tianjin and the foreign architecture within them has allowed the people of Tianjin to indulge in

5 This observation is based on my own visit to the Italy-Style Exotic District.

a 'fond memory of the city's past history' (Tianjin Haihe Yishifengqingqu Guanweihui n.d.: 6).

To highlight the importance of colonial buildings, one local writer argues at great length that since architecture is set in stone, it is emotionless. While the buildings served foreign imperialists in the past, they now serve the Chinese people. To him, today's China is no longer the same as it was in the old days when foreign powers could act lawlessly and wilfully in China. Although it is necessary to remember the humiliating history, it is not necessary to harbour hatred towards the architecture associated with it. One should instead appreciate and utilize the former concessions with the mind set of acting as their new masters (Guo 1999: 2). Feng Jicai, a native of Tianjin and famous writer, has exerted a lot of effort in recent decades calling for the preservation of historical and cultural sites in Tianjin. As a renowned advocate for the conservation and preservation of Tianjin's historical and cultural sites, he was also called upon to contribute to the official booklet on the celebration of the launch of the Italian-Style Exotic District. Interestingly, Feng sees no irony in the fact the heavily commercialized, rebuilt Italian section is labelled as a cultural heritage site and has nothing but praise for the official endeavour. In a short article entitled 'Italy along the Hai River', Feng adopts the usual writing style of first condemning the former concessions' symbolic representation of Tianjin's colonial past and quickly moving on to highlight their historical importance. He thus argues that while the Italian architecture serves as a vivid reminder of the harsh and humiliating history that Tianjin once endured, their value goes well beyond 'being a label as the evil evidence of imperialism' that needs to be eradicated. Their historical heritage represents valuable culture and 'add uniqueness to the city, and is thus an integral part of the city's cultural treasury'. Feng further claims that 'the Italian section provides rich historical and cultural resources to the city and that history does not simply belong to the past, but can also serve the present and the future'. Feng concludes that transforming the former Italian concession into an exotic street is a remarkable achievement and that the people of Tianjin 'should turn passive history into a charming future to make full use of Tianjin's colourful and rich historical resources' (Feng 2001: 4-7). Amid the official and scholarly glorification of the Italian-Style Town, the voices of roughly 5000 families from the area who were relocated to different parts of the city were lost.[6] The wide support for the reconstruction

6 According to a cadre who works for the management committee of the Italian-Style Exotic District, the 5000 families that were moved out of the area received either monetary compensation or housing accommodation.

and improvement of the Italian heritage in Tianjin can be compared with the broad support that Geng Yanbo received in Datong when he decided to recreate lost historical sites (discussed in detail by Cui in this volume).

While some buildings within the area are labelled 'historical and stylistic architecture of Tianjin' under the 'protection' of Tianjin municipal government, most buildings house bars, coffee shops and Western-style restaurants. Advertisements and slogans are visible everywhere within the district. One advertisement for an upmarket hotel claims, 'Have a Taste of a Century's Italy-Style Exotic Flavor and Enjoy Our Luxury Hotel'. One slogan appearing in both English and Chinese states 'Exotic Flavor, Special Prosperity'.

Conclusion

China's humiliating defeat in the Second Opium War and the ensuing signing of the Treaty of Peking (1860) led to the opening up of Tianjin as a treaty port and saw an influx of foreign consulates and entrepreneurs. Between 1860 and 1902, nine foreign powers established concessions in the city and transformed the city into the largest treaty port in north China. A city moulded by both foreign stimuli and internal dynamics, Tianjin's rise to economic and political prominence went hand in hand with its status as a treaty port and with the official reform and modernization efforts. Both foreign stimuli and internal dynamics played important roles in the development and transformation of the city. This Chinese city's unique historical legacy has reconfigured the present, and still shapes the present urban form. In the new ideological ethos of post-Mao China and in the context of cultural and economic globalization, physical products of past imperialism are subject to new understanding and interpretation. Nevertheless, to reconcile the CCP's relatively recent anti-imperialist outcry with its current celebration of the physical display of former imperialistic penetration into China often presents a contested and paradoxical area. Today, the municipal government of Tianjin has regarded the foreign-style architecture within the former concessions not so much as a symbol of imperialist penetration, but as tangible cultural and architectural heritage that needs to be preserved and protected, and has bequeathed a more diverse and culturally rich identity to the city of Tianjin. Eager to promote Tianjin's distinctiveness, the local authorities have seemingly created a new heritage site in the reconstructed Italian-Style Exotic District. To enhance the importance of the Italian area, local Chinese publications typically hail its charm and authenticity while ignoring its former identity as a colonial concession, and list important national figures, such as former presidents,

premiers, members of the Qing imperial family, prominent warlords, famous writers, and entrepreneurs, who once lived in the concession to further accentuate the area's illustrious past. The choice of the name for the rebuilt Italian section was also interesting, as the flamboyant-sounding new name, Italian-Style Exotic District, cleverly hides the origin of the Italian concession as a colonial experience for Tianjin. The re-representation of the former Italian concession is motivated by a number of factors: to attract tourists and business enterprises, to advocate Tianjin as an international city, to celebrate Tianjin as a city with a rich cultural diversity, and a city that once housed many 'celebrities'. All of these have become boasting points for Tianjin, a city that has been in economic and cultural eclipse in recent years. In a way, the reconstructed Italian section epitomizes the changing perceptions of modernity and the political, cultural, and commercial ethos of China of recent decades, and is meant to demonstrate that Tianjin has a rich cultural and historical foundation and is a cosmopolitan city that has long gone global.

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4 Historic Urban Landscape in Beijing

The Gulou Project and Its Contested Memories[1]

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Abstract
The chapter scrutinizes public reactions to two successive projects (2010 and 2012) that seek to transform the urban fabric of Gulou, a neighbourhood in Beijing. By discussing collective memory (through lived and embodied experience of heritage and the community's attachments to the place), it provides insights into the complex and evolving relationship between official, professional and local narratives and the memories of its inhabitants. The study analyses the role and power of different actors involved in the urban redevelopment and heritage management of the neighbourhood. Its conclusion sheds light on local heritage categories and on the asymmetry between relocation and preservation issues.

Keywords: heritage, collective memory, recommendation of historic urban landscape, Gulou neighbourhood, urban transformation, preservation, resistances

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Beijing's urban fabric and its current transformation

In February 1950, four months after Mao Zedong announced the establishment of the People's Republic of China, two architectural approaches were competing for the transformation of the capital city of New China. Architectural idealism aimed to preserve the old city intact within its walls while political pragmatism, based on a Soviet model, aimed to transform the old city by implementing industrial and administrative zones (Sit 1995). Tradition gave way to modernity. Less than 50 years later, the new master plan for the development of Beijing (1991-2010) reversed the trend with a strong emphasis on the aesthetics, or visual atmosphere (*fengmao*), of the city, taking account of its ancient and traditional character (Abramson 2001, 2007; Gaubatz 1995). Changing the scope of preservation from individual buildings to an entire district had a real impact on urban heritage. The fragmented politics of urban planning and property speculation during the Reform Era had severely affected China's built environment (Hsing 2012; Leaf 1995; Wu 1997).[2] The traditional areas in Beijing composed of *hutongs* (alleys) and *siheyuan* (courtyard houses) are highly valued as historic, economic, and cultural areas, but these became the subjects of controversy during developments that potentially jeopardize cultural heritage (Felli 2005).

The disappearance of half of the 7000 hutongs in less than 50 years (or 24 per cent of the old city) has raised awareness of the protection of cultural heritage at both local and national levels. In the year 2000, to meet this challenge the Municipality of Beijing designated 25 historic preservation districts. These consisted of traditional neighbourhoods considered to be a microcosm of the broader city unit plan with its historic structural elements (walls, doors, lanes, hutongs, official buildings, temples) and immaterial culture (mixed population, ways of living, social and cultural practices). The Shichahai area is typical of such a historic and cultural neighbourhood. It has over '40 historic monuments (including temples and royal mansions), the largest natural lake in the city, and a large historic residential area with relatively well-maintained courtyard houses' (Zhang 2008: 200).[3] For generations many have viewed the area's rich legacy of historic buildings

2 The rehabilitation of Ju'er hutong (Wu 1999) – a governmental project of the rehabilitation of dilapidated housing in the inner city – which attempted to improve the housing conditions of its inhabitants when the market mechanism was introduced in Beijing, gives us an interesting insight into the management of urban development in the 1990s (Yang and Fang 2003).

3 In 1992 Shichahai was labelled 'Historical and Cultural Scenic District' by the municipal government of Beijing.

as an organic living tradition. It includes the Bell and Drum Towers, and the chessboard grid of traditional courtyards 'with public life spilling into the hutong alleyways and private life hidden behind brick walls in the courtyard houses' (Ouroussoff 2008). The native families of Beijing have gradually been replaced by migrants from other provinces, both old and new, as well as workers, small entrepreneurs (shop owners, restaurant or café managers), craftsmen, students, and expatriates. Shichahai is typical of an area where tangible and intangible heritage meet and where local inhabitants and communities make a living from their neighbourhood and contribute to its urban development. Their claim for the recognition of their right to belong to their place of residence and to not be displaced has become a crucial issue (Broudehoux 2004; Merle 2014; Siu 2007; Zhang 2013).

Fifty years on, the preservation of the old city is once again at stake. Will the government's plans, initiatives, and projects finally better integrate the historic monuments with their surroundings, their social and cultural environment? More plans and initiatives have been implemented to protect the urban fabric, yet they seem only to worsen it. How can we understand the paradox? What is missing in the initiatives? How can we understand the efforts of different groups, such as the government agencies, expert-driven projects, and local voices? Concepts such as historic urban landscapes (HUL) and collective memory are useful analytical tools to address these questions.

HUL and collective memory

Over the past decade, heritage management has become key to sustainable urban development. At the international level, reflection on the renewal of urban conservation approaches culminated in the 2011 UNESCO 'Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscape' (RHUL). UNESCO defines HUL as 'the urban area understood as the result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the notion of "historic centre" or "ensemble" to include the broader urban context and its geographical setting' (UNESCO 2011: Article 8). To define the scope of its definition more closely, the following is added: 'This wider context includes notably the site's topography, geomorphology, hydrology and natural features, its built environment, both historic and contemporary, its infrastructures above and below ground, its open spaces and gardens, its land use patterns and spatial organization, perceptions and visual relationships, as well as all other elements of the urban structure. It also includes social and cultural practices and values, economic processes and the intangible dimensions

of heritage as related to diversity and identity' (UNESCO 2011: Article 9). The innovative perspective of RHUL lies in its 'holistic approach', which seeks to transcend the opposition of conservation and development, nature and culture, tangible and intangible, and the protection of antiquity and creation of the new (cf. UNESCO 1972, 2003).

This concept seems to be all-encompassing, one that addresses all tangible and intangible elements. Yet it remains pure rhetoric, without any concrete guidelines as to how the 'social and cultural practices and values' should be preserved. There is legitimate criticism of the weak impact of UNESCO recommendations on national laws and practices, largely because it is subject to local political, economic, environmental, cultural, and social issues, as well as legal and administrative constraints.

This is especially true of cities such as Beijing (as well as cities such as Datong and Tianjin discussed in this volume). In historical areas, where responsibility for protecting heritage lies with the municipal level, but without financial resources, one collateral effect of protection is the profit generated through commodification within the selected zone. In Beijing and elsewhere, conservation practices that were supposedly designed to preserve cultural diversity and enhance links between the tangible context and inhabitants have often been criticized for increasing social and spatial fragmentation (Abramson 2001; Bandarin and Van Oers 2012; Shin 2010). For local communities involved in such processes, this criticism presents an opportunity to claim their rights to the city (Harvey 2008) and/or the heritage in their neighbourhood (Evans 2014) or villages (Svensson 2006).

Beijing's initiative for historic districts predates the RHUL. Why is it so difficult to practise this approach? All of the recommendations appear consistent with the city's initiative, with one exception: 'the intangible dimensions of heritage as related to diversity and identity'. This highlights the main limitation of the RHUL: it is too broad and addresses too much to be holistically implemented. Thus any partial understanding and adoption of the recommendations can lead to biased practice with regard to the preservation of the historical urban landscape.

One crucial dimension of heritage as related to diversity and identity is collective memory, first explored by Maurice Halbwachs (1950). He asserted a dynamic role for collective memory in the process of the identification of a social group and its mechanism of spatialization in the group's territory and architecture. Urban studies and the history of nationalism have revisited Halbwachs's ideas on collective memories, insisting that his dynamic processes refer to the past to better describe the present. How people construct a sense of the past is a major issue within social and cultural history

(Huyssen 2003), shedding light on urban memory that reflects various strata in society and the local communities that construct the city landscape.

Social representations of collective memories produced both by inhabitants and the local agencies involved in urban planning management and preservation are diverse, contested, and conflicting. Local resistance to rapid transformation can be tracked either through its narratives or practices (Scott 1990). It is mostly expressed in or defined by ordinary, everyday practices (De Certeau 1990) applied in spaces of various dimensions, from physical to emotional, political to economic, or social to cultural. They involve a diverse population of different social classes, genders, ages, and ethnicities, and are defined according to their feelings of belonging to the area.

An alternative microhistory of these urban territories or ethnographies of heritage and territorial place-making (Bendix et al. 2012; Feuchtwang 2004; Graezer Bideau and Kilani 2012; Wang 2012; Yan 2015) strengthens a wide range of discourses, privileging some social actors while simultaneously disengaging others from the use of heritage. Over the past decade many scholars have highlighted the production of internal hierarchies as constitutive of the process of heritagization (Di Giovine 2009; Herzfeld 2004; Smith 2006) where different collective memories cause rivalry and controversy (Connerton 2009). In the case of Gulou, highlighting local group strategies for preserving links and practices of memory will reveal both the gap and tensions between local inhabitants' needs – mainly popular classes, illegal migrants, and elderly natives – in their everyday lives and the new, government-defined, functions of the area (a tourist and commercial zone). It will also show the potential and limits of heritage activism in an urban landscape.

The area and the project

The Bell and Drum Towers (*Zhonglou* and *Gulou*) are located at the north end of the central axis of Beijing's old city. Built in 1420, the two towers are 2.1 kilometres away from the north gate of the Forbidden City, serving as both a physical and cultural marker for the capital. Physically, they showed the north border of the gated city. Culturally, they were time-keeping buildings: They announced the time day by day and centrally shaped and maintained Beijing residents' rhythm of life.[4] Because of their spatial and temporal

4 A classical Chinese saying refers to the functions of the two towers – morning bell, evening drum.

characteristics, the two towers gradually became a central hub and public space within the city. By the mid-sixteenth century, the Drum Tower and its vicinity had evolved into a commercial centre as well. This commercial prosperity was still evident in 2012, when small shops, restaurants for local foods, coffee shops, and bars were around the square, with a big local market at the northeast of the Bell Tower. This area, then, is a multilayered representation of the city's cultural memory over time: spatial icon, temporal marker, and social and commercial livelihoods. In 2002, it was designated as one of Beijing's historical and cultural protection zones.[5]

In 2010 a development project was proposed for this protection zone. In January, during the annual Two Meetings,[6] official media released the message about the 'Beijing Time Cultural City' development project, the intent of which was to spend RMB 5 billion (about US$61 million) to renovate an area consisting of 12.5 hectares centred on the Drum and Bell Towers. According to the reports, the project would enlarge the square between the two towers by widening the streets, in order to improve the residents' quality of life. A seemingly more compelling purpose was to create within the area a historic-centred place of time-telling celebration. A conference centre, an underground complex with a museum, and shops and car parks were planned, and the government even proposed to resume the 'morning bell, evening drum' tradition (Jiang, 2010).

The ambitious project was soon widely criticized. The voice of opposition came from the Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center (CHP), an NGO engaged in historic preservation.[7] According to CHP, the project would result in massive relocations and the demolition of cultural properties. CHP saw the new underground museum as a useless investment, saying: '[s]imply improving the quality of the museum exhibitions inside the Drum and Bell Towers can encourage a deeper level of appreciation and understanding' (CHP 2010). CHP even planned to organize a public meeting for debates, which was cancelled by the police at the last minute.

5 In 2002, the Beijing Municipal Institute of City Planning and Design (BICP) proposed to launch surveys to identify the existing *siheyuan* of the old city. Standards for recognition of the protected courtyards with licensed cards were the following: 'The present condition is well, the layout is basically sound, the building style is still existing, it forms a scale, it has reserved value.' See http://www.bjghy.com.cn.

6 In March each year, China holds its National People's Congress and Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. Commonly called *Lianghui* (Two Meetings), it constitutes the perfect moment for announcements of new proposals and projects.

7 CHP has its official website at http://en.bjchp.org/.

Towards the middle of 2010, the 'Beijing Time Cultural City' project went quiet. It is not clear how much influence CHP and other preservationists had over this suspension, but the reason given was administrative transition. In July, the municipal government of Beijing merged Dongcheng – where the Gulou area is located – and Chongwen Districts into a new Dongcheng District. Grand projects proposed by the previous government, like the Gulou project, were halted and to be reconsidered by the new government (Yang 2010).

The idea of 'restoration' for Gulou never disappeared, however. In 2012, the government restarted the proposal with a less ambitious plan entitled 'Bell and Drum Tower Square Restoration Project'. The new project would restore the original historical square based on a map drawn in the Qianlong reign of the Qing dynasty (1735-1796). Courtyards and structures deemed inconsistent with the map were to be demolished to restore the traditional landscape. As a result, the plan called for the expropriation of 66 courtyard dwellings and 136 households (Wei and Guo 2012) which were considered 'without historical value', a total of 4700 square metres. The compensation rate was RMB 44,000 per square (US$5400 in 2012), plus an affordable apartment in Shaoyaogju neighbourhood.[8] The deadline to claim the apartment was 24 February 2013. If the agreement was signed by 2 February, each household could receive an extra 'award' of up to RMB 170,000 (US$20,700), an obvious incentive for quick relocation. Although the compensation rate seems high, it was in fact about only half the market price in the area as it is located in the very centre of the historic district. Given this, the residents felt it to be unfair as they speculated on the rate their counterparts in nearby neighbourhoods could receive.

This new restoration project encountered even wider and stronger resistance than the previous one. This was partly because it was an action plan rather than a concept, and partly because of the extremely short period between announcement and implementation – only two and half months, which included the Chinese New Year. Active preservationists quickly responded – as CHP had to the previous project[9] – but local outrage was more striking this time around with many residents refusing to move. As Simon Rabinovitch recorded, only a handful had left with the deadline closing in: 'Police officers have been knocking on doors on a daily basis to remind

8 Shaoyaoju is located between the third and fourth ring avenues, to the northeast of the Gulou area. It is still seen as part of the city unlike many relocation places outside the fifth avenue seen as suburban areas.

9 CHP has not intervened in the second restoration project.

Figure 4.1 Demolition of dilapidated houses in front of the Drum Tower

Photograph by Florence Graezer Bideau and Haiming Yan

people their time is up. Angry residents have had shouting and shoving matches with them. Many say they will fight to stay' (Rabinovitch 2013).

In spite of all the controversies during the case, the project has progressed since 2013. Almost all courtyards designated by the plan have been evicted and residents have been relocated. The square has been 'cleaned'. There is a new wall built along the eviction line. In the past, the square was used as a parking space. Now it is a public square for people to enjoy recreational activities. A notice board was erected named 'Bell and Drum Towers Square Management Rules', listing several forbidden behavioural codes such as gambling and superstitious activities, fighting, lying on the ground, playing soccer, walking dogs, etc. And most inhabitants said: 'It is now better than before.' As one said, 'There used to be so many shops and a commercial atmosphere. Now it's all back to normal life.'

The Gulou area has become a battlefield in which three major groups of stakeholders fight over sharply different claims. The government discourse primarily revolves around key, but blurring, terms such as restoration, authenticity, environment improvement, cultural and art zones, etc. Preservationists, on the other hand, question each government statement

Figure 4.2 The square after restoration is a public space for locals

Photograph by Florence Graezer Bideau and Haiming Yan

with a counter-statement. The most complex group is the local inhabitants, inside and outside of the eviction area. The concept of 'cultural heritage', or 'historic urban landscape', seems to be too far removed from their discourses. Instead, their claims and voices are concerned with practical issues, living conditions, traffic, environment, etc. Revealingly, the struggle has become the mechanism by which collective memories are created, shaped, and reproduced. How should we understand the three groups' discourses? And how do the narrative claims of local inhabitants reflect the social fabrics of historic urban landscape in China? To address these questions, we have conducted field research in the Gulou area and collected data from official discourses by reading policy documents and media reports closely. Preservationists' claims are analysed using interviews and NGOs' and voluntary groups' website posts. To fully investigate locals' opinions and practices of the project, we conducted ethnographic observations and interviews between late 2015 and early 2016. More than 30 local residents were interviewed with questions about their attitudes towards the project and living conditions. Memory was a central topic in the interview questions. The answers show how locals use memory to make sense of the project

and everyday life. Simply put, the study is framed with a sociological lens on different mnemonic practices in relation to the restoration project as well as to the implementation of HUL.

The contested memories

The official discourse

The Gulou project is not *ad hoc*; it has been under consideration for over a decade. As the then mayor of Dongcheng District, Yang Yiwen, told the *Beijing Times* in January 2010, the motive for a large project was somewhat forced by a sense of inferiority compared to other districts: 'Other districts have many big projects. We are envious, but we don't have the space' (Sexton 2010). An underground plaza seemed a reasonable alternative. In 2006 and 2007, a six-month workshop, led by Italian architect Claudio Greco,[10] resulted in a plan for underground car parks around the area. Professor Greco was, however, opposed to relocation or new buildings (Sexton 2010).

The *raison d'être* for a large project and the acquisition of land for the project was simple: asset generation 'through land sales, rent and business taxation', something the existing scattering of shops, bars, restaurants, and 'unhistoric' buildings did not offer. This is a place within the historic centre of the city that has great potential for revenue production. As Professor Greco mentions in his report, there is a contrast between the extreme poverty of the residents and extremely high land prices. By acquiring the land and courtyards at a low price and then selling it at a much higher rate to developers, the government would generate considerable income. Furthermore, the place also has a symbolic importance to the authorities, as it is seen as an essential component of the 'north-south axis' of Beijing, a metaphor of political power. Thus it has been strongly pushed for nomination as World Heritage. Simply put, the place is valued for both economic and political reasons.

However, this income generation scheme, as well as political rhetoric, while widely recognized, was not to be made public. Instead, the authority adopted the appealing idea of memory as the central, and legitimate, concept.

10 Claudio Greco teaches at the Università degli Studi di Roma 'Tor Vergata' and has engaged in collaborations in China since the 1990s.

> The 'morning bell and evening drum' around the Bell and Drum Towers is one of the most unforgettable memories of old Beijing. Due to historical transformation and urban development, its surrounding environment and historical landscape have been largely destroyed, with the square shrinking from more than 14,000 square meters to 4,000 square meters. [...] [The project] will be based on maps of the Qing and early PRC to restore the square, and maintain the natural and multilayered fabrics and landscape. The restored space will be used for public culture services. (Qi 2012)

This account portrays an image espousing the authenticity of the neighbourhood; an official narrative derived from memory. The memory of 'morning bell and evening drum' encapsulated in this statement is to be shared and remembered by current and future generations. The authority sees historical landscape, similar to memory, as something to be restored. The re-expansion of the square by removing 'unhistoric' buildings is therefore the only approach to the revitalization of both the memory and the landscape (albeit on a different scale the same logic underlined Geng Yanbo's ambitious plans for Datong as discussed by Cui in this volume). However, the nexus between the memory (the saying) and the landscape (the square) is ambivalent. If the time-telling function of the towers is integral to urban memory, it should be the sound and the behavioural pattern regulated by the sound that constitutes the memory, not the square.

According to the authority, the courtyards built after the historic map 'encroached' as illegal constructions. Because of this the area suffered from extreme population density, poorly maintained houses and infrastructure, and unregulated constructions. The government is primarily concerned with the safety of inhabitants and cultural heritage; thus, the stated aims of the project are the improvement of living conditions for local inhabitants, the safety of cultural heritage sites, and the maintenance of the landscape of the old capital. In other words, the 66 courtyards to be demolished are not regarded as cultural heritage and are seen as having no historical value.

It is somewhat surprising that, despite the constant use of terms such as historic landscape, cultural landscape, urban landscape, etc., the officials we interviewed seemed unfamiliar with the concept of HUL. None of them ever used the full concept – historic urban landscape – while referring to the restoration project. The most commonly used term was 'historic districts', the official expression that has been used for over a decade. It is obvious

that the interpretation of 'landscape' for them was different from that of the HUL. Within the typically Chinese way of interpreting a universal concept with their existing conceptual and practical frameworks, the dimension of memory is missing.

The preservationist discourse

During the two phases of the project – 2010 and 2012 – cultural heritage preservationists' resistance took two different forms. The first was led primarily by CHP, an NGO striving to utilize the opportunity to broaden public debates about heritage rights and to provide an alternative plan called a rejuvenation project. The second was more like an attempt to salvage the project as it went from the conceptual to practical phase, in which a less organized, more multidisciplinary, team was formed to conduct a last-chance survey of the soon-to-be-dismantled courtyards.

CHP published a series of articles on its website concerning its objection to the project. One article widely circulated was a public letter, 'A Better Future for Gulou – CHP's Views on the Planned Redevelopment' (CHP 2010), which was posted online after the authorities cancelled a public meeting. In this article, CHP echo the government proposal's missions: to maintain the authentic representation of traditional Old Beijing, and improve the rights and livelihoods of the local residents. Taking a somewhat neutral stance, the article acknowledges that commercial and retail areas are intruding upon local inhabitants' privacy and need to be rezoned. However, according to CHP, any project that intends to realize those missions should be carefully framed in the historical context, and should be sustainable for future generations. It goes on to criticize the planned relocations and demolition as something 'crude' that would eventually lead to a triple failure: destruction of cultural heritage; destruction of social fabrics; and destruction of commercial potential. CHP made an alternative proposal: The Drum and Bell Towers rejuvenation project. This proposed that instead of demolition and relocation, the same funds be used to renovate rundown housing and rezone the commercial area, in order to avoid a 'pseudo-historical' neighbourhood.

In 2012, a less formally organized team – the Gulou Preservation Team[11] – was formed to object to the second phase of the project. Although the projects were only two years apart, between 2010 and 2012, Weibo – or mini-blog in China – had boomed. Despite not necessarily knowing each other offline, the Gulou Preservation Team members found each other

11 A more formal title of the team is the Watching Team for the Bell and Drum Tower Area.

through their common interests or opinions about the project via Weibo and created the team's own Weibo account.[12] An urban designer, whose Weibo account was named Wepon, organized more than ten people who joined the team. Their disciplines ranged from architecture, urban planning, and landscape, to sociology and mass media. In the beginning the team's major purpose was to record the process of demolition and relocation. As the project went on, however, they started to conduct more systematic studies on the history of the courtyards. The team created an interactive Internet platform, webGIS website, to call for public participation. On the website, everyone could add comments about particular courtyards.

Where CHP has taken a macro view, the Gulou Preservation Team took a relatively micro view of the area, recording each courtyard and exploring historical messages, even for a single structure. What they most objected to was the government's claim about the historical value of the 66 to-be-dismantled courtyards. From a scholarly perspective, the team attempted to negate the government's value judgement. They compared the current layout of the square with an old picture taken in the early 1900s, for example, and found that some courtyards had existed for over a century, which was inconsistent with the government's claim. Using their various survey results with local residents and historians, they argued that the square had existed more or less unaltered since the Qing dynasty. They were, therefore, able to cast doubt upon the government's plan.

The team's central concern was that the specifics of the plan were mostly unclear. Nothing was released to the public about the details of the project. As expressed in an interview,[13] Wepon stated that even the government was self-contradictory; a number of recently renovated or added houses and structures were funded and guided by the District Bureau of Housing Management, yet according to the notice these were illegal constructions: 'Actually there was no standard. Any building they want to demolish would be marked as illegal.' In other words, it was not the project plan that ignited the team's outrage; rather it was the 'no plan' that frustrated them.

Regarding the impact of the project on the social fabric and local inhabitants, where CHP focused on rights and civic participation, the Gulou Preservation Team stressed the inseparable link between the physical environment and the intangible factors of a living neighbourhood. In

12 http://weibo.com/u/3229147557?is_all=1.

13 The interview text was published in March 2013 by the student-run magazine *UIBELIFE* at the University of International Business and Economics.

their unpublished report,[14] they claim that local residents and the dwellings had become an indivisible part of regional tradition. Though never using the term 'memory', the report lays out four major impacts: psychological, cultural, emotional, and lifestyle. All revolve around the concept of memory. Change of daily routine, loss of hutong spirit, feelings of alienation, drastically downgraded education and healthcare were highlighted as key terms among the accounts. In other words, according to the team, the project would eventually result in the loss of the mnemonic patterns and fabrics for both the physical environment and the inhabitants.

Just as memory was hardly mentioned by the preservationists, HUL did not appear as a term in their accounts. International terms are used to legitimize their acts, nonetheless, such as the World Heritage Convention. The term 'historic urban landscape' was never used in any formal accounts, in the media or in their report. This does not mean that they ignore the term, however. On the contrary, what they aimed to achieve was exactly the goals of HUL: The physical environment conserved with intangible elements and the respect for and realization of the community's rights to its own past. In this sense, the preservationists have fully adopted the spirit of HUL in their practices.

The local discourse

From the start, local residents' attitudes towards the project were divided. Some people objected to the acquisition and relocation, while others looked forward to it. As we carefully examined these accounts, however, we found that claims from both supporters and opponents were profoundly rooted in the rhetoric of memory.

The desire to stay may derive from a strong emotional attachment. A female student, whose grandfather was born in the area, expressed hurt feelings about the demolition: 'We love the hutong. As a cultural pattern it should be preserved. Destroy it and rebuild a fake one? What we want is just better living conditions!' (Jiao 2013). An owner of a famous local restaurant just outside the eviction line was sympathetic to his old neighbours and long-time customers: 'They've been born and living here for generations; they enjoy being in the community; and they share memories. Once left, everything is gonna be cut off!'

14 The Gulou Preservation Team drafted the report but never formally published it. Furthermore, they attempted to publish articles in formal media in addition to the mini-blog, which also failed because of censorship.

Figure 4.3 Sociability within the Bell and Drum Tower Square

Photograph by Florence Graezer Bideau and Haiming Yan

Most residents complained about poor living conditions. Their fight to stay, however, was not to retain the current conditions, but to restore the physical settings back to the 'good old days' deeply anchored in their memories. According to them, the area used to be a lively and clean neighbourhood. In the past, people living there mostly had the same demographic background: working in *danwei* (working unit), having a *hukou* (residential permit to live and have social welfare in Beijing), and feeling privileged and belongingness to the community. It was a homogeneous community. Then, in contrast to the homogeneous past they remember, it was the mass tourism boom and the in-flow of non-Beijing people (*waidiren*, a label given by residents to those without residential permit) that turned the area into the current chaotic place of today. The *hukou* system has had a strict institutional design that not only excludes *waidiren* physically, but also socially and culturally from the locals. As Wu (2012) finds, they are excluded from community activities and only live as 'economic sojourners'. The locals clearly draw a boundary between themselves and the *waidiren*. According to our interviews, the longer the resident had lived in the neighbourhood, the more they complained about the contrast between the past and present,

and the stronger the hatred they expressed towards *waidiren*. An old man who had lived in the hutongs for over 60 years consistently complained about *waidiren* during his interview:

> You see those three-wheelers? Guess how many of them are Beijingers? None! They come here to earn money, bring all the family here. They park the three-wheeler wherever they want. In the past, a truck could easily drive through. Now even the duck-cart gets struck by the junks.

Even in the early stages of the protest when CHP tried to organize the public meeting, they collected complaints from local residents. Conflicts often seemingly arose from a contrast between the present and a remembered past:

> I have lived my whole life on Gulou Dongdajie, and while I loved it when I was small I hate it now. Before, every summer I would love to sit in the cool shade of the trees on the side of the road, or skip rope with my friends. Just look at it now! I almost never go outside, people and cars are everywhere. You try living such a noisy, anxious life. The wonderful past that I remember no longer exists. (CHP 2010)

A more practical reason for many residents' refusal of the offer of relocation was the unsatisfactory rate of compensation. Many local residents in Beijing's historic centre are nowadays waiting for relocation, because of their high expectation of compensation, perhaps the only way for them to 'get rich'. Therefore, as previously mentioned, the rate at 44,000 per square metre, half the market price, was thought by many to be unacceptably low. In an online forum, one resident demanded, 'What we want is reasonable compensation!' Another added, 'Some neighbourhoods start at 100,000, we start at 40,000?' In the forum, some tried to categorize the residents, claiming that those who had accepted the offer had other apartments in the city and those who had refused had nowhere else to live. 'At the current compensation rate, nobody [of the latter] would move out. Nobody is stupid.' The author concluded, 'Neighbours, let's keep calm and wait. If you rush for a deal, it must be a bad deal.'

Their strategy can be seen to be common in recent relocations. Compensation is expected to rise if there is an agreement between the owners and the government. Although the government always offers an early-move 'award', in most cases those who move later receive higher compensation. Each deal is different from the next, confidentially agreed between the

government and the owner. As the Gulou Preservation Team recorded in their unpublished interview sheet, locals desired relocation because mass tourism had destroyed their peaceful lives. However, they chose to stay, refusing the offer of compensation, simply because it was unsatisfactory. In another case, an old local lady expressed the same feeling: 'I am an old Party member, living here for 60 years. Indeed I have emotional attachment to here. But as long as the compensation is reasonable, we would respond to the call of the Party' (Jiao 2013).

It should be noted that many residents were willing to move out, mainly due to the bad living conditions. On another level, it was their mistrust of the government that compelled them to move. Environmental and infrastructure improvement seemed to be more rational than simple demolition, but most residents simply did not believe that the government would realize the plan in the near future. 'Too many changes over the years!' an old man complained. 'There is always policy changes and nobody really knows what's gonna happen.' As our interviews revealed, there is extreme hatred towards the government as well as hatred of commercialization. The residents, whether accepting or refusing relocation, were generally frustrated by what has occurred in the last decade, namely mass tourism and the government's lack of control over it. With this kind of disbelief, moving out seemed a reasonable choice. A 78-year-old resident living with his wife in a 20-square-metre room said in the *Global Times*: 'We want demolition and a move to a better place. We've been waiting for the official notice of demolition' (Li 2010).

Some residents, whose courtyards were outside the eviction line, were not satisfied with the no-move situation; they are still waiting for the supposed second wave of relocation. However, government policy vacillation has made them more dissatisfied A 70-year-old resident was explicitly envious of his previous neighbours:

> Since 2009, there have been rumours about our relocation. Then halted because two districts merged. Then came a new mayor. And we still wait for the notice! Some people moved out. But most stay and still are waiting. The government is just so unpredictable! So much *huangxier* [ungrounded rumours]. They say something today and forget it tomorrow. That's always the case, for many years.

This shows the ambiguity of nostalgia. Contrary to our assumption that nostalgic feelings would drive the locals to stay, we observed that by expressing nostalgic attachment to the neighbourhood, many residents were

actually legitimizing their willingness to move. Emotional attachment does not transform into an act of attachment. This mirrors what Berliner called 'multiple nostalgias' (2012), in which diverse actors of nostalgia are engaged in, based on particular social, cultural and in this case primarily economic contexts. There are multiple layers of nostalgia. And those that could easily be overturned by economic compensation may not be seen as nostalgic as other forms of nostalgia. In other words, nostalgic expressions in this case are shaped by the contrast between past and present, and are used for the pursuit of a better future.

Animosity towards *waidiren* has risen remarkably alongside commercialization. Almost every local resident complained about the incivility of *waidiren* and the troubles they have brought to the community. They are characterized as being as evil as the government: profit driven, indifferent to community life, responsible for the downgraded environment, etc. Local people feel that their once peaceful and harmonious community has been disrupted by the *waidiren*: 'They make money by telling lies!' one said. 'The peddlers sell expensive dirty foods and the three-wheeler drivers just make up fake stories about Beijing's history for the tourists.'

It is revealing that, despite the seemingly contradictory opinions about relocation, those who fight to stay and those who wish to move share the same underlying force – dissatisfaction about the destruction of their memory. They cherish the past, compared to the chaotic present. Those who intend to stay are the optimists; the past can be restored and memory reshaped. Those that strive to move are pessimistic. The broken mnemonic fabrics have also yielded a stronger sense of insecurity amongst the residents. Some choose to stay with the hope of regaining security, but more people choose to move, seeking another kind of stability.

Interestingly, even the core memory of the place – morning bell, evening drum – is characterized in totally contradictory ways by the government and the residents. A certain number of residents explained their willingness to move by pointing to the unbearable noise generated by the re-enactment performance of 'morning bell, evening drum'. At the Drum Tower, a drum is banged seven times a day for the tourists, causing unwanted noise for the neighbourhood. The sounds used to serve residents in the past, but now the community challenges the authenticity of the ritual. They perceive it as fake sounds with no authentic connection to their actual living contexts. This is paradoxical. The official memory of the area in text is the sound, yet the re-enactment of it has broken the memories for its present inhabitants. This reveals the fundamental nature of collective memory; it is always malleable, selective, and contested.

HUL is also malleable. The use of the term 'historic urban landscape' among local residents is different from that used in official and preservationist discourses. They do not seem to care much about the term 'landscape'. They did not even attempt to explain it, let alone to misinterpret it as the authorities did. To a large extent, HUL was created to preserve community life, but local people seem uninterested in having their life defined or decided by a pure concept. The concept is well practised in their acts, but yet remains unspoken.

Conclusion: Collective memories and voices from a battlefield

The case study of Gulou shows the shaping of collective memory over the last decade in which radical changes occurred, matching evolving urban policies and regulations of historic and cultural districts. Memory is constituted by and constitutive of Gulou, and the stakeholders involved in the area have differentiated agency to raise or impose their voices. The historic urban landscape is an international Western concept that promotes an idea of the preservation of parts of a city by including local inhabitants who keep the area alive and dynamic. Simply put, the official discourse misinterprets HUL by stressing the physical environment defined by historic district, the preservationist discourse adopts HUL by allowing more room for its implementation in the Chinese context, and the local discourse simply ignores any formal concept by focusing on practices. Overall, HUL is malleable. It is local experiences and practices that determine its applicability in particular contexts, especially in places and culture that have already established certain strategies for historic urban preservation.

This holistic perspective needs to integrate local memories, not only as stories for remembering or promoting the historic background of a place, but also as part of its entire reflection or constitution. The negotiation and contestation around memories and places in each case study highlight multiple (mis)understandings of the HUL concept. Interpretations of such recommendations are numerous because the definition is broad and its implementation is not strict or binding, as it needs to be adapted to each political and economic context.

Almost a decade before the HUL formulation, Chinese urban conservation experts proposed the implementation of a new heritage category intended to protect urban areas and to deal with threats of urban sprawl and property capital. These 'historic and cultural preservation districts' (*lishi wenhua baohu qu*), which include built environments and human

factors, had already taken an integrated approach.[15] All parties involved in cultural heritage issues, from officials to ordinary citizens, used this tool to defend, impose, or negotiate their positions. The aforementioned elaborated discourses on the urban heritage preservation express what is at stake in the Gulou case study. They also reveal different layers of commitment and action. In defending urban and heritage policies, the governmental discourse relies upon a selected vision of the past that highlights a conventional aesthetic of the old city (Drum and Bell Towers, chessboard grid layout of streets with large traditional courtyards breathing life into the social and commercial neighbourhood) mixing together the elite and the common people. Their renovation projects focus on the historical monuments of the area, with the extension of a built environment composed of ordinary housing, in order to avoid disfigured landscapes. The preservationist discourse is more disputed and trenchant. The proactive position makes this heterogeneous group of stakeholders organize public debate and propose alternatives for the protection of the neighbourhood and its livelihood. By using social media, technology, and archives, these groups of activists were able to contest official propositions for the area and, based on scientific arguments, suggest better ways to care for current everyday life and alternative forms of memories that matter to its inhabitants (on the role of social media in heritage debates, see also Cui and Svensson in this volume). As previously described, the local discourse is more blurred. Gulou's inhabitants want to preserve their community life, even referring nostalgically to a certain authenticity, but they struggle to see past financial opportunity. Although members of this community are diverse in terms of age, education, social class, and *hukou*, their arguments try to balance financial motivation and standard of living with attachments to the present living environment and personal or community memory.

The modernization of the historic urban landscape has involved contested processes that go beyond the antagonistic and stereotypical positions of the powerful state destroying part of the old city and the powerless reactions of local communities suffering the consequences of such brutal urban change. Although these generalizations contain an element of truth, the examples in this chapter also offer narratives of a certain level of constructive local resistance. We observed two levels of negotiations or contestations among these groups of stakeholders. First, tension between the preservationist

15 As another approach, in 2009 China started to designate Historic and Cultural Famous Streets. *Guozijian jie* (the name of the Imperial College) was among the first ten designations in 2009; *Yandaixie Street* (Sweet Tobacco Pouch Street) was designated in 2010.

and the official levels: The former relying on so-called universal standards of protection based on international urban heritage expertise (UNESCO, the World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region [WHITRAP], the International Council on Monuments and Sites [ICOMOS], the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property [ICCROM], etc.) and the latter implementing municipal/local standards based on national expertise (Beijing Municipal Commission of Urban Planning, Beijing Municipal Policy Research Bureau, etc.)[16] highlighting Chinese characteristics. Second, a tension between the local population and heritage expertise claimed by certain preservationists and official stakeholders: Gulou inhabitants struggled to be heard on the matter of maintaining their current and ordinary social and cultural livelihood against the preservation of a nostalgic neighbourhood as a shrine (*mise sous cloche*) or the promotion of the city for historic and cultural tourism (Shin 2010). Similarly, Tam's chapter on the contestations surrounding the preservation of a temple in Beijing and Cui's chapter discussing contestations in Datong, reveal the complex views on heritage and divergent power among officials, private companies, preservationists and the general public, that help us move away from a simple understanding of a powerful state vis-à-vis a homogenous and repressed subaltern. The local resistance against a project of transformation of historical urban landscape is more complex than a simple issue of preservation. In our case, the local population is benefiting from the transformation in order to develop a resistance which ultimately relies more on the benefit of a relocation than on an interest in preserving an urban heritage.

The recommendation of historic urban landscape has already been studied extensively since its formulation in 2011. As a Western concept, it was been adapted following debates around its eventual implementation in the East. It is not a convention that UNESCO members need to ratify or undertake to comply with obligations, so the RHUL provides some additional flexibility and freedom to develop the concept, and breathing space for urban heritage experts who recommend the implementation of this recent approach towards built environment and local communities in a local setting. Its plasticity is still an advantage for all stakeholders involved in historic and cultural preservation districts as

16 For instance: Beijing Municipal Commission of Urban Planning, *Conservation Planning of 25 Historic Areas in Beijing's Old City* (Beijing: Yangshan Publishing House, 2002); Beijing Municipal Policy Research Bureau, *Study on Housing Renovation in Historic Preservation Districts in the Old City of Beijing* (Beijing: Beijing Municipality, 2004).

they can instrumentalize it according to their positions and projects. Any transformation of Beijing's old fabric needs to take into account the physical and social structures of these neighbourhoods, which maintain a sense of community, strengthen organic community life (residents, emotions, traditional architecture, economy, culture, administration, public services) and stimulate the local economy, including local tourism (Gu and Ryan 2008), which serves to keep local populations in the area and make it thrive.

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Section II

Celebrating and Experiencing Cultural Heritage: Top-down and Bottom-up Processes and Negotiations

5 Creating a Race to the Top

Hierarchies and Competition within the Chinese ICH Transmitters System

Christina Maags

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Abstract
The chapter retraces the impact of the two main intangible heritage policies (ICH) on individuals and communities in the cities of Jiujiang and Changzhou. Although ICH policies are aimed at supporting local cultural work, the chapter shows how local policy implementation facilitates division and hierarchies among local stakeholders, particularly as inscription often depends on good connections to heritage experts and officials. In the competition for inscription, local stakeholders often employ official heritage discourses and heritage expertise to enhance their agency and obtain legitimacy in the heritage-making process, enhancing contestation and conflicts between members within and between local communities.

Keywords: intangible cultural heritage, transmitters, policy, discourses, contestation

Through ratification of the 2003 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has committed itself to set up an institutional infrastructure and adopt policies for the protection of traditional cultural practices. When implementing the UNESCO Convention, the PRC not only established a representative list for intangible cultural heritage, but also set up a Chinese Living Human Treasures system, the so-called intangible cultural heritage (ICH) transmitter system, on all four administrative levels (see Blumenfield as well as Chan in this volume). As a result of governmental promotion and awareness-building, traditional cultural practices which had previously been gauged as 'superstitious' and

'feudal', were now re-evaluated and relabelled as intangible cultural heritage. Since the mid-2000s, an 'intangible cultural heritage fever' (*feiyi re*) has swept across Chinese society, rekindling public interest in traditional Chinese culture. The fever has also substantiated the wish to participate in local heritagization processes. While the government appropriates ICH as a tool of governance to regulate social order, modernize isolated regions through tourism, as well as increase the public's 'quality' (*suzhi*) (Oakes 2013), local stakeholders in turn are utilizing governmental ICH policies to enhance their agency within the heritagization process. By participating in ICH policy implementation,[1] governmental ICH programmes or heritage discourses, local stakeholders are actively striving to obtain a voice in local identity formation and heritage-making.

This chapter enquires into how local stakeholders affected by top-down ICH policy implementation develop individual strategies to enhance their agency and/or contest the top-down policy implementation and outcome from below. To do so, the study comparatively examines how the two main intangible heritage policies, the 'representative ICH items list' and the 'ICH transmitter list', have an impact on individuals and communities in Jiangsu and Jiangxi Provinces, particularly focusing on Changzhou municipality (Jiangsu Province) and Jiujiang municipality (Jiangxi Province). Although these policies are aimed at supporting local traditions and individual cultural work, local implementation of these policies has brought about division and hierarchies among local stakeholders, since only a limited number of local traditions and cultural practitioners may be inscribed on governmental safeguarding lists and thus receive state funding and support. Furthermore, inscription often depends on good connections to heritage experts and officials. Local stakeholders involved, such as cultural practitioners aiming to become an official representative ICH transmitter or locals striving to have their local tradition enlisted, individually employ official heritage discourses and heritage expertise to enhance their agency and obtain legitimacy in the heritage-making process. As a result,

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1 Although an autocracy, non-state actors in the PRC are increasingly able to participate in the policy process (Mertha 2009) by taking part in policy implementation, policy programmes or shaping public discourses (Maags and Holbig 2016).

competition for inscription leads to contestation and conflicts between members within and between local communities.

Cultural heritage as a playing field for top-down and bottom-up processes

Power struggles and contestations resulting from ICH policies in China appear to be caused by a mismatch between the predefined goals of a given ICH policy and the outcome of policy implementation.[2] Yet, the politics surrounding heritage are much more complex than this picture leads us to believe. As heritage is 'a new form of cultural production of the present that takes recourse to the past' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995: 269), a plurality of economic, political and cultural stakeholders compete with each other to push through their interpretation of the past. Furthermore, each of these actors use their agency and resources to add value to certain historical remains and traditional practices, resulting in tensions over who holds the power to define what cultural heritage is and what it is not (Bendix 2009: 253-260). Yet, as Bendix et al. (2013) remind us, 'It is not simply human actors seeking or wielding power and holding control: The regimes themselves, as realised in unfolding bureaucratic institutions and processes, discipline both actors and their cultural practices into (perhaps) unforeseen dynamics' (2013: 16). While the institutional setting including policies and laws as well as official discourses thus delineate the playing field on which the actors interact, their power struggles and contestations result in unpredictable repercussions for state and society.

These dynamics are produced by the interplay between top-down processes of ICH policy formulation and implementation on the one hand, and bottom-up processes of reimagining and contesting official conceptualizations of heritage on the other. Heritage is an important national symbol which diffuses ideas of the nation, national identities and collective identity, thereby fostering social inclusion but also economic regeneration and localism (Pendlebury 2015: 437). As such the state has a vested interest in controlling cultural heritage discourses and means of protection. Laurajane Smith has pointed out that the official or 'authorized heritage discourse' inherent in the various international heritage conventions which forms the

2 A discrepancy between policy design and policy implementation is a common phenomenon. Policy scholars therefore employ policy implementation and evaluation theories to examine why and how these discrepancies occur (Mazmanian and Sabatier 1980).

basis of domestic policies, in fact also authorizes institutions of heritage to create or identify a community of cultural practitioners, conservationists and experts (2006: 113). Top-down processes thus not only stipulate what heritage is (or is not) but also who is provided with the opportunity to represent and speak for it. Non-official stakeholders, however, are not passive receivers but active participants in these heritagization processes. Due to this reason, 'contestation is at the core of numerous discourses about heritage, be it in the commemoration of past violence, ancient greatness or everyday life' (Schramm 2015: 443). Non-state actors use their agency to counter official narratives and demand participation in defining cultural heritage, to the extent of mobilizing public opinion to challenge authorized discourses and influence policy making (Cooper 2013; Neil 2015: 348). In this act of 'heritage from below', Robertson has argued that 'anti-hegemonic possibilities do exist and exist as resources for expressions of identity and ways of life that run counter to the dominant' (2012: 2). As a result, numerous heritages are imagined and recognized leading to a 'dissonance' in heritage-making (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1995).

In the PRC, this interplay between top-down and bottom-up processes is similarly complex, yet further couched in rapid processes of economic development and social change. A bulk of scholars has demonstrated how top-down processes of policy formulation and implementation have led to the marginalization of vernacular understandings of cultural heritage. Zhu and Li (2013), for instance, have shown how governmental plans for local tourism sites often neglect popular understandings and local participation. Instead, cultural heritage is regarded as a resource by which the local government can develop the tourism industry and generate revenue (see also Su 2010; Wang and Bramwell 2012), thereby exerting cultural authority through tourism (Oakes and Sutton 2010: 4). Top-down regulations similarly commodify and relabel Chinese ICH. In his analysis of the Gwer Sa La Festival in Southwest China, Liang (2013), for instance, has shown how the local government has purposefully created false 'primitive' imaginaries of local ICH in order to inscribe a local traditional religious festival as ICH. The relabelling of popular religion or 'superstition' as cultural heritage is a common phenomenon in China, aimed at de-politicizing and legitimizing religion (Chau 2005; Gao 2014). In addition to fostering the local economy and administering social control through government heritage regulation and management, we can also observe how the party-state has created their own Chinese 'authorized heritage discourse' (Yan 2015) which is similarly informed by international conventions (Du Cros and Lee 2007: 140; Li et al. 2008). Through these top-down processes the Chinese party-state

develops its own interpretation of Chinese cultural heritage as well as 'appropriate' conservation and safeguarding measures.

Local stakeholders, however, do not always accept this imposition of top-down interpretations, regulations and management procedures by the party-state, but attempt to contest or negotiate official heritage politics. Yu, for instance, has demonstrated that while the party-state enlisted traditional festivals as ICH and thus transformed them into tourist attractions, villagers nonetheless contest the official narratives by independently performing and transmitting rituals in a sacred domain outside of governmental control (2015: 1035). By finding ways to circumvent top-down authoritative measures, local communities demonstrate agency and autonomy in transmitting and further developing their traditional cultural practices. Zhu has similarly found that when the party-state adopted, reinterpreted and applied the Western notion of authenticity, the authentication of heritage became 'a governance strategy to legitimize inclusion and exclusion and to allocate economic, moral and aesthetic values' (2014: 12). Nevertheless, in this specific case the villagers challenged the state-imposed authentication by developing their own meaning and norms in their performance (Zhu 2014: 11-12). Moreover, local communities may be empowered through the heritagization process by, for instance, benefitting from the tourism industry (Ingram 2012: 66-70) or by participating in one of the few projects where community participation[3] is encouraged (Nitzky 2013: 226).

Contestations do not only arise between the state and experts on the one side and local communities on the other, but also within local communities. Svensson has drawn our attention to the competition and conflicts that may arise between local actors which occur since 'villagers might differ on what narratives and buildings are central to the local community and how these narratives should be told' (2006: 29). Chio (2013) furthermore has shown how villages compete against each other for tourism revenue. In other cases, villages have competed against each other for being selected as scenic spots, thereby obtaining the opportunity to represent local heritage and benefit from local tourism (Oakes 2013: 386). The interplay between top-down and bottom-up processes in China, as elsewhere, is thus heavily influenced by constantly changing power relations between local stakeholders such

3 Projects where the community is encouraged to participate in the heritagization process, however, remain to be rare. Not only are many of such projects induced by international NGOs or organizations, the party-state frequently regards participation more as a responsibility to support state policy implementation, rather than enhancing rights and agency of the community (Nitzky 2013: 226; see also Fan 2014).

as government officials, experts, local businesses, cultural practitioners and the like (see Neil 2015), which all attempt to obtain a voice in local heritagization processes.

This chapter retraces the impact of top-down ICH policies on local non-state stakeholders by focusing on the arising contestations between local communities and individual cultural practitioners. In particular, this study examines how local stakeholders develop individual strategies to influence top-down selection of the 'ICH items list' as well as the 'ICH transmitters list'. For this chapter, the author conducted over 50 semi-structured interviews and engaged in participant observation in Jiangsu and Jiangxi Province, particularly in Jiujiang and Changzhou municipality. During the fieldwork, the author interviewed local cultural practitioners, ICH officials as well as experts[4] involved in the selection process to identify how local communities attempt to influence top-down selection of ICH items and transmitters[5] in a bottom-up manner.

Top-down policy implementation: The ICH items and transmitter lists

The Chinese ICH regime is largely based on the creation of two inventories or lists: The list of representative ICH items (*Feiwuzhi wenhua yichan daibiaoxing xiangmu minglu*) and the list of ICH transmitters (*Feiwuzhi wenhua yichan xiangmu daibiaoxing chuanchengren*). While the 'ICH items list' is similar to the UNESCO's Representative List of the ICH of Humanity and constitutes a selection of Chinese traditional cultural practices, the 'ICH transmitters list' inscribes cultural practitioners who perform these traditional practices – comparable to UNESCO's Living Human Treasures system. Both lists are thus established to raise awareness for ICH protection and support practitioners who embody traditional cultural knowledge (State Council 2005; State Council 2008).

Top-down implementation of these policies on all four administrative levels is the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and its subordinate

4 In this chapter, the term 'ICH experts' is used to describe the bulk of scholars and professionals who advise the party-state in ICH-related work. As heritage experts create and legitimize the official heritage discourse (Smith 2006), they are included in the analysis. Despite an autocracy, in the PRC experts exert significant influence in ICH policy formulation and implementation (Maags and Holbig 2016).

5 As this chapter is derived from a larger research project on the ICH transmitter programme, particular emphasis was put on the selection process within this programme.

Figure 5.1 An ICH transmitter in Nanjing

Photograph by Christina Maags

agencies (Ministry of Culture 2008). To date, the Ministry's subordinate agency, the ICH department, has published four national ICH items lists and four ICH transmitters lists (China News 2012). When selecting traditional cultural practices and practitioners for these lists, the Ministry is supported by ICH experts. These experts, such as anthropologists and

ethnologists, assist the party-state in its ICH-related work by conducting national and regional surveys, compiling dossiers, and recommending certain ICH practices and practitioners for inscription (Shanghai Culture and Broadcasting Department 2010). The local community is, however, not included in the selection process (Interview 6/2014) despite the ICH Convention's stipulation that 'each State Party shall endeavor to ensure the widest possible participation of communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals that create, maintain and transmit such heritage, and to involve them actively in its management' (UNESCO 2003). While the party-state identifies and selects ICH practices for inscription, cultural practitioners need to apply to become ICH transmitters. If selected for the ICH transmitters programme, they officially receive the title 'ICH transmitter' as well as an annual stipend which is to support the practitioner in transmitting his traditional knowledge to the next generation. In return, the cultural practitioner agrees to teach students, participate in public events and publish on his respective cultural tradition (Interview 15/2015). As the Ministry of Culture establishes lists on all four administrative levels, the ICH items as well as ICH transmitters may be promoted up the ladder, ultimately becoming a national or even international representative of Chinese traditional culture.

Due to the four-tier policy design and implementation structure, the system of ICH lists creates institutional hierarchies between ICH items and ICH transmitters. By selecting certain cultural practices and labelling them 'intangible cultural heritage', the party-state adds value to some practices and practitioners while marginalizing others. As 'one's self-awareness is dependent on the experience of social recognition' (Honneth 2002: 46), selecting certain ICH and cultural practitioners over others and thus recognizing their value through lists leads to exclusion and depreciation of others. Following Thompson, 'political recognition' creates public recognition and becomes a marker of identity, due to which the recognized feels included and equal, while the one not recognized feels overlooked and unvalued (2006: 7-8). While the dynamics around recognition of heritage (Smith 2015) particularly the resulting inclusion and exclusion effects of defining cultural heritage (MacKenzie and Stone 1994; Silverman 2011) through inventories or lists (Hafstein 2009) have long been discussed and criticised, the implementation of these lists along a four-tier system in China further enhances these effects by not only creating competition and contestation over which practice or practitioner is listed (and which is not), but also concerning which ICH is more valuable and thus more eligible to climb the hierarchical ladder.

As provincial governments enjoy leeway in realizing national policies (Lieberthal and Oksenberg 1988; for an example of the fragmented authority in Chinese heritage administration, see Cui in this volume), ICH policy formulation and implementation differ across provinces. On the one hand, in Jiangsu Province, the provincial culture bureau was quick to adopt its own policies as well as establish ICH items and transmitters lists in 2006 (Jiangsu Culture Department 2006a). Keeping up with provincial objectives, Changzhou municipality has set up four ICH practice lists (Changzhou Culture Bureau 2013a) and four ICH transmitters lists (Changzhou Culture Bureau 2013b). While Jiangsu's provincial government attempts to display a forerunner role in ICH safeguarding through providing financial opportunities such as granting ICH transmitters additional stipends (Jiangsu Culture Department 2006b), Changzhou's culture bureau has established a strategic partnership with Changzhou University (Interview 19/2015). Due to the provincial aspiration to demonstrate successful ICH safeguarding, according to an ICH transmitter from Changzhou, many opportunities arise for ICH transmitters to take part in international and domestic events and market their products (Interview 18/2015).

Jiangxi Province, on the other hand, has hitherto pursued different objectives. Not only did the provincial government issue its own ICH policy comparatively late in 2015 (Jiangxi Culture Department 2015), it was also rather reluctant to invest in ICH safeguarding as it regards itself as an 'underdeveloped province' (*qian fada de sheng*) (Interview 48/2015). Nevertheless, Jiujiang municipality has hitherto established five ICH items lists (Jiujiang Culture Bureau 2015) and three ICH transmitters lists (Jiujiang Culture Bureau 2013). Due to their 'underdeveloped' economy, as one ICH transmitter from Hukou, Jiujiang municipality, stated, neither the provincial nor the municipal government pays stipends to their ICH transmitters (Interview 5/2014). Another ICH transmitter from Pingxiang municipality argued that ICH transmitters only seldom have the opportunity to take part in events abroad (Interview 4/2015). Due to the lack of financial support, many ICH transmitters from Jiangxi, therefore, aspire to be inscribed on the national list to obtain the full stipend and additional opportunities that come with national recognition (Interview 26/2015). Whereas the implementation of the ICH items and transmitters lists along the four-tier administrative system already creates an institutionalized hierarchy, the different economic and political circumstances in each province lead to further inequalities between local communities and ICH transmitters' access to opportunities to safeguard local ICH. These

geographical differences in policy implementation moreover create a greater pressure for local communities and ICH transmitters to have their traditional practices listed on the national level, in order to obtain additional funding opportunities. In competing over inclusion and promotion, local communities and ICH transmitters have developed a variety of strategies to compete for selection which result in conflicts between local communities and practitioners.

Developing bottom-up strategies in heritage competition

In order to compete in the selection process, local communities and cultural practitioners employ personal contacts (see Chan in this volume), official heritage discourses as well as heritage expertise to get ahead of their competition. In the case of the ICH transmitters list, social connections (or *guanxi*)[6] are essential for entering and advancing within the programme. According to an ICH transmitter from Nanjing (Jiangsu Province), many of the 'higher ranking' ICH transmitters obtained the title during an early phase of the programme when it was still quite unknown. They were able to do so as the cultural practitioners knew a government official and were able to use their social connections to be inscribed as ICH transmitter. Subsequently, due to their early entry into the programme and their social connections it was easier for them to be promoted to upper levels. This creates comparative disadvantages for other cultural practitioners. The ICH transmitter from Nanjing further argued that after this initial phase it has become increasingly difficult to become part of the programme and subsequently be promoted within the system as competition among the ICH transmitters has become fierce (Interview 15/2015). These findings also correspond with interviews made in Jiangxi Province. In the interviews, ICH transmitters frequently mentioned that local ICH associations, their work unit (*danwei*) or local scholars informed them about the programme and subsequently supported them in taking part. Thus cultural practitioners who maintain social ties with people or groups of higher social standing such as officials, experts or other cultural elites, may use them to obtain information or be recommended for the programme or, conversely, may be promoted due to personal interests of these more powerful people and groups. In Hukou, a county of Jiujiang, for instance, one local scholar appeared to be a facilitator in this regard as he persuaded at least one local

6 cf. Thomas et al. 2002.

opera performer and one producer of traditional tofu products to submit an application. Furthermore, he also assisted them in filing the application (Interview 28-30/2015).

As the scholar frequently advises the local government in their ICH related work and is a member of the selection committee (Interview 28/2015), he is also very familiar with the official heritage discourse. For this reason, the scholar would not only be able to use his heritage-related expertise to assist the cultural practitioners in their application, but may also influence the local government's decision on which cultural practitioner to select for the programme. Similarly, once a cultural practitioner becomes a member of the programme, he or she may employ the official heritage discourse as well as heritage expertise to advance within the programme. In an interview with a local transmitter in Jiujiang, the transmitter stated that he was thinking of inviting a scholar who could advise him in how to fill out his application for promotion within the programme (Interview 27/2015). As the ICH transmitter had already advanced to the provincial level of the programme, he thus sought scholarly expertise to get ahead in the fierce competition over national inscription. While in the example above social ties were used to receive information about or a recommendation for the programme, these ties may also be used to obtain scholarly expertise related to the official discourse.

Secondly, family ties play an important role in being listed as an ICH transmitter. During field research, I found that many of the ICH transmitter's family members and students also become ICH transmitters, resulting in clusters of ICH transmitters among families or schools. Speaking of another ICH transmitter, one national ICH expert, for instance, explained that 'When the programme started it was his grandfather who took part, then it was he himself who participated, followed by his grandson. Afterwards his grandfather's or his friend participated. They are all like this' (Interview 3/2014). Access to the ICH transmitter programme is thus easier for candidates who already have social connections within the programme or know a person who is well versed in the official heritage discourse. Cultural practitioners who have such social connections or are able to employ heritage scholars thus use these resources strategically to be selected for the programme. Conversely, cultural practitioners who do not have these resources are in a comparatively disadvantaged position, ultimately losing in the competition for inscription.

Finally, ICH transmitters and general cultural practitioners use their own financial resources to enhance their standing and voice in the heritage discourse. By publishing articles and books on their traditional cultural

practice they contribute to the discourse, obtaining agency among their peers. A county-level ICH transmitter in Jiujiang, for instance, explained that he attempts to publish as much as possible on his local cultural tradition. As he, however, does not have a high income and only gets sporadic financial support, he has troubles funding his publications:

> I have to tell you that it is hard to obtain money, sometimes they [the government] don't give you any [money], other times they do something in your name, it is difficult to say. […] I paid for the research myself. All the things that I have written I have paid for myself, not the government. This means everything you research, you finance yourself. (Interview 5/2014)

Conducting research or generating heritage expertise is thus a further strategy which ICH transmitters employ to enhance their agency within the heritage discourse. However, as cultural practitioners often rely on their art or craft to earn their monthly income, it is difficult to obtain a voice in the discourse without sufficient financial resources.

Local communities have utilized similar strategies to influence the selection of local ICH practices for the 'ICH items list'. As they are excluded from selection, they attempt to influence the governmental officials and experts involved in the decision-making process. As one national ICH expert explains, local communities often directly contact the Ministry of Culture or experts in order to convince them to choose a particular ICH practice for the list (Interview 13/2015). As in the case of the ICH transmitters, they do use informal channels to persuade the local governments and involved experts of the value of their particular ICH practice. This finding is in line with Ku (2014), who has found that local communities in Fujian have hired an ICH expert to compile a dossier on local heritage which could be handed over to the local government. Local communities thus seek to enhance their agency through means of direct persuasion and appropriation of scientific expertise. In doing so, they similarly use their social connections to government officials and experts or financial resources to win the competition of ICH inscription.

According to a Jiangsu Province ICH official, the local community furthermore attempts to influence the ICH nomination and selection in order to preserve their cultural self-esteem:

> This happens a lot. It has to do with their cultural self-esteem, ICH is the cultural basis of their life. Naturally, the culture that their own community likes must be the best one, but they do not have any comparison.

> This is a common thing. It is a good thing as it demonstrates their cultural self-confidence and self-esteem. It is a good thing, yet this kind of situation needs to be resolved through [official] procedures. You cannot just say I should change something and then I will change it. This is not possible. (Interview 16/2015)

This statement demonstrates that it is of great importance to members of the local community that their traditional practice is selected as a representative of local ICH. After the government officials and experts collectively review and nominate certain ICH items for the list, they are obliged to publish this nomination list online and provide the general public with the opportunity to respond to this nomination within 20 days (Jiangsu Culture Department 2015). Many members of the local community, however, seem to seek to influence the selection process at an earlier stage, thereby circumventing the formal procedures.

While local communities attempt to influence the local government and experts to select their preferred ICH practice for the ICH items list, also local government officials develop strategies to get ahead in regional competition for ICH inscription. According to an ICH official in Jiujiang, the municipality hired provincial-level experts to assist them in rebranding their local opera performance. As all the surrounding municipalities were home to a local variant of the same opera tradition, the official was eager to make Jiujiang's version of the opera stand out in contrast to the traditional practice of other municipals. The ICH items list had thus created competition between different government agencies. To gain the upper hand in this competition, he therefore invited an ICH expert familiar with the provincial inscription process and the heritage discourse to the municipality. The expert recommended to use an ancient name which was used during the Ming dynasty instead, thereby rebranding the local opera and providing it with a new historical narrative (Interview 6/2014). As a member of the local community, ICH government officials who are commonly also cultural practitioners themselves may also have an intrinsic motivation to develop strategies which will advance their locality's ICH in the regional competition for inscription. Nevertheless, as government officials are evaluated according to their performance in ICH protection (Interview 19/2015), they may also attempt to enhance the municipality's location branding and tourism industry out of personal career ambitions.

All in all, local communities and practitioners develop a number of strategies to get ahead in the competition for inscription on the ICH items and transmitters lists. In doing so, they commonly choose informal channels to

exert influence on local decision-making, particularly by employing personal connections or contacting involved government officials and experts directly. They furthermore frequently employ the official heritage discourse and heritage expertise in order to legitimize their claim, if need be by investing their own social connections and financial resources. As the individual actors, however, differ in their opinion which ICH practice is to be selected and compete for inclusion in the ICH transmitters programme or the ICH items list, contestations arise which cause conflicts among the local stakeholders.

Local contestation over heritage representation

Conflicts mainly arise over whose culture is officially recognized as ICH and who financially benefits from inscription. Inscribing a traditional cultural practice on the safeguarding list implies that this traditions is not only considered to be worthy of governmental protection, but it also implies that this tradition will represent the variety of similar local traditions to the wider public, domestically and internationally. The authority over the representation of local ICH, including its meaning and understanding, is therefore of great importance to the ICH transmitters. One ICH transmitter, for instance, argued that his title also provided him with the opportunity to enhance his reputation across China (Interview 22/2015). Domestic and international government-organized exhibitions, performances and media broadcastings facilitate knowledge on the particular ICH practice and advance the esteem of the transmitter. In some cases also foreign universities or overseas Chinese organizations invited ICH transmitters on their own account (Interview 15/2015, 17/2015, 22/2015). Among the interviewees, all provincial- and national-level ICH inheritors and some municipal ICH inheritors (all in Jiangsu) have had the opportunity to demonstrate their ICH abroad at least once (for instance, interviews 14/2015, 15/2015, 17/2015, 21/2015, 22/2015). By being inscribed on one of the ICH lists, ICH items and ICH transmitters thus become the official representative or showcase for a greater variety of similar traditional practices.

This showcasing of selected ICH practices and practitioners does not only have implications for the pride and self-perception of local communities, but may also entail financial ramifications for them. In the case of the ICH transmitters programme, the financial betterment does not result from the annual governmental subsidy but from the opportunity to sell one's traditional cultural products or performance, for instance, as an official Chinese ICH item. In the same way as intangible cultural heritage is exploited as a

Figure 5.2 ICH transmitter exhibiting and selling his art at an ICH exhibition in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province, 2015

Photograph by Christina Maags

cultural resource (Blake 2009: 64), the title of 'ICH item' or 'ICH transmitter' also becomes a sort of brand or resource which the cultural practitioner can use to sell the ICH he or she is representing – often at a higher price (Interview 26/2015). As a national ICH expert explains, exploiting the ICH label as a brand is a common phenomenon:

> It [the food] is perhaps not as famous, but he [the merchant] hangs up a sign saying 'national ICH' and perhaps attracts a few customers. In this instance the merchant is using a branding strategy. [...] This happens all the time. He really uses national ICH in order to earn some money. So he spends a lot of physical and mental efforts to achieve this state. (Interview 7/2014)

Using the official 'ICH transmitter' title as a marketing device has thus the potential of yielding considerable economic benefits. In an interview with a family in Jiujiang producing traditional *huangjiu* (yellow liquor), the municipal ICH transmitters explained that in some cases cultural products

by ICH transmitters become so expensive that locals cannot afford the product anymore. The price for regional *fenggangjiu* (type of liquor), for instance, had risen from 20 to several hundred RMB. When asked whether the price of the liquor they were producing had increased she confirmed, smiled and added that it was not as expensive as *fenggangjiu* (Interview 26/2015). The 'ICH brand', however, was visible on the bottle as it displayed the Chinese logo for national intangible cultural heritage (see figure 11).

Among the interviewees, a majority confirmed that becoming ICH transmitters had either boosted their sales or led to an increase in product price (Interview 14/2015, 17/2015, 26/2015). In addition, the ICH transmitters also obtain the opportunity to display and sell their products at regional, national or even international events. For this reason, they may not only sell their products at a higher price but may also acquire more customers.

Compared to ICH transmitters, cultural practitioners who are not in the programme do not necessarily have these economic benefits. Both the official recognition and the economic commercialization create a process of exclusion for cultural practitioners not involved in the programme. These cultural practitioners, firstly, do not receive any annual subsidy and, secondly, do not benefit from being able to sell their cultural practice or goods with the help of the 'ICH brand'. While the subsidy does not account for that much of the annual income of any cultural practitioner, when it comes to selling traditional cultural products they find themselves in a position of comparative economic disadvantage. Cultural practitioners not able to use the 'ICH brand' to market their products cannot 'prove' that their products are representing the traditional culture of the region. This leads to a form of exclusion as their products are not necessarily considered 'authentic' representatives of regional ICH, which simultaneously devalues these products.

In competing for selection for governmental lists and programmes, local communities and cultural practitioners therefore contest each other's representativeness and abilities which creates conflicts among them. The practice of selecting a few local practitioners for a programme marginalizes other practitioners leading to arguments and contestations over the listings (Interview 3/2014, 6/2014, 15/2015). One ICH expert, for instance, explained:

> Let's say the four of us could have done almost the same thing, we are almost the same and suddenly the media reported on me, I became a celebrity, you three, however, didn't become well-known, this will hurt your self-esteem, then you don't do it anymore, this is not right. (Interview 7/2014)

Figure 5.3 Liquor bottle with ICH logo produced by ICH transmitter in Jiujiang

Photograph by Christina Maags

This statement and other conducted interviews demonstrate that in some cases the contestations had even gone so far that some cultural practitioners ceased to perform an ICH practice (Interview 3/2014, 15/2015). These contestations not only occur over who is selected for the ICH transmitters programme but also who advances within the programme. In comparing

his own abilities to those of a colleague, for instance, one ICH transmitter explained that his colleague, a fellow paper cutter, had expressed jealousy when he was selected for promotion, while the colleague himself was not:

> He [paper cutter] is over 80 years old. He told me, 'I have been in this profession for over 60 years and you are much younger than I am. How did you become a national ICH transmitter while I am only a provincial one?' He really felt he had not been treated fairly, so this created a bit of a conflict. (Interview 22/2015)

A majority of the interviewees argued that the non-ICH transmitters were 'jealous' (*jidu*) of the ICH transmitters' position in society (Interview 18/2015, 22/2015). Although this statement refers to a subjective judgement of the interviewees, it does express potential feelings of exclusion among non-ICH transmitters when their colleague is proclaimed an official representative of local culture and praised as 'outstanding', while they are not. These inclusion and exclusion effects – similar to the observations made with international listings of ICH items at the UNESCO (cf. Kuutma 2007: 178) – create hierarchies among cultural practitioners, particularly between the ICH transmitters in the programme, which in turn result in contestations about the representativeness and abilities of the individuals. In addition, not only the abilities as a cultural practitioner are contested but also the way in which one has entered the programme. As stated above, some ICH transmitters obtained the position due to knowing people. As Smith and Waterton (2009) have reminded us, 'heritage is a process through which individuals and collectives negotiate their social position and "place" within particular societies' (2009: 293). In this instance, however, cultural practitioners who are already equipped with social capital or hold a relatively strong societal standing are more frequently selected, leading to reinforcement of the social position of advantaged members of society, while also reinforcing the comparative 'disadvantaged' position of others.

Ultimately, the ICH items and transmitters lists thus lead to the formation of hierarchies and conflicts among cultural practitioners and local communities. Through the selection of particular ICH practices and transmitters, these local communities and cultural practitioners receive the opportunity to generate financial capital (annual stipends, usage of ICH brand, tourism development) and to represent local ICH regionally, nationally and internationally. The majority of the local communities and cultural practitioners, however, do not receive this opportunity. Although their position as such has not been altered, they are now in a place of comparative disadvantage. This finding confirms what Hafstein has argued earlier, namely that

programmes on ICH safeguarding 'intervene in social processes in order to change them. Safeguarding itself is a change. It is a change in relations' (2007: 81). Identifying certain traditional cultural practices as ICH thus changes the underlying social fabric of society.

Conclusion

On the basis of a comparison between ICH items and transmitters lists in two different provinces, this chapter has demonstrated that the top-down formulation and implementation of these policies creates hierarchies and division among local communities and cultural practitioners. On the one hand, the policy design listing ICH items and transmitters on four different governmental levels creates an internal hierarchy which leads to a 'race to the top' among the local communities and cultural practitioners eager to inscribe their local traditional practice and climb the institutional ladder. On the other hand, local communities and cultural practitioners whose ICH practice or product is not selected are in the position of a comparative disadvantage. The political and social recognition of heritage thus ultimately creates distinctions between cultural practitioners which have profound impacts on how ICH is transmitted and by whom. While these exclusion and inclusion effects have been similarly mentioned in other studies, the Chinese inscription system for ICH items and ICH transmission stands out as it adds internal competition to these effects in the form of its four-tier inscription hierarchy.

Moreover, due to the prerogative of the government-scholar evaluation committee to select ICH items and transmitters for inscription, the local community does not obtain the right to decide for themselves who is representative of their local ICH. As a result, certain ICH items and transmitters are legitimized as rightful representatives of local culture, thus gaining authority over its meaning and understanding, while the majority of ICH practices and cultural practitioners are excluded. These inclusion and exclusion effects give rise to competition among the local stakeholders involved who develop bottom-up strategies aimed at enhancing their agency within the heritagization process. In competing for inscription, these stakeholders appropriate their personal financial and social resources, particularly their social connections, as well as the official heritage discourse and heritage expertise to gain the upper hand in the competition. As a result, contestations over claims to represent local traditional culture and the opportunity to obtain financial resources arise in a plurality of forms. For these reasons,

the top down formulation and implementation of the policy seems to not only *not* enhance the transmission of local traditional culture, but also partly to discourage local practitioners from continuing their work as a whole, as they feel marginalized from their right of cultural representation. Yet, more research is needed concerning which ramifications top-down policy formulation and implementation of so-called 'best practices' in the field of ICH protection have for local stakeholders involved. In particular, more knowledge needs to be generated on how the implementation of ICH policies creates 'windows of opportunities' for local actors to advance their individual agency and which resulting local inclusion and exclusion effects can be observed. In shedding light on these questions, it will become easier to differentiate whether these implications are due to deficiencies in the policy design itself or in the way local stakeholders implement the policy.

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6 Heritagizing the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival in Hong Kong

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Abstract
This chapter narrates how and why the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival in Hong Kong has become a national intangible cultural heritage of China. The festival reflects religious needs, nostalgia for a traditional lifestyle, and an attempt to gain recognition for cultural traditions and identities. Among some segments of the Chaozhou community in China, the festival was also a deliberate attempt to use heritage status to create stronger ties with Chaozhou communities in Hong Kong and express support for the mainland government. The struggle for heritage recognition in this case took place within the larger framework of Hong Kong identity politics and pro-China politics.

Keywords: intangible cultural heritage, Hungry Ghosts Festival, politics, identities, Hong Kong

Introduction

This chapter examines how the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival has become intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in Hong Kong and China. This process is different from the heritagization of religion in mainland China. In the PRC, the heritagization of religion is often directly initiated by the state for political purposes (e.g. Cooke this volume, Dean 1998: 154-155; Chan and Lang 2015). The heritagization of religious sites often coincides with moral and spiritual campaigns endorsed by the state, and strengthens

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state legitimacy and promotes nationalism (e.g. Laukkanan this volume, Shepherd 2013; Shepherd and Yu 2013: 48, 67; Sofield and Li 1998: 370). For local governments, heritagization is also an important means of economic development (e.g. Tam this volume), especially in the less developed regions where the ethnic minorities live (see e.g. Oakes and Sutton 2010; Chan and Ma 2004: 29). In Hong Kong, however, it was a non-governmental organization, comprised of a group of wealthy Chaozhou merchants, which took the initiative in turning the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival into ICH. This chapter demonstrates how the invisible hand of the state has successfully extended its cultural governance to Hong Kong through non-governmental, ethnic-based organizations in the postcolonial territory. I shall also demonstrate how the heritagization of the festival allows us to make sense of the ethnic relationships in Hong Kong, the state-society dynamics, as well as the social, cultural, and political meanings of ICH. My findings are different from most existing studies on heritage in Hong Kong, which focus on civil conservation efforts and the controversy over the political economy of built heritage (Ku 2010; Lu 2009). Existing research on built cultural heritage largely examines the contestation of Hong Kong memories, development-conservation tensions, state-society-capital conflicts (Henderson 2008; Cheung 1999; Ku 2010, 2012; Lu 2009), and voluntarism through private donations by philanthropists or self-governing funded bodies (Cheng and Ma 2009; Ma 2010). This case study of the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival argues that relatively cooperative state-society dynamics were found in the process of heritagizing the cultural festival. Promoting ICH has enhanced both Chaozhou and Hong Kong identities.

This chapter is based on information collected from anthropological fieldwork conducted during the period from 2012 to 2015. Observations were made in 56 different communities where the festival was held and more than 300 in-depth interviews were conducted with participants, worshippers, NGO workers, tourists, and government officials.

Religious activities for the Chaozhou migrants in Hong Kong

Much has been written on the Hungry Ghosts Festival. Some researchers have traced the origin of the Festival to India and its historical connection with the filial piety of Confucianism, as well as the traditions of Buddhism and Daoism. Historically, the Hungry Ghosts Festival originated from Buddhism in India. In China, it is known as *Yulanpen*, and the story of how Mulian (the Chinese name for Buddha's disciple Maudgalyâyâna) saved

his mother from punishment in hell through ritual chanting is widely known today. The festival has been held since 538 AD with Buddhist rituals established by Emperor Liangwudi in commemoration of ancestors (Huang 2011: 181). In other words, filial piety in Confucianism has been upheld through the ritual practices of the aristocracy at the Hungry Ghosts Festival. Emperors in subsequent dynasties also followed these practices. Since the Tang and Song dynasties (618-1279 AD), the story of how Mulian saved his mother has been further popularized through performances in local operas (Telser 1988: 97). From the Song dynasty (960-1279 AD) onwards, Daoist rituals have also been incorporated into the Hungry Ghosts Festival. The festival subsequently gained popularity among the commoners who were Daoist worshippers (Telser 1988: 92, 95). The meaning of the festival has been expanded from venerating ancestors to commemorating those who lost their innocent lives to misfortune. Meanwhile, people invented practices where small boats with lit candles were released into the river, and the ships would supposedly float to the 'River of Hell' – a place where all spirits of the dead rest. Apparently, these candles would illuminate the darkness of the river, therefore leading the spirits with this light, expiating the sins of the dead, and releasing their souls from purgatory (Huang 2011: 187).

Research on the contemporary practices of the Hungry Ghosts Festival focuses on Chinese communities in Hong Kong (Chan 2015; Waters 2004; Sinn and Wong 2005; Issei 2014; Tsao 1989; Yu 2012), Singapore (Chong 2014; Heng 2014), Taiwan (Weller 1987), and Malaysia (Debernardi 1984, 2004).[2] The festival is a good platform for understanding the dynamics between the confrontational and/or cooperative relationship between society and the state, as well as ethnic communal relationships with other social groups. In Hong Kong, there were at least 118 celebrations of the Hungry Ghosts Festival held at various public places by different ethnic communities in the seventh lunar month in 2014. Among them, at least 56 celebrations were the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival organized by Chaozhou people, while the rest were held by Hoklo and Cantonese people.[3] Celebrations of the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival are conducted in public space, ranging from one to six days.

2 Mainland China suppressed ritual practices during the Cultural Revolution. In the 1980s, revival began shortly after with the market reforms.

3 The number of performances held in public spaces varies from year to year. It depends on whether the local community has the manpower and financial resources to organize them. For details, see Chan 2015.

The earliest performance of the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival in Hong Kong was initiated by a group of Chaozhou migrants who worked at the piers as coolies in the period when Hong Kong was developing into an entrepôt.[4] These coolies from Chaozhou arrived as refugees, without their families, to work in Hong Kong. Some died without having married and a few lost their lives during work. For these migrants, conducting rituals at the festival was merely an imitation of what they did back in their hometowns. In the rituals, they commemorated these bachelor fellow-workers who died from industrial accidents or misfortune. It was believed that these people would become vicious ghosts if they were not properly worshipped after death. The Hungry Ghosts Festival was therefore meant to pacify those who died due to misfortune and to ensure that peace and order would prevail in the local community (Chan 2015). At the same time, the festival was also an occasion for the migrants to worship their ancestors, as they were unable, in those days, to return home to sweep their tombs.

From local religious festival to Chinese national ICH

The Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival officially became Hong Kong's ICH in 2009 and China's national-level ICH in 2011, based on the authenticity of its cultural practices and rituals (see details below). Nevertheless, in reality, these features alone were not adequate for the authorization of the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival as Chinese national ICH. Social capital, relationships, and networks between officials in the PRC and the Chaozhou communities also played a significant role in the heritagization of the Hungry Ghosts Festival. In this context, social capital implies resources based on relationships and networks between officials in the PRC and organizers of the festival in the local community. Similarly, Maags (this volume) has also highlighted how the successful of ICH and ICH transmitters in mainland China also relied on good connections to heritage experts and officials.

In the following, I will first delineate how social capital owned by two pro-China non-governmental organizations played an important role in the heritagization of the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival. These two organizations are the Federation of Hong Kong Chaozhou Community Organization

4 Sinn and Wong 2005 used oral histories to delineate the origins of the Hungry Ghosts Festival among the Chaozhou ethnic group in early Hong Kong. Tanaka 2014 described rituals conducted by the Chaozhou people during the Hungry Ghosts Festival at different districts in 1978. For details on the origins of the earliest Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival, see Chan 2015.

(FHKCCO) and the East Kowloon Chaoren Association (EKCA). The FHKCCO was founded in 2001 with members who were predominantly wealthy merchants of Chaozhou ethnicity. Its objective is to unite the Chaozhou people in Hong Kong, to promote development in Chaozhou in Mainland China, to encourage cooperation in different forms between people in Chaozhou and Hong Kong, and to foster cooperation among Chaozhou people globally. Similarly, the EKCA was founded in 2008 with the purpose of serving the Chaozhou people in eastern Kowloon and Hong Kong, and uniting Chaozhou people locally (East Kowloon Chaoren Association 2012). It is not unusual for people to join and become active members of both associations. These two organizations were established with the encouragement of the PRC government after Hong Kong's reunification with China in 1997.[5] From the PRC government's standpoint, these organizations were set up to enhance communication networks with the inhabitants of different local communities in Hong Kong. From the standpoint of the board members at the FHKCCO and EKCA, the organizations were established to help facilitate networks among the merchants[6], as well as to enhance their relationship with the PRC government, because most board members are businessmen who have investments in China.[7] Both the FHKCCO and the EKCA have close connections with local officials from Chaozhou in Mainland China as well as officials from the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). In 2009, members from the EKCA learned from the government officials in Chaozhou in Mainland China that the next applications for inscription on the third national list of ICH in China would soon begin. The EKCA contacted the FHKCCO, which subsequently assumed leadership of the application for the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival as Hong Kong's ICH, as well as Chinese national ICH. Indeed, it is the social network owned by the EKCA that sowed the seeds of this application. More importantly, the social capital owned by the FHKCCO and EKCA also directed them to people who could help them write a good application. Through the contacts of the EKCA in Mainland China and through the introduction of the cultural bureau in Chaozhou, a team of cultural experts was solicited to write an application and to film a video. These experts in the cultural bureau were cultural brokers who had

5 The Chinese government encouraged the formation or revival of many ethnic-based and hometown associations in Hong Kong.

6 Liu 1998 mentioned that clansmen associations or the Chinese Chambers of Commerce in Singapore are settings for businessmen to create and enhance business networks.

7 Most of the merchants have investments in China, especially their hometowns.

experience in writing cultural heritage applications in Mainland China and were familiar with the style, format, and arguments favoured by the Chinese government.

Firstly, the legitimacy of claiming the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival as national ICH is derived from its belonging to a religious tradition, its well-established local communal practices, as well as the consistent support of the Hong Kong government since colonial times. The application document began by narrating the historical background of the Hungry Ghosts Festival with reference to Buddhism and Daoism (Ministry of Culture 2009). In other words, the legitimacy of this religious festival is predicated on a major religious tradition. The document highlighted how the festival was brought over to Hong Kong in the late nineteenth century by the Chaozhou migrants and has been held at over 60 public places in Hong Kong.[8] It also described how the Hungry Ghosts Festival had experienced difficulties during the Japanese War and still survived to the present day. It claimed that support for the annual festival from the Hong Kong government as well as various government departments was evident even in colonial times.

Secondly, the submission document also noted that the knowledge and practices of the Hungry Ghosts Festival have historical, social, moral, and economic value. The document addressed the economic contribution by claiming that HK$600,000-700,000 was spent on each site every year.[9] Different material and immaterial aspects of the religious festival, such as the construction of temporary altars, food, rituals, and Chaozhou drama were claimed to be representations of spiritual, social, and cultural values, which promote moral virtues of filial piety, charity, and kindness. Grassroots organizers who were well connected to the two organizations provided ritual details.

Thirdly, the submission document also used jargon and phrases that were commonly used by the Chinese government in managing religion. For instance, it highlighted the celebration of the festival as a classic expression of Chinese traditional culture and arts, as well as a popular traditional folk custom (*minjian chuantong wenhua*). Traditional folk custom is indeed a common term used by the Chinese government, especially in the endorsement of religious practices as legitimate activities (see also Chan and Lang 2015; Palmer 2009; Goossaert and Palmer 2011). Fourthly, the

8 In an interview with Patrick Hase, it was revealed that 64 sites performed the Hungry Ghosts Festival in 1980. The actual content of the performances varied according to the limitation of space and budget.

9 One US dollar is around 7.76 Hong Kong dollars.

Figure 6.1 Hungry Ghosts Festival in Causeway Bay, Hong Kong

Photograph by Selina Chan

document narrated the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival as a platform for the participants to enhance communication with each other and exercise communal support. The festival was said to connect the Chaozhou people with each other, and provide an opportunity to demonstrate their love for their hometown and motherland, as well as patriotism. The celebration of the festival was therefore described as helpful for the construction of Hong Kong as a *hexie shehui* (harmonious society).[10] This is clearly in line with the Chinese government's practice of using religion for social unity. It views the festival as a way to serve nationalism and to build a harmonious socialist society.

The document was first submitted to the HKSAR government for approval. The Expert Panel at the Advisory Committee of ICH considered the following factors: '1. the number of operators of the festival; 2. cultural continuity and support by younger generation; 3. uniqueness to Hong Kong;

10 The concept of a harmonious society was first coined during the National People's Congress meeting in 2005, as a response to the conflicts brought by social injustice and inequality from the market reforms.

4. historicity; 5. communal relations"[11] (Chan 2015: 4-5). The panel agreed that the festival is a representative illustration of Hong Kong culture with significant historical and communal value, and approved its application as Hong Kong's ICH. After obtaining the approval of the HKSAR government, the proposal was submitted to the Ministry of Culture in the PRC central government for consideration as national ICH. In May 2011, the Chinese government approved the application and the festival officially became classified as national-level ICH. The Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival belongs to the category of 'folk customs of traditional rituals and festivals' with 'diverse ethnic, territorial, historical, communal, and normative features' in accordance with the Chinese government's ICH policy.

It is clear that social capital owned by these associations is of prime importance to the successful application of the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival as Chinese national ICH. The close connections of these two associations with the Chinese officials offered them important information and networks to prepare for the applications. This is similar to the situation in mainland China where Maags (this volume) pointed out that personal connections with government officials and experts play an important role in obtaining official recognition of ICH items and becoming listed as cultural transmitters.

In Hong Kong, the economic capital owned by the two associations also facilitated the application procedures in monetary terms. In this connection, one could compare and contrast the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival with the Cantonese Hungry Ghosts Festival or the Hoklo Hungry Ghosts Festival in Hong Kong. Among the 118 public performances of the Hungry Ghosts Festival in 2014, 62 were conducted by the Cantonese and the Hoklo people. Similar to the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival, performances at these festivals also have a long history in Hong Kong and the features bear ethnic significance. Interestingly, neither the Cantonese nor the Hoklo version of the Hungry Ghosts Festival was similarly classified as national ICH.[12] Apparently, the lack of strong organizations representing these ethnic groups and the lack of social capital as well as economic capital led to the fact that no other ethnic groups submitted applications for the Hungry Ghosts Festival.[13] In sum, the authorization of national ICH reveals an unequal power distribution among different ethnic groups in the local

11 The author was one of the members of the Expert Panel at the Advisory Committee of ICH.

12 The majority of the Chinese people in Hong Kong are Cantonese.

13 Cantonese and Hoklo Hungry Ghosts Festival became Hong Kong's ICH in 2014 when the HKSAR government sent a team to conduct an ICH survey in the territory.

community. The lack of social and economic capital of a particular ethnic group may undermine its opportunity to have its culture represented as an authorized national ICH.

Religion, heritage, and identities: People, media, and NGOs

Although the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival has been organized predominantly by the Chaozhou people, it is now widely participated in by various ethnic groups. Today, participants come to the festival for the sake of commemorating ancestors and mourning those who died in accidents without being properly mourned. They believe that religious activities bring peace to the local community. Moreover, charitable activities are also conducted during the festival, such as giving free rice to the needy.[14] For many Hungry Ghosts Festival organizers and participants, participation in the festival is also a family tradition. The stories of two prominent Chaozhou merchants, Ma and Hui, may further enlighten us on how religious practices are the result of family socialization. Both Ma and Hui are first-generation migrants from Chaozhou, regular worshippers at the Hungry Ghosts Festival, and wealthy merchants. Ma is from a religious family who regularly patronizes the Hungry Ghosts Festival in the neighbourhood where his father lived and became wealthy. Following the example of his father, who was a key donor to the festival held in the community where they lived, he also supports the festival by donating a substantial amount of money. Similarly, Hui also learned the praying practices at the Hungry Ghosts Festival from the family. Like Ma, he donates a substantial amount of money to support the organization of the Hungry Ghosts Festival in the community where his business is located. For Hui, the belief in gods and ancestors embedded in the Hungry Ghosts Festival forms a good source of moral control, which he cherishes. Many participants at the festival perceive participation in voluntary work and the donations of money and resources to the Hungry Ghosts Festival as a way to cultivate moral virtues (*gongde*, *xiuxing*), which is believed to result in better luck and health (Chan 2015: 141-145).[15]

It is clear that the religious meanings and practices of the Hungry Ghosts Festival continue to exist in today's Hong Kong after its heritagization.

14 For details on the practice of giving rice, see Chan 2015.

15 Some became devoted worshippers because of a personal miraculous transcendental experience of religious efficacy (Chan 2015: 141-145).

This is thus rather different from some situations found in China where heritagization was sometimes known to have negatively impacted the local religious community or damaged the original religious meanings. In Wutaishan, the heritagization of religion has led to the displacement of residents and the destruction of homes (Shepherd and Yu 2013: 89). In Guizhou, the religious exorcism ritual of *tiaoshen* has lost its original meanings as a dynamic expression of faith in the heritagization process. Instead, it has become a fossilized form of cultural heritage called *dixi*, and is a frozen cultural object, a state fossil, an archaic tradition, a national heritage, a kind of heritage entertainment, a mini-industry, and a tourist attraction (Oakes and Sutton 2010: 52-53; Dean and Lamarre 2004: 257, 267), which was obviously the result of interference by the state and markets (Oakes and Sutton 2010: 61). The religious ritual has become 'meaningless' to the locals as the original religious elements and local history of violent conquest and identity were diluted and displaced. In contrast, the religious meanings of the festival continue to exist among the participants.

In addition, new secular, social, and political meanings have also been added. The Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival has been objectified as a representation of Chaozhou heritage. My interviews with many organizers reveal that the heritagization process has empowered the organizers, been a source of pride for the Chaozhou ethnic group, and enhanced Chaozhou identity among the Chaozhou community in Hong Kong.[16] An informant proudly recounted his experience: 'Yesterday, there was a German lady coming to our site. She came here after reading the recommendation made by the Tourism Bureau. I showed her around and explained to her the details of the rituals. Now more and more foreigners are coming to see our festival.' The informant was very proud of the local custom and felt that he was doing a meaningful job in promoting Chaozhou culture. Similarly, another informant said: 'Since the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival became a national ICH, I have been feeling very honoured. We Chaozhou people earned face [prestige].' Indeed, the heritagization of the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival has psychologically empowered many of the organizers at the Hungry Ghosts Festival and reinforced their Chaozhou identity.

Moreover, Chaozhou heritage has also been objectified as a representation of Hong Kong heritage after it became an authorized heritage. Shortly after the success of listing the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival as national ICH, the festival attracted the public's and the media's attention. A popular

16 Earlier, Sinn and Wong 2005 pointed out that the organization of the festival has empowered the grassroots organizers and enhanced their identity.

local magazine reported the details of the Hungry Ghosts Festival with texts and pictures in two consecutive issues. The first issue explains the historical origins of the Hungry Ghosts Festival in Hong Kong by describing how it was introduced by the Chaozhou people who migrated to Hong Kong (Chan2011a: 37). It provides a detailed narration of the spatial arrangement of temporary halls in public spaces during the festival (Ming Pao Weekly 2011a: 38-39). It also contains an explanation of how rituals, paper offerings, food offerings, and opera performances at the festival reflect Chaozhou ethnicity (Chan2011a: 40-52, 54-57). The charitable aspect of the festival is also delineated (Chan2011a: 53). Furthermore, individuals were interviewed to discuss their passion for the cultural dimensions of the Hungry Ghosts Festival, such as opera, rituals, and dialect. The festival is interpreted as an opportunity for the people living in the community to gather together (Chan2011a 2231: 58-61). In addition, the decline of the festival at some of the sites in Hong Kong is also covered (Chan2011b: 45-47). Urbanization, secularization, and inadequate manpower and funds are identified as key risk factors.

Ways to preserve and maintain the festival were explored in an interview with a government official from the Cultural Museum and Mr Hui from the FHKCCO. Up until 2015, the Hong Kong government in fact did very little.[17] It has promoted public awareness of the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival as ICH while working together with local academics, experts, and organizers of the festival to arrange some cultural tours as well as place information display boards at some of the sites during the festival. In effect, the ICH Office (ICHO) was only established in May 2015.[18] It aims to conduct research and record Hong Kong's ICH, as well as to promote public awareness. The ICHO has uploaded a list of videos of Hong Kong's ICH, including videos of the Hungry Ghosts Festival.

In contrast, NGOs assumed leadership in promoting the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival shortly after it became an authorized ICH. The FHKCCO was the first organization to promote the festival. The organization and its members believed the heritagization of the festival brought a sense of

17 In 2014, a territory-wide survey on ICH was launched. Several tasks have been undertaken: 'i. discussion with local informants to establish the locality, timing, event programme and bearers of ICH; ii. oral history survey with the identified ICH bearers on details of the heritage items; iii. photographic and video recording of the particular event in which the ICH takes place; and iv. collection of instruments, objects, artefacts and documents associated with the ICH items' (Chau 2011: 125).

18 The office was in fact upgraded from the ICH Unit that was formed under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department in 2006.

pride to Chaozhou people in Hong Kong. In 2012, the book *National ICH: Zhongyuanjie: Special Issue on the Hong Kong Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival* was published with the support of the FHKCCO. From 2012 to 2015, the FHKCCO obtained funds from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust to begin a series of conservation activities, such as inviting a scholar to conduct anthropological fieldwork and to write a book[19] as well as to set up a website about the festival. In 2014, the FHKCCO also contracted a local TV station to make a documentary about the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival. In 2015, a website about the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival was set up.

In addition, other NGOs in Hong Kong also began to pay attention to the festival and promote it. Several types of activities were organized: display boards at festival sites, cultural tours, seminars, and workshops. Students, local cultural enthusiasts, and the general public have been the target audience of these various activities. Although the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival conveys the significance of Chaozhou heritage, Hong Kong heritage, as well as Chinese heritage at three different levels, NGOs other than the FHKCCO tend to place more emphasis on its Hong Kong heritage. In fact, some NGOs do not only promote the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival exclusively, but also draw public attention to the versions of the Hungry Ghosts Festival organized by other ethnic groups in Hong Kong, such as the Cantonese and the Hoklo, which have been recognized as Hong Kong's ICH since 2014. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the 'authorized' national Chinese ICH – the Chaozhou version of the Hungry Ghosts Festival – receives more promotion and attention than others.

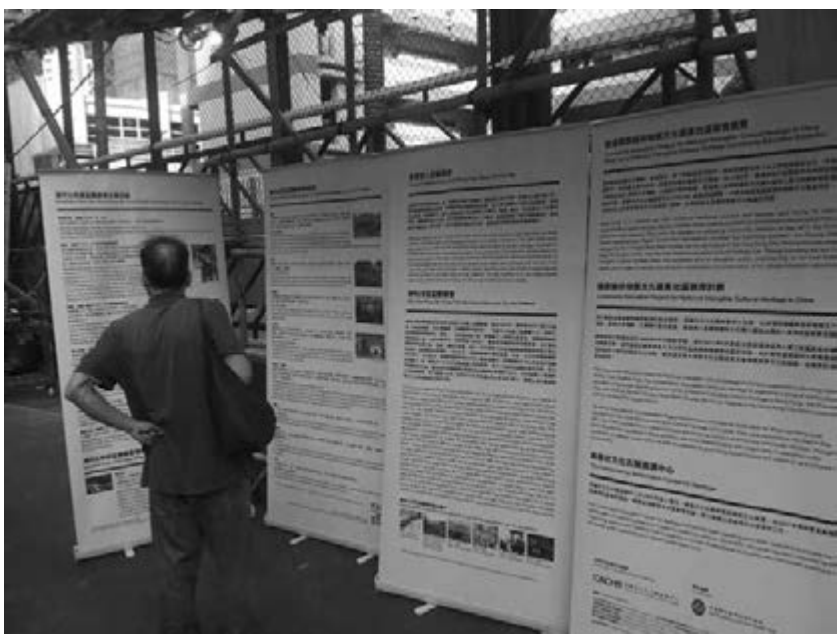
Today, the festival has not only become a popular Hong Kong festival, but also a representation of Hong Kong culture and a symbol of nostalgia that has attracted the public gaze. This is partly due to the pervasiveness of Hong Kong nostalgia among its people since decolonization. Nostalgia in Hong Kong was reinforced by the anxiety surrounding Hong Kong's reunification with China and the fear over the loss of autonomy and independence after 1997 (Chan 2010). Part of the nostalgia was intensified by anxiety and anger over the economic downturn in Hong Kong after 1997 (Chan 2010). Nostalgia also emerges as an increasing number of people become displaced by modernization, industrialization, and environmental degradation (Chan 2010). In the context of decolonization, nostalgia has become a refuge for the Hong Kong people and has also raised wider public concern over local history, cultures, and traditions (Chan 2010). Both

19 The author is the writer of the book *Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival: Collective Memories, Intangible Cultural Heritage, and Identities*, which was published in Chinese in 2015.

Figure 6.2 Banner which congratulates the heritagization of Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival in Mongkok area, Hong Kong

Photograph by Selina Chan

Figure 6.3 Display Board at the Hungry Ghosts Festival in Causeway Bay, Hong Kong



Photograph by Selina Chan

intellectuals and ordinary Hong Kong people tend to actively remember and create memories related to local cultures. Such an awareness of history and tradition is indeed a common decolonization experience. Like most colonies, Hong Kong's own history and culture were never emphasized and never taught systematically in schools during the colonial regime. Local history and tradition began to become an important discourse only during Hong Kong's decolonization and reunification with China. They are important resources for the Hong Kong people to construct their own heritage and identity, and to create a boundary and distinction between themselves and the Mainland Chinese.

It is not unusual for cultural enthusiasts to capture the details of the festival at different districts, regardless of ethnicities, and upload their pictures onto different websites. Although many of these pictures were taken during ritual performances, there is no explanation of the religious meanings. Instead of focusing on the religious meanings of the rituals, the secular meanings of the Hungry Ghosts Festival as a representation of Hong Kong culture and heritage have been highlighted.

In addition, the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival is a way for many Hong Kong people to remember communal relationships nostalgically. Many festival participants from various communities who were interviewed highlighted that the festival had created special relationships between their community and themselves, and stated that the structure of the current society has undergone a huge change. To add to this, these people said that the Hungry Ghosts Festival in the past was more or less filled with people. During the festival, they met others from their neighbourhood, made new friends, and volunteered to organize the festival, which gave them a feeling of communal belongingness. Every time it came near to the date of the festival, people living in the community donated money to sponsor the event. On the day of the festival, families in the area would excitedly attend the activities, full of enthusiasm and in good spirits. Some informants have fond memories of families exchanging special ethnic food during the festival. Adults would worship the gods whilst children played in the area with their neighbours and friends. There were hawkers selling candyfloss, fish balls, and many other snacks. Some hawkers even sold traditional Chinese figures made of flour. Many people, when asked about the festival in past times, described it as a 'funfair' or 'enjoyable carnival'. In the past, Chaozhou opera performances on stage typically lasted overnight, prompting many of the elderly spectators to stay up and watch. However, performances now end at 11 p.m. because of the strict sound pollution laws that have recently been introduced.

Performances that cannot completely finish before 11 p.m. are sometimes cut in half, and the second part of the show is performed on the following night.

Participants of the Hungry Ghosts Festival also recalled that soliciting donations from the community for the festival had always been easy in the past because people knew each other and had close relationships. In former times there were plenty of shops in every neighbourhood that sold rice, miscellaneous objects, porridge, and noodles. As members of the community, shop owners were willing to contribute to support the festival, especially if they were ethnic Chaozhou people. Over the past few decades, rental costs have increased tremendously in Hong Kong. Small shops have difficulty surviving and chain stores have gradually replaced them. Factories have moved to the mainland because of the high labour costs in Hong Kong. To add to that, the people in the modern society very rarely know each other well, and people who live in luxurious buildings have high levels of security that also prevent the organizers from going door to door asking for donations. A lot of people who were interviewed commented on the extreme difficulty of collecting money nowadays, and missed the former communal relationships in their community. When they recall their fond memories of the festival in the past, they are lamenting the loss of communal relationships in modern Hong Kong. Nevertheless, these nostalgic memories are subjective accounts of the past in which tension and conflict among neighbours over the organization of the festival are forgotten. Indeed, nostalgia is an imagination of the past from the present.

Politicizing ICH

Apart from the social and cultural meanings of the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival, the political use of heritage is also interesting to note. The Chinese state utilizes religion as heritage for political and social unity. Unity among ethnic groups is often a theme found in the heritage preservation projects for ethnic minorities (e.g. Sutton and Kang 2010: 115). Unity among the Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese is another key in the heritage preservation of folk religion. Mazu and Huang Daxian religious practices in Fujian and Zhejiang are tolerated as they are placed within the framework of cultural nationalism and the PRC government's goal of reunifying Taiwan to China, as well as attracting Hong Kong worshippers (Dean 1998; Chan and Lang 2015). Mazu religious rituals have been recognized as one of the items

in the first batch of national-level ICH in 2006. Similarly, Daoist legends of Huang Daxian were also identified as ICH at the city-prefectural level and provincial level in 2006 and 2007, respectively (Chan and Lang 2015: 56). Both Mazu religious rituals and Huang Daxian legends and music were emphasized as ICH with the aims of social and political unity.

From the PRC government's viewpoint, the Hungry Ghosts Festival should play an active role in uniting the Hong Kong people. This message is clearly revealed in the speech delivered by the Deputy Director General of New Territories, Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR, when he attended the Hong Kong Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival Preservation Seminar organized by the FHKCCO on 6 August 2012. He highlighted that the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival should perform its important role in Hong Kong, with the aim to pray for health and harmony for the family, the community, the harmonious society (*hexie shehui*) as well as the peace of the world.[20] From the perspective of the Deputy Director General and the Chinese government, the festival helps to maintain stability. It is therefore a positive source of energy for uniting Hong Kong people.

Indeed, the Chinese government has appropriated the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival in order to support the national narrative of cultivating a harmonious society. This agenda is also found at many other heritage preservation projects in the PRC. In Wutaishan, Shanxi Province, the promotion of cultural (religious) festivals was viewed as a way to support the official national ideology of building a harmonious society (Ryan and Gu 2010: 171; Shepherd and Yu 2013: 46, 55, 66). Heritage preservation in the PRC is always for the development of national consciousness, reflection of socialist values, cultivation of a civilized consciousness, and contribution of economic development and modernization. Political unity and social harmony are moral values embedded in the symbol of ICH.

Unlike contemporary times in which the state actively creates and promotes the social and political dimensions of heritage, ordinary people actively promoted ICH in the Republican times for political and nationalistic purposes. The Hungry Ghosts Festival in Guangzhou was nationalized when national heroes were deliberately commemorated in order to avoid the condemnation of such rituals as 'superstition' (Poon 2004: 213, 217). Similarly, the Hungry Ghosts Festival in Nanjing in 1935 was also meant to

20 Cultivating a *hexieshehui* (harmonious society) is one of four key points highlighted by Hu Jintao in his policy.

commemorate those officials and soldiers who died in the war (Nedostup 2008: 105). Government officials were invited by the community organizers to attend the festival, giving it the stamp of state approval. The aim of these activities was to legitimize the Hungry Ghosts Festival, as the Republican government often perceived it as a superstitious activity as well as a waste of money. These activities also revealed the political aspect of religious life of ordinary people.

In today's Hong Kong, the heritagization of the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival provides an occasion for the FHKCCO to arrange activities relating to the festival and to unite the Chaozhou people. For instance, shortly after the success of the application for the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival to become national ICH, the FHKCCO organized a celebratory banquet. Organizers of the festival at different local communities in Hong Kong, prominent Chaozhou people in business and government sectors, government officials from Hong Kong and the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR were invited to join the celebration. This is indeed the first time organizers of the festival at different local communities gathered in one place. In addition, the FHKCCO also arranges seminars on the Hungry Ghosts Festival. These are occasions where organizers from different districts can get together, although the interaction among these organizers is limited and social unity among them is rarely achieved through the seminars. In reality, organizers at different local communities have different views on ritual practices and celebrations, and conduct them in their own ways while observing the core structure of the rituals.

Interestingly, the heritagization of ICH provides a good opportunity for the pro-China non-governmental organizations to express their political views and to assist the Chinese government to extend its governance to local communities in Hong Kong. In fact, the political use of the festival in Hong Kong was clearly revealed in the mobilization of the pro-China campaign when a crisis in governance was observed in 2014-2015. During that period Hong Kong faced the controversy of universal suffrage, when protestors, in what became known as the Occupy Central or Umbrella Movement, took to the streets and halted traffic in a number of busy locations, including the key Central District.[21] Different factions in Hong Kong responded to the Anti-Occupy Central movement in different ways. While some expressed support for it, others were against it.[22]

21 For details, see Ortmann 2015.

22 Details are beyond the scope of this chapter.

The pro-China organizations in Hong Kong collectively organized the 'Alliance for Peace and Democracy' to support the Anti-Occupy Central movement. There were 1526 organizations participating in the Alliance and the FHKCCO was one of them. On 19 July 2014, the Alliance started a month-long campaign to collect signatures from the Hong Kong people to support the Anti-Occupy Central movement. Since most Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival organizers adopted a pro-China stance, many of them welcomed counters to be set up at Festival performance sites for collecting signatures from supporters of this movement.

In the Anti-Occupy Central movement, the Alliance also mobilized Hong Kong citizens to stage a demonstration on 17 August 2014. The FHKCCO also responded by actively mobilizing various organizations to participate in this event (FHKCCC 2014). At a lunch seminar on the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival on 30 July 2014, the FHKCCO also assembled organizers at various districts in Hong Kong to participate in the demonstration. Meanwhile, many organizers of the Hungry Ghosts Festival also mobilized participants and friends to participate in the demonstration. Many of these organizers said that the EKCCO encouraged them to bring several dozen participants from each district. A couple of organizers from different districts told me that many of them wanted to join the demonstration but they were over 70 years old and unable to endure the physical exertion of the three-hour demonstration in the summer heat. It was reported that 111,800 people joined the demonstration (Hong Kong Economic Journal 2014).

As a result of heritagization of the festival, the FHKCCO and EKCCO have been able to connect with grassroots organizers and to mobilize the locals to participate in the Anti-Occupy Central movement. In other words, the festival has become a good source of political mobilization for these two pro-China organizations. In the case of Hong Kong, FHKCCO and EKCCO and many grassroots organizers of the festival actually share the same views as the Chinese government, specifically on the issue of the Anti-Occupy Central movement. The festival has become a platform for FHKCCO and EKCCO to mobilize many grassroots participants to voice their opinion against the occupation of Central, which is in line with the stance of the central government. This situation is however different from those found in mainland China where local actors merely utilized the government's political agenda for their own benefits, such as developing local tourism as observed in the studies of Huang Daxian (Chan and Lang 2015) or ethnic minorities (Sutton and Kang 2010).

Conclusion

This chapter takes a processual approach to examine the creation of the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival as an official national ICH and its implications. The successful listing of national ICH reveals the politics of ethnic representation, the power dynamics of different ethnic groups, as well as the state-society dynamics. The process of authorizing the ICH of the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival in Cantonese-dominated Hong Kong society reveals how the 'margin' attempts to rewrite itself into the 'centre'.

This chapter also highlights that although the state has attempted to use religious heritage as a means of cultural governance and to impose political and moral meanings on the festival, various actors and social groups seem to have reacted in different ways and granted it multiple meanings. For ordinary people, nationalism is apparently not the dominant meaning embedded in the festival, even though it was promoted by the PRC government. For organizers and participants, support for the festival is based on religious, charitable, communal, and ethnic reasons. For some organizers, the festival commemorates the socio-economic stories of their predecessors in the early migrant community of Hong Kong and carries communal memories. For all organizers, the festival is also a venue for them to promote Chaozhou culture and ethnic identity. In fact, the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival has now assumed exhibitionary functions. For the FHKCCO, promoting the Hungry Ghosts Festival as Chinese ICH is a way to promote ethnic cultures and to unite the Chaozhou ethnicity of different classes in Hong Kong. It is also intended to draw a closer relationship with and to present a patriotic stance to the Chinese government. For non-Chaozhou Hong Kong locals, ritual performances at the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival are viewed as part of Hong Kong culture, something to gaze on nostalgically, to enjoy, and to commemorate. For NGOs that promote the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival, their objective is to enhance the locals' understanding of cultures, history, and heritage in Hong Kong. Like the Hong Kong people, NGOs' interests in and appreciation of the festival have become an expression and celebration of Hong Kong identity. In sum, various groups are able to practise or participate in the Hungry Ghosts Festival for multiple reasons, such as performing religiosity, enhancing moral virtues, affirming ethnic identity, or defining national identity in line with the official authorities. These meanings of ICH are grounded in the actual experiences of different cultural actors and social groups. Meanings embedded in the development of ICH in Hong Kong are significantly different from those in mainland China, where state and markets dominate.

Although the state and the society appropriate the ICH of the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival for diverse and occasionally similar purposes, the state-society relationship is largely a harmonious one. This is unlike other cases of heritage studies in postcolonial Hong Kong where conflicting and confrontational relations were observed with anti-commercialism and civil disobedience as dominant features. The study of the heritagization of the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival demonstrates migrants' economic remembrance, nostalgic communal memories, and the complex discourse of identities in decolonized Hong Kong. The representation and utilization of the Chaozhou Hungry Ghosts Festival are means for different social groups and individual actors in Hong Kong to express their different levels of identities in various contexts and times.

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7 Recognition and Misrecognition

The Politics of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Southwest China

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Abstract
This chapter discusses how communities in northwest Yunnan are navigating heritage policies, showing different experiences and negotiations with the cultural heritage discourse. A discussion of Moso weavers in a northwest Yunnan village shows the intricate and complex ways heritage is understood and how this affects the local community. The label 'intangible cultural heritage', or 'transmitter of intangible cultural heritage', guarantees neither protection nor commercial viability for the time-consuming handicrafts. This chapter explores what heritage 'does' or 'does not' do to individuals, communities, and their cultural practices and products. It alerts us to the difficult tensions between transmission, innovation, protection, and commercial use, asking whether and how local communities have a say in the protection and development of their heritage.

Keywords: intangible cultural heritage, Moso, northwest Yunnan, weaving, cultural heritage in China

Ms Yang settled back as she watched the weaver deftly pass the yarn through the loom apparatus, vibrant colours layering upon one another as the scarf took shape.[1] She was proud of her efforts to promote weaving in her community, and prouder still of her success in branding the products

1 This chapter is a revised version of the paper presented at the Lund University Workshop on Cultural Heritage in China: 'Contested Understandings, Images, and Practices', 18 June 2015, organized by Marina Svensson. I thank the editors for their helpful comments on earlier drafts.

and registering the label of Mosuo hand-woven goods for use in Lijiang's many tourist shops.[2]

The culmination of over a decade's efforts, the weaving activities had not received much special attention at first. When I visited Ms Yang's home in Walabi, a village near the end of the road in Yongning Township in northwest Yunnan, in 2002, the items lining the walls of one room were not particularly market-oriented. As an anthropologist studying cultural change and education, though, I was very pleased to see these long-practiced crafts being revived and taught once again, albeit in a different way from the transmission among female kin, from one generation to another, that had formed a cornerstone of the household economy in an earlier era. Inexpensive, machine-produced textiles that reached Yongning several decades before had freed women from the laborious process of growing hemp and flax, spinning it into thread and yarn, stewing the fibres with lard to toughen them, then weaving those materials into cloth that the women would later sew into the family's clothes. Villages around China experienced similar transitions from home-spun linens and clothing to that produced by machines, and villagers turned to purchased clothing for everyday use as soon as they could manage the cost.[3]

But later, the hand-woven goods became the hub of a flurry of attention and publicity through the burgeoning tourist industry, not only at Lugu Lake, about an hour away on bumpy roads from Ms Yang's courtyard workshop, but also in the tourist mecca of Lijiang. Still later, weaving became one of the many processes absorbed into the intangible cultural heritage system, a system that had not even existed when Ms Yang first began teaching women to weave in the courtyard of her home.

How did weaving go from a nearly-lost process to a named, branded and officially registered practice? This chapter explores how this happened, examining the promises and contradictions of the system of which it is now part, and engaging with local ideas about intangible heritage designation in the process.

2 'Mosuo' is the transliteration of the Chinese name for members of this group of people from northwest Yunnan, numbering around 20,000. I normally use 'Moso' when writing in English, but use 'Mosuo' here for consistency with the heritage labels and media coverage introduced below.

3 Some villages struggled to afford machine-produced textiles: in one western Yunnan region, an entire village shared a single set of machine-produced clothes, of which they were very proud. This set of clothes was reserved for special occasions, when a person needed to leave the village for official purposes or to go to a market. Afterwards, the clothing was carefully washed for the next user.

Contingent heritage and soft power

Joshua Kurlantzick (2008) argues that soft power has become a key diplomatic strategy for the People's Republic of China. The Beijing Olympics, Shanghai Expo, and spread of Confucius Institutes worldwide all represent China's efforts to raise its profile internationally (Hubbert 2014).

So too does the rush to pursue intangible cultural heritage recognition from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (Shepherd 2014). Intangible cultural heritage, a category enshrined into the UNESCO pantheon of designable heritage only in 2003 (Bamo 2008; Ruggles and Silverman 2009; Smith and Akagawa 2009; Ye and Zhou 2013), represents the latest trend in a long cycle of changes in the ways ethnicity and cultural traditions have been alternately celebrated or denigrated in China (Svensson 2012: 193). As Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer have warned, however, 'Culture is a paradoxical commodity' (2002). This paradox resounds in China's deployment of its cultural patrimony as part of its soft power strategy.

As numerous case studies have made abundantly clear, what receives recognition from UNESCO is contingent on subjective and political factors (both within China and internationally) rather than objective designation (Blumenfield and Silverman 2013; Fiskesjö 2010; Silverman and Blumenfield 2013; Swain 2013). Intangible heritage, like other forms of cultural heritage, is arbitrary in its designation, but the recentness and speed with which it has been taken up is somewhat breathtaking. By the early 2010s, an inventory craze had swept the country, with 1372 national-level and 11,042 provincial-level intangible cultural heritage (ICH) items inscribed by 2016 (China Daily 2016). Many more items have been designated at the county and prefectural levels. From a sceptical nonbeliever's perspective, everything and anything is heritage; anything can be considered intangible cultural heritage (Di Giovine 2009; Hafstein 2009). Why, then, should we care about it? Should we care about it, or should we cynically dismiss it as the latest fad deserving of wall-painted slogans, press coverage, and scholarly attention?[4]

4 As Holbig and Maags have demonstrated, the number of scholarly articles on the topic in Chinese has risen exponentially since 2005. In their analysis of articles in the China Academic Journals Database, they found that only twelve articles between 1981-1999 mentioned 'UNESCO' (*Lianheguo jiaokewen zuzhe*) and 'cultural heritage' (*wenhua yichan*), with none mentioning 'intangible cultural heritage' (*feiwuzhi wenhua yichan*), or ICH. Articles about ICH began appearing in 2004, though not very many. By 2006, nearly 50 articles had appeared about ICH, with nearly 100 articles published on the topic in the following year. By 2011, the number of articles exceeded 200 (Holbig and Maags 2012).

Cynicism is difficult to avoid. After all, inherent within the ICH system is exclusion. Naming one practice as intangible heritage means that another practice is merely ordinary. Similarly, the process for naming ICH transmitters is fraught with all the problems and inequities that encompass much of life in contemporary China: who gets crowned with the title of 'intangible cultural heritage transmitter' has as much to do with who knows whom and who owes a favour to whom – the infamous *guanxi* system – as with who is a legitimate transmitter of a cultural practice. As Christina Maags has explored in her research on the intangible heritage transmitter designation process, the system can look entirely different from one province to the next, and from one community to the next, depending on who is in charge of the process and depending on how much importance a particular government (provincial, regional, or local) places on the intangible heritage designation process (Maags 2015; see chapter by Maags this volume). In a place like Yunnan Province, where ethnic culture is a crucial economic resource deployable through the tourism process, governments at every level have a strong incentive to invest in naming, promoting and celebrating intangible cultural heritage.

In northwest Yunnan, the politically savvy and well-connected Naxi people have successfully achieved designation of their principal city, Lijiang, as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site (Peters 2013; White 2010) and of Dongba painting as intangible cultural heritage. The nearby Mosuo people, less connected but with a world-renowned system of sexual visits and matrilineal households, have not managed to submit an application for similar status.[5] Officials at the Lijiang office in charge of cultural heritage explained to me in 2011 that this was partly because of internal quotas on how many applications could be put forth from a particular region – the Naxi already held several intangible and tangible cultural heritage designations, and since the Mosuo were classified as a subgroup of Naxi, they had already reached the quota. The officials also hinted at other extenuating circumstances, though they did not elaborate.

For its part, the online publication *InKunming* reported on the circumstances precluding submission of Mosuo cultural elements for intangible heritage status:

> He Hua, an official works [*sic*] in media of Ninglang County, said that both government in Lijiang City and Ninglang County have paid high attention to the protection of traditional Mosuo culture. 'At first, we

5 For an in-depth discussion of this system and other elements of Mosuo culture, see Blumenfield Kedar 2010.

> planned to apply for intangible cultural heritage of maternal culture, which was later said to be contradicting to the current laws, so we failed,' said he. Now, Lugu Lake has been listed as a cultural protection area by Lijiang City. (InKunming 2011)

Meanwhile, a Luoshui friend who saw the officials explained that their delegation had a pre-determined outcome. According to him, before arriving they had already decided not to protect the area or apply for heritage status, but they needed to give the appearance of investigating thoroughly. As the *InKunming* article noted, the reason they gave was incompatibility of the Mosuo sexual visit system with the values China wanted to promote (cf. Holbig and Maags 2012). But my Luoshui friend interpreted this as an excuse, informing me that the real reason for the rejection was the desire of the county government officials to avoid the restrictions on development that would inevitably accompany designation as cultural heritage.

Even without official designation as a national or international heritage zone, though, certain aspects of Mosuo culture are gaining attention through the intangible cultural heritage recognition system at the regional and provincial levels. Weavers like Ms Yang and other key individuals from this community are being hailed as 'intangible cultural heritage transmitters' and recognized at conferences and events that promulgate this new global brand. Exactly how is this taking shape, and with what effects?

Weaving Walabi

Dudjih Ma, or Yang Dajie (Big Sister Yang) has long been a fixture of Walabi. Tourism was on the rise at the nearby-yet-far-away Lugu Lake (it could take an hour over bumpy roads to get there, or longer in the rainy summer months), and while serving as the women's representative for the village, Ms Yang became concerned by the drain of village women to work in the less seemly sectors of the tourism industry. As one Walabi woman told me, 'Mosuo women are celebrated for being independent. [...] But life is actually very difficult for us Mosuo women. [...] So many of the younger women in the village are going to work at Lugu Lake.'[6] Against the lure of

6 Personal communication, July 2013. The documentary film *Fall of Womenland* (He, 2009) provides context for these comments.

more lucrative options, Ms Yang developed a system of home-based weaving cooperatives.

Beginning in 2002, I visited Walabi often as part of my research on cultural change and education, watching the project morph from a small effort with another woman in the courtyard, to a much larger affair with additional weaving spaces added behind the house and women weaving throughout the village.[7] I often saw women weaving in shops along the road, and sometimes encountered one or two women working in a family's courtyard. I also witnessed the explosion of the 'Mosuo weaving shop' phenomenon, complete with a 'Mosuo weaver' (or sometimes a young woman wearing Mosuo clothing), in Lijiang, Shuhe, and Luoshui.

Back in Walabi, though, like many projects, the weaving project was contentious and plagued by controversy. Was Ms Yang pocketing too much of the proceeds from weaving for herself? After all, she hosted the showroom in her home and opened it whenever visitors appeared – sometimes whole vans full of visitors who might purchase the women's products. Ms Yang coordinated with the outsiders who bought the woven goods for shops in Luoshui, Lijiang or Shuhe and arranged for the procurement of fibres that would be woven into scarves. With other family members, she eventually operated six shops of her own. Suspicions and envy emerged, and it was not long before competing arrangements appeared in the village.

Although more fragmented, the weaving efforts were so successful that women could barely keep up with the demand. When I visited in 2011, Ms Yang proudly told me that nobody left the village to work as a prostitute anymore. 'The ones who went out before are all back home now, with little children. The younger ones are going to school. Paying their school fees for elementary school and junior middle school is no longer a problem: we can earn what we need for them ourselves, without even asking their fathers or uncles to help out.' For high school, a local education fund would help out if need be. University tuition was still a problem, though, she sighed. I was in

7 My ethnographic research has explored demographic changes, education and media production in five Yongning Township villages with significant Mosuo populations, each affected by tourism in different ways (cf. Blumenfield 2003). I did not set out to study intangible cultural heritage *per se* but became interested early on by discussions of *wenhua chuancheng*, which translates loosely as 'cultural transmission and continuation'. It was in this context that I first met Ms Yang in 2002. Fieldwork for the early research and the 2016 research was funded by Fulbright fellowships and supported by Yunnan University. Fieldwork in 2013 focused on socio-ecological resilience and was funded by a Mellon Faculty Research Grant through the David E. Shi Center for Sustainability at Furman University, while 2011 research was funded in part by a grant from the Association for Asian Studies, China and Inner Asia Council.

the midst of editing a book about cultural heritage in China (Blumenfield and Silverman 2013) and had just completed interviews with officials in Lijiang on the topic, so I was startled when Ms Yang proclaimed with pride, 'I am a *fei wuzhi wenhua yichan chuancheng ren* [intangible cultural heritage transmitter].' This is quite a mouthful in Chinese, an awkward translation of the recently invented concept. Curious, I asked about this designation. Ms Yang explained about a Lijiang conference and her receipt, in 2007, of a certificate for being an intangible cultural heritage transmitter. Along with the cash award recognizing her contributions, Ms Yang also unofficially gained the opportunity to be a preferred vendor for government work units needing a supply of woven Mosuo goods. The 'intangible cultural heritage' phrase landed on the Lijiang weaving shops' bags, too, as she proudly showed me. While pleased for Ms Yang, this conversation made me suspect that 'intangible heritage' had surfaced as the latest form of branding, both for tourist consumption and for locals' edification.

Returning to the village in 2013, I was surprised to find a newly constituted village-wide weaving collective in operation that seemed to circumvent Ms Yang, who was no longer the women's association leader. Since her eager proclamation two years earlier, apparently the market for hand-woven goods had crashed. Machine-woven textiles were being sold in faux-Mosuo weaving shops. 'Tourists cannot tell the difference between hand-woven and machine-woven scarves,' a young woman named Dashih Latzo explained to me inside the new weaving space, at the other end of the village from Ms Yang's house in a partially constructed family home.[8] No longer able to sell their textiles for decent prices, most women had stopped weaving. In the home where I stayed, scarves were piling up, unsold, in an empty bedroom.

With support from the State Ethnic Affairs Commission (*Guojia minwei*),[9] and from the United Nations Development Program, two teachers from Singapore and Shanghai had come to teach the villagers how to create patterns that they claimed could not be imitated by machines.[10] By the time

8 It had exterior walls and a completed courtyard and a roof, but interior walls and rooms had not yet been built.

9 Their website provides an overview on their mission and scope: http://www.seac.gov.cn/gjmw/mwjs/M08index_1.htm.

10 For background on this programme, see United Nations Development Program [2014] and related project videos, 'Weaving out of Poverty' (http://bcove.me/z8svrah9) and 'The Ethnic Minorities Cultural Products Development Project' (http://bcove.me/8bqfk60b). A captioned photo gallery is available from on the *Global Times* website (Global Times 2015). Further information about the project is available from 'Weaving Tradition and Innovation into Poverty Reduction',

I visited the village, the villagers had elected leaders and were working towards fulfilling their first order. Many of the people involved with the nascent effort, still not officially registered, had spent some time working outside the village. Were they glad to be earning some income back home, in something approximating the '*li tu bu li xiang*' model (leave the fields, but not the hometown) – even though everyone was still immersed in farming work when not weaving? When I asked whether they were enjoying the weaving project, the women shot quizzical looks my way. 'It takes three, four, even five days to complete a shawl, even longer for the more complex ones. We only get 100 yuan for a finished shawl. That's not even 30 yuan per day'. Since the going wages for daily labour in the fields had recently jumped to over 100 yuan a day, the calculation was an unsettling one.

But, two people assured me, this was not simply a financial calculation. They were just getting the project off the ground, still working hard to figure out the much more complex patterns developed by their fashionable teachers. The project had to succeed, because unlike previous efforts that would only benefit one or two people, it had the potential to help the entire village. To them, this deployment of woven heritage represented something like a collective self-improvement project (Oakes 2013), not only an attempt towards financial gain.[11]

Curiously, although their weaving workshop was not far from the officially designated 'intangible cultural heritage transmitter,' who had without doubt spurred the development of weaving in the village, none of the people I spoke with in 2013 had heard of the concept of intangible cultural heritage. Only my friend Riba, elected the accountant for the collective, reflected on my question and said it sounded like something related to the United Nations. For most of the collective participants, the project was only partly about valorizing things from their 'ancient ethnic culture' (*gulao minzu wenhua de dongxi*).

But in speaking with the weavers, I recognized something espoused during the 2013 Chengdu UNESCO meetings: 'Intangible cultural heritage will nurture people's self-awareness, self-confidence and cultural self-determination, and will play an ever-increasing role in constructing a

http://www.cn.undp.org/content/china/en/home/ourwork/povertyreduction/successstories/weaving-tradition-and-innovation-into-poverty-reduction/. Note that the celebratory narrative common across these articles espouses a rose-coloured view of the development project that only partially corresponds with the actual situations of people interviewed.

11 Like the projects discussed by Oakes, these projects also carried paternalistic self-improvement rhetoric by their funders. For glimpses of that rhetoric, see Zhou 2011 and Global Times 2015.

Figure 7.1 Working out the intricate patterns requires intense concentration

Photograph by Tami Blumenfield

harmonious world and promoting cultural diversity' (UNESCO 2013: 3). Even without the awkwardly translated foreign vocabulary, the effects of new policies within China to support intangible cultural heritage had reached a village just beyond a tourist zone.

The weaving projects in context: Rethinking heritage designation

'I tell you, intangible cultural heritage is just a brand.'
– Scholar from the Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences

When I first began working on this project, I would have agreed with that scholar. The intangible cultural heritage designation process, despite its complexity, seemed arbitrary. How could one possibly differentiate among all the practices still alive and flourishing, when so many practices merited appreciation?

In a conversation with Archei, a Luoshui museum director and filmmaker, I argued that singling one person out for special attention unfairly sidelined others with similar skills, but he responded that people who earned the designation of intangible cultural heritage *transmitter*, as opposed to intangible cultural heritage *practitioner*, deserved the recognition. After all, they had not only dedicated their time to whatever earned them accolades,

they had also spent time teaching and encouraging others. In some cases, they also worked hard to connect their efforts with broader audiences. This, he assured me, was not an easy feat. Given his own background as a museum founder and director, Archei spoke from a position of some experience.

After similar conversations with others deeply invested in the process, I am no longer so vehement in my opposition to the designation project. First of all, while designation as intangible cultural heritage can certainly introduce new problems, it can also offer important opportunities to showcase something of which a community or even a single family is proud – opportunities that may particularly benefit women. Chinese Airline magazines and newspaper articles are full of examples hailing a recognized process or product as an exemplar of intangible cultural heritage. According to these articles, in many cases, only a single family or few members of a village had been practicing before designation brought a welcome recognition to their previously rather thankless efforts.

Sometimes the new recognitions collide with the lack of intellectual property protections, causing unanticipated problems. This happened with a laborious tofu-making process whose recognition ended up encouraging copycat factories. The newly available factory-produced pressed tofu saturated the market and drove down the prices for pressed tofu produced in family workshops. The plummeting prices forced most of the families out of business, leaving the product highly acclaimed but making the process nearly extinct.[12] The lack of intellectual property protections also created challenges for the Walabi weavers.

In Yunnan, Ms Yang and her son Achi Nima, based in the city of Lijiang, applied for trademark protection for twelve of the new designs.[13] With this protection, they could challenge the machine-woven textile producers through the legal system. While this introduced new problems into a previously communal-based system in which no single individual held more rights than any other individual, it also allowed them to market the woven goods on Taobao, an online shopping site with broad name-recognition throughout urban China.[14] Nima publicized the weaving process and marketed the woven goods through posts on the WeChat

12 The article appeared in a July 2015 Chinese airline magazine.

13 A Baike Baidu Wiki site contains full details, including images of the copyright license for the twelve Mosuo patterns (8 November 2012), the logo registered to Ms Yang (valid for ten years beginning on 14 December 2010), and her designation by the Yunnan Province Ethnic Affairs Commission and the Yunnan Province Cultural Bureau as an Intangible Cultural Heritage Transmitter (9 June 2007). See Baike.baidu.com n.d.

14 To visit the site, see http://mosuo.taobao.com.

social media platform.[15] From there, potential buyers could be directed to online ordering pages. Transaction complete, the textiles would soon arrive at their homes, packaged in an attractive red canister imprinted with a stylized image of Ms Yang at her loom above the words, 'Intangible Cultural Heritage – A Traditional, Hand-crafted Mosuo [People's] Item' (*fei wuzhi wenhua yichan, Mosuoren chuangtong gongyipin*). The canisters also bore the trademarked logo with Ms Yang's Naru name, 'Achi Dudjih Ma' [in Chinese] (see Figure 7.2).

With support from external organizations, Ms Yang and Nima also built a lofty new showcase for woven goods and other handcrafted items historically used by Na people. On two floors of a separate building, they built spaces where people could set up their looms and where the family could store textiles. The mother-son pair named their newly created space the Mosuo Traditional Handicraft Transmission Centre (*Mosuo chuantong shougong chuancheng zhongxin*), emphasizing its role in passing on knowledge rather than simply selling products. When I visited in June 2016, Ms Yang proudly informed me that she had been conducting classes for students interested in learning to weave during school vacations and on weekends. These efforts, portrayed in a DVD produced by Onci Archei, sounded worthwhile. However, the vastness of the space and the piles of unsold textiles concerned me. After all, how successful could the new Taobao venture really be? I asked Ms Yang, 'Could the scale be a little too big?'

'Exactly,' she replied. She could only entrust the online shop to her son and hope for the best. But size aside, the new buildings did provide a needed space for the weaving and teaching activities, while also creating showcase areas for already-produced items.

As for the other weaving collective in Walabi, although launched with great fanfare and celebrated on the United Nations Development Program website (UNDP [2014]), it lasted about a year. The weavers never earned salaries, but they did not mind as long as the money from the sales of the textiles was shared. However, when the person in charge failed to distribute the money appropriately, the collective dissolved.[16] Members of the former collective made their own efforts to earn money from the weaving. Riba and his partner, Adru Aga, rented space from a relative in a lakeside tourist village and tried selling their goods there. At first, they were the only ones

15 CCTV-10 Storytelling 2010 profiled Nima and his mother in a 25-minute television programme, 'Nima's Springtime.'

16 Riba, personal communication, June 2016.

Figure 7.2 In the newly completed weaving showroom, red canisters with Ms Yang's image and logo await customer orders

Photograph by Tami Blumenfield

Figure 7.3 Guiding visitors on a tour of his newly completed exhibit spaces at Mosuo Buluo, Dudjih Dashih pauses in front of an enlarged photograph taken early in the previous century. The room behind him features woven baskets and leather bags

Photograph by Tami Blumenfield

selling woven goods in the lakeside village, but soon after they were joined by two other weavers who also set up looms to demonstrate weaving. With shops also selling similar merchandise, their business ran into trouble. Frustrated and barely able to cover the expenses of the rent, they planned to abandon the effort as soon as their lease expired in late 2016.

From my perspective, it seemed that as often happens, the fruits of intangible cultural heritage had been unevenly distributed. Certain individuals, possessing ample social capital, were well-positioned to take advantage of the designation. Others, excluded from designation and lacking social capital, became frustrated in their efforts (cf. Maags 2015: 10). But in 2016, Ms Yang explained, that seemed poised to change. Walabi had recently become part of the 'ancient villages cultural protection village' system (*gu cunluo baohu cun*).[17] As part of this process, the village would benefit from a significant investment for building and enhancing infrastructure. Meanwhile, in one room of their weaving centre, Ms Yang and her son planned to showcase the new group of intangible cultural heritage transmitters from their village whose designation had recently been approved by heritage experts. Many skills in addition to weaving could earn someone recognition: These included making the salted, preserved pork known in Chinese as *zhubiaorou*; making *pige* leather clothing used in ceremonies; and making *sulima* alcohol. *Haba* dancing ability; medical expertise using medicinal plants and bone-setting procedures; carpentry and wood-carving skills; and expertise as a *daba* ritual specialist (discussed below) could also earn recognition.

Some of these skills and talents, like the medical knowledge and the talents of the *daba* ritual specialist, are possessed only by a select few individuals. Others, like the production of *zhubiaorou* and *sulima* alcohol, are skills that nearly every adult villager of the designated gender possesses. Normally, men are responsible for the butchering of the pigs and subsequent cleaning and salting of the meat, while women usually distil *sulima* alcohol from grain. With these new designations, the intangible cultural heritage system was poised to complete its move from a rarely heard term that few understood, to a broader designation that recognized more people as valued contributors to their village's, and their culture's, heritage. As for Ms Yang and Nima, they were playing key roles in helping others earn that recognition by hosting the heritage showcase within their weaving centre.

17 This designation reportedly comes with a 3,000,000 yuan allocation from a government unit.

Daba as intangible cultural heritage transmitter

Although the process for recognizing additional intangible cultural heritage transmitters in Walabi had just begun at the time of this writing, Ahwo Tuodi, the sole *daba* ritual specialist in Yongning Township, has already enjoyed several years of celebration as an intangible cultural heritage transmitter. His experiences may provide insight into how others from his village might perceive their pending designations.

Tuodi has been invited to conferences celebrating Naxi *dongba* ritual specialists (cf. White 2010), where he received special certificates recognizing his achievement and granting him a *daba* degree.[18] One might be tempted to look askance at the involvement of external arbiters of *daba* ritual skill, particularly when those arbiters bear the authority of the Chinese state. After all, *daba* operate in an entirely different plane from most state actors, mediating between the human and spirit worlds through ceremonies that involve chanting, figurines, animals, and ancestors.[19] But when I met with Tuodi in 2013, he rushed to show me his certificates, beaming with pride. Not only did he enjoy the process of being celebrated along with other *daba* and *dongba*, as someone whose education had never involved sitting in a schoolhouse desk, receiving a degree-level certificate was a very special honour. Never very comfortable speaking in Mandarin, and often breaking down into self-conscious giggles mid-sentence when the words did not come, Tuodi now possessed a document that affirmed

18 The Naxi *Dongba* (*Daba*) Degree-Level Certificate read:
In accordance with the <<Yunnan Province Naxi Dongba Culture Protection Regulation>>, in order to effectively accomplish the Dongba Culture Transmission Work, through the authorization of the Yulong County People's Government, under the supervision and verification of the Yulong County Culture and Media Bureau, the Lijiang City Naxi Dongba Culture Transmission Association and the Yushui Zhai [Jade Water Village] Dongba Culture Transmission Base have organized Dongba Degree Qualification Examinations and Expert Specialist Appraisal Examinations, and in accordance with the standard stipulated by the <<Dongba (Daba) Degree Level Assessment Method>>, have determined the degree of:
DABA MASTER (法师 *fashi*)
Special Certificate Holder: Daba
Birthplace: Ninglang County Yongning Township
Lijiang City Yulong Naxi Autonomous County People's Government
Lijiang City Naxi Dongba Culture Transmission Association
November 2012.

19 For some examples of daba-led rituals, see *Some Na Ceremonies*, a film by Onci Archei and Ruheng Duoji, produced by Tami Blumenfield (Berkeley Media, 2015). Common rituals include protective rites, healing ceremonies conducted on behalf of someone who is ill, and funerals.

his knowledge in another realm. To me, this document represented little more than a nice acknowledgement of his abilities, but to Tuodi, it meant much more.

'Recognition', defined by the Oxford English Dictionary (2002) as 'acknowledgement or admission of an achievement, service, ability, kindness, etc. [...] acknowledgement of something as true, valid, legal, or worthy of consideration; esp. formal acknowledgement conveying approval or sanction of something', takes on new meaning when viewed from Tuodi's perspective. That official sanction became very important to him. As for the others slated to become official intangible cultural heritage transmitters, many of whom have struggled to gain recognition in a society that disparages rural residents with little formal school-based education, I believe the new designations will prove highly meaningful to them, too.

In addition to participating in regional conferences, Tuodi's designation as a provincial-level intangible cultural heritage transmitter meant he could also join conferences for all of the provincial-level transmitters in Yunnan. In fact, three of the four Ninglang County residents recognized as provincial-level intangible cultural heritage transmitters are from Yongning, Tuodi and Archei told me in June 2016. In addition to Ms Yang and the *daba*, an older man from Amiwoh Village named Adjih Tzihdi earned recognition for his talent in creating wall paintings (*bihua*).[20]

Once I grasped the concept of a provincial-level transmitter at the county level, I asked Tuodi and Archei, 'By now, has heritage designation fully transformed local people's appreciation for these special talents?' The answer was not quite what I expected. Archei responded, 'To put it bluntly, the main question is, 'Is it worth money or not? Can it be sold?' If so, great – everyone will be willing to learn how to do it. If not, it will be very difficult. No one will be willing to pursue it.' 'Like with studying to be a *daba*, right?' I asked. 'Right,' Archei responded. 'No matter how great, how special, if there's no economic benefit, nobody will be willing to study.'[21]

20 That all three transmitters identify as Mosuo is probably less an indication of Mosuo people's extraordinary talents and more a reflection of the tourism-propelled spotlight under which Mosuo people find themselves. With journalists and researchers constantly streaming into the region, it is not surprising that more Mosuo individuals have been identified than those from other ethnic groups. This unevenness underscores the arbitrary nature of the recognition system – quite possibly others in the county are equally deserving, but do not encounter media or researchers in their daily lives like those living closer to the tourism zones do.

21 Personal communication, Luoshui Village, June 2016.

From previous experiences exploring with others possible ways to promote *daba* knowledge in the region, I recognized the truth in his comments. We could praise and admire *daba* all we wanted, but that did not resolve the fundamental rupture in *daba* training that would likely lead to absence of *daba* in future decades.

The spread of intangible cultural heritage

As noted above, few people were aware of the concept of intangible cultural heritage during my 2013 visit to Yongning and Lugu Lake. The concept had not yet penetrated very far. By 2016 it had made serious headway, and not only among the scholarly or governmental community. When I posted a photo of pounded rice cakes on WeChat, along with a short video of a few Badzu friends working together to pound, roll and stamp them, a friend from the same village now living in Shenzhen commented with a grinning emoji, 'Mosuo intangible cultural heritage!' (*Mosuo fei wuzhi wenhua yichan*) (18 June 2016). True, this friend can be considered a cultural worker, making his living from representing ethnic minority cultures like his own at a theme park, but his comment still represented a broader diffusion of the concept than I had previously encountered.

Even more significant than the tongue-in-cheek social media recognition of an everyday process using the intangible heritage terminology was the development by a young university graduate of a sprawling cultural showcase in his family's new hillside home. Dashih Dudjih's father, a hugely popular icon of the nearby lakeside village of Lige, had given his son free reign in designing and filling the exhibit rooms. With the tenacity of someone who had grown up hearing people bemoan the imminent loss of Mosuo culture, plus the financial support of a family flush with hard-earned profits from a successful barbeque business catering to tourists, Dashih Dudjih had spent three years quietly gathering items. By the time he graduated with his marketing degree in 2015, he possessed both the items and a keen eye for presentation. 'I had this idea all along, but I did not want to tell anyone in case I could not make it happen,' Dashih Dudjih explained as he proudly showed Archei, a Hong Kong researcher, and me around shortly after the June 2016 grand opening (see Figure 7.3).[22]

22 Archei, a museum director himself, turned to me after we left and said, 'I feel like I just encountered a fifteen-years-prior version of myself.' Like this young man, he too had taken the profits from his family's successful tourist-oriented business to build a cultural centre and

Amazed by this new place and in awe of what the young man had accomplished with his family's help, the sign in front of the weaving exhibit room should not have surprised me, but it did. In Chinese and English, it read:

> *Traditional Textiles* (*Intangible Cultural Heritage*)
> These textiles and w[e]aving tools are the earliest artistic creation proofs of the primitive Mosuo. By using their fantastic wisdom and craftsmanship, the Mosuo people demonstrate their earnest understanding towards life, nature and religion. Each and every textile contains the days' and months' hard work of the Mosuo women, with traditional techniques and natural materials.

Beyond the embrace of the ICH terminology, the text and its earnestness really left an impression on me. Furthermore, the presence of woven goods as exhibit items rather than products designed for sale distinguished them from similar displays I had seen elsewhere. In fact, as Dashih Dudjih kept emphasizing, nothing was for sale in the exhibit area.[23]

This lack of concern with financial gain made the cultural centre experience wholly unlike that of the weaving showroom in Walabi. Without external support, the weavers there needed to sell their carefully designed woven shawls and scarves so they could earn some income. Some may disparage their efforts as overly commercialized or too market-oriented, but is that fair? Who among us does not hope to earn income from our work? Instead, the range of showrooms and exhibits demonstrates the breadth of experiences Mosuo people hoped to offer to their visitors, friends and possibly customers. Some operate without much regard to cost, and others depend on visitors' support to stay solvent.

Concerns vary from one scale of heritage-making to another (Harvey 2015). Convincing an international body how deserving an ICH element was would involve moving across several registers: cultural boundaries, national boundaries, and social norms. It therefore poses more challenges

museum. Unlike him, though, Archei had still hoped to earn money from the venture – a goal that the young graduate completely dismissed.

23 Dashih Dudjih reminded me of a Luoshui friend, Duoji, who had explained a few days earlier that his 'Mosuo-house visit' experience was the only one at the lake that did not attempt to sell anything to the tourists, although the travel agencies that arranged their visit compensated Duoji for hosting them. What Timothy Oakes, in the context of Guizhou 'Tunpu' communities, calls the 'disavowing of commercialization', is apparently a common feature in tourist zones (Oakes 2013: 398).

than demonstrating an individual merits inclusion on a list. Nonetheless, the international recognition remains very important to many Chinese officials, who carefully decide which element(s) to nominate for UNESCO inscription each year.

Is international recognition still necessary? UNESCO and the Torch Festival

In January 2015, over a month after the event had concluded, a terse announcement appeared on the Chinaculture.org website: 'Thirty-four entries were added to the World Intangible Cultural Heritage List at the ninth session of the Intergovernmental Committee held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. […] The Torch Festival of the Yi ethnic group failed to be included on the list this year' (Chinaculture.org 2015).

For many years, China was the most successful nation in the race to inscribe elements within the UNESCO heritage regime (Silverman and Blumenfield 2013).[24] Only 12 of the 46 proposed entries were deferred at the 2014 session. So what happened in Paris, and what explains the failure to be included?

Before the Yi Torch Festival (*Huoba jie*), a frenzy of activity that culminates in late-night spectacles of flaming sticks being carried around predominately Yi cities and villages in Yunnan and Sichuan every summer, was considered for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2014, years of work and a huge financial investment went into preparing a complex, multilingual, multimedia application (cf. Tu An et al. 2013). This intensive effort culminated in the rejection, in the presence of the 950 official attendees as well as journalists and other observers at the Paris session, of the proposed inscription, following contentious debate over the inclusion of animal fights for entertainment purposes.[25] Participants debated whether these fights fit in with the sustainable development ethos espoused by the international body.

24 For an updated list of UNESCO-designated intangible cultural heritage in China, see http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/state/cn.

25 The ninth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage took place at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, from 24 to 28 November 2014. Committee members included Afghanistan, Algeria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Greece, Hungary, India, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Mongolia, Namibia, Nigeria, Peru, Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda and Uruguay.

The text from the decision document, after praising many elements of the Torch Festival, includes the following explanations for the deferral.

> R.1: Although the Torch festival includes different cultural expressions and practices transmitted from generation to generation, *additional information would be needed on those of its components that involve animal fights to explain whether these are compatible with the requirement of respect for the sensitivities of diverse communities, groups and individuals, and respect for sustainable development*; [emphasis added]
> R.2: Although its inscription on the Representative List could contribute to the visibility of the intangible cultural heritage, *additional information would be needed to explain how some components of the festival that involve the use of living animals for entertainment could encourage dialogue among communities that have a different sensitivity.* [emphasis added]
> 1. [The Committee] Decides to refer the nomination of *Torch Festival of the Yi people* to the submitting State Party and invites it to resubmit the nomination to the Committee for examination during a following cycle. [emphasis in original] (UNESCO 2014: 34-35)

For the individuals who had worked so hard to advance the nomination, the experience at the Paris session felt like a huge slap in the face. Also, as the Torch Festival was the sole nomination advanced by China for that year, its deferral from inclusion on the list represented a lost opportunity for another element's inscription.

'Should we reapply?' a leading government official asked one of the presenters. Humiliated by the entire affair, she responded, 'Forget it.' Frustrated by the narrow focus on elements of the festival that involved animal fights and animal sacrifice by *bimo* ritual specialists, she felt that the Paris participants overlooked the deeper beauty of a festival honouring the Fire Spirit, allowing only for a sanitized view of heritage. In any case, the Torch Festival already enjoyed widespread official recognition within China, recognized on multiple levels and officially designated national-level intangible cultural heritage. Why bother further pursuing international designation from a body that failed to recognize that sometimes intangible cultural heritage involved messy elements?

Abandoning the pursuit of international recognition represented a reassertion of heritage as valued within China, something that the 2011 Intangible Cultural Heritage Law of China also emphasizes. Certainly, approbation from an international body remains important. But with intangible cultural heritage firmly enshrined within multiple levels of Chinese governance (cf.

Holbig and Maags 2012; Maags 2015), the international approval has become less crucial than in an earlier era, even just a decade before. After all, China has its own, trademarked 'Intangible Cultural Heritage' logo.[26]

Conclusion

All over China, heritage designation and its associated spotlight has raised some important issues. What counts as heritage, especially intangible heritage? Who decides what 'counts', and who holds the right to question a designation deemed legitimate by others? Moreover, does heritage even matter?

To return to the question I posed earlier in this chapter – Should we care about intangible heritage? – I argue that yes, we should, because it has become an important category affirming value in areas long devalued by outsiders.[27] Much like the transformation of ethnic classification from a crucial issue worth fighting the government on to one no longer needing official attention since tourists and media have given *de facto* recognition to the *Mosuo* category (Blumenfield Kedar 2010), intangible heritage has been reconstituted as a site of significance to those needing to deploy the category – even though many people still do not participate in those conversations. As the Chengdu Recommendations, issued at the Chengdu International Conference on Intangible Cultural Heritage in Celebration of the Tenth Anniversary of UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, made clear, the concept has 'reconfigured' relationships and created a 'fundamentally new paradigm':

> The concept of 'intangible cultural heritage' has entered the vocabulary of languages to an extent that few could have imagined a decade earlier. The Convention's [Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage] ground-breaking definition of intangible cultural

26 The logo can be found on the CCTV English website: http://www.cctv.com/english/special/C18595/01/index.shtml. Note that a year after their unsuccessful application for UNESCO ICH status, the Chinese delegation did succeed in getting another form of intangible heritage designated: The 'Twenty-Four Solar Terms' were inscribed on the 'Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity' in 2016. See http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/RL/the-twenty-four-solar-terms-knowledge-in-china-of-time-and-practices-developed-through-observation-of-the-suns-annual-motion-00647.

27 As Holtorf 2010 has discussed, the process of valuing heritage encloses a specific sensibility, one that is gradually expanding its purview. See also Shepherd 2009 and Swain 2013.

> heritage has fundamentally reconfigured the relations between the bearers and practitioners of intangible cultural heritage and the officials, experts and institutions involved in its safeguarding. By emphasizing the active agency of communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals, and their indispensable role in recognizing their own intangible heritage and taking responsibility for its safeguarding, the Convention has established a fundamentally new paradigm. (UNESCO 2013: 1)

But we should also move beyond deciding whether these are analytical categories worth exploring and investigate the consequences of their embrace – or lack of awareness of their existence. The recommendations also address the tension between 'transmission and innovation and between safeguarding and commercial use' (UNESCO 2013: 2), and indeed, the danger of ossifying cultural forms under the new, yet strangely familiar intangible heritage category, is one to guard against. As Taylor reminds us, 'The production of culture is even more important to capitalism than in the past' (2014: 164). How, then, can this production itself become a site for exploitative relations? What power differentials can this encompass? With regard to the examples shared above, what does it mean when a wealthy family possesses means to showcase cultural elements without regard to selling them, while another family facing financial pressure must select those elements that seem viable in a rapidly changing commercial market? And what effects do the presence of new systems of designations have on gender roles within a particular village and among members of a cultural group? As we have seen above, both women and men have embraced the intangible cultural heritage label, but their abilities to capitalize on it may vary. Women like Ms. Yang have the flexibility to leave when needed, but usually remain involved with household tasks like cooking and farming that often keep them close to home, if they are not out working in another town or city. As for other weavers in Walabi, weaving and its monetization have allowed them to attend to their families, allowing them to earn some income without leaving home. Meanwhile, men in Mosuo communities typically have fewer consistent, daily responsibilities and thus have greater liberty to travel to distant conferences or move from place to place. Ms. Yang's son Nima, for example, has become an important partner in the effort to market Mosuo woven goods under her trademark.[28] This is by no means to say that women never leave home or that men never stay home, but only to

28 One wonders, though: would a container bearing his image be just as successful a marketing tool, or is the female weaver's silhouette a more effective label element?

suggest that as cultural elements are redefined through the heritage system, analysing gendered mobility will be particularly important.

Deconstructing the discursive power of cultural production and its attendant effects, and the ways in which these discourses become embraced, incorporated, ignored, and eventually challenged (cf. Chio 2014; Oakes 2013; Svensson 2012), remain important tasks for those observing the rapidly changing landscape for heritage in China. In the meantime, we would do well to keep in mind that much is at stake for those immersed in the discourses and productions – as well as for those who are left out of them.

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8 Holy Heritage

Identity and Authenticity in a Tibetan Village

Sonja Laukkanen

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Abstract
This chapter addresses religious as well as ethnic identity and heritage in a Tibetan village in the Meili Snow Mountains, which is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Three Parallel Rivers. It shows the complex interplay and artificial distinction between natural and cultural heritage in UNESCO's work and its impact on a local community. The mountains are listed only as a natural heritage site, although they are holy to the Tibetans. The new heritage status ignores the mountains' long-standing cultural significance and meaning for the local community. The listing and natural park status is also problematic since it seems to favour tourists' experiences at the expense of local communities' participation in and management of the area.

Keywords: Tibetan, tourism, authenticity, nature/culture, Meili Snow Mountains

Xidang is located in Meili Snow Mountains nature reserve near Deqin (Dechen in Tibetan) in Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, in northwestern Yunnan. Meili Snow Mountains are part of the 'Three Parallel Rivers' nature reserve UNESCO World Heritage Site and the peaks of Meili Mountains, especially Mount Khawa Karpo,[1] are holy to the Tibetans. Pilgrims from all over China visit this mountain every

1 I use the spelling 'Khawa Karpo' which seems to be the most frequently used version of the standard Wiley transliteration *Kha ba dkar po*. It is also seen in the literature as 'Kawa Garbo' and 'Kawagebo'. For discussion of the Khawa Karpo versus Meili naming issue, see Litzinger 2004.

year. The site is recognized as a natural heritage site but the holiness of the mountains and the fact that thousands of people live inside the area are not recognized. Tibetan culture as such has not been listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List and many scholars, activists and the Dalai Lama regard it as being threatened (see discussion e.g. Barnett 2001; Lopez 1998; Anand 2000). China has been accused of utilizing its cultural and natural 'resources', depoliticizing them, and then profiting from contested heritage sites under the guise of development and sustainability (Winter and Daly 2011: 19). With the advance of tourism in Diqing, fostered by the name change of Zhongdian town to Shangri-la and the nomination of Meili Snow Mountains as part of World Natural Heritage, the policies of different actors concerned with heritage and tourism are influencing the villagers' conceptions of their heritage and identity. So although heritage and tourism has brought many benefits (mostly economic and infrastructural) to the locals, it has not allowed more space for local voices.

The main question this chapter examines concerns authenticity and how the sense of it is created or contested by different actors involved in the tourism and heritage business at Meili Snow Mountains, especially in Xidang village. Another issue it discusses is the false dichotomy of nature vs culture which does not fit in with the local understanding of their environment. The first section provides an introduction and background information to the area and the transformations witnessed over the last decades, as well as the participation of the villagers in the tourism business. Questions such as authenticity of heritage, state led transformations of it, authenticity of tourism and tourist expectations will be examined in 'Heritage as a resource: Tourism development and state appropriation/redefinition of heritage'. The dichotomy of culture/nature is the main theme of 'Holy Mountains: Challenging the dichotomy of nature vs culture', especially since the concept of nature is not universal and does not fit into the Tibetan understanding of geopiety. What is authentic nature, anyway? Authenticity in connection with identity and the role of heritage in identity construction is discussed in 'Authenticity as a field of contestations'. This chapter is based on data collected during a three-year period between 2009 and 2015 as well as on the methods of participant observation and discussions with villagers, tourists, and people working in the tourism business. This chapter also addresses the official ambivalent view on minority cultures and the religious importance of heritage sites, topics also addressed by Cooke (on ethnic minorities in Qinghai) and Chan (on the Hungry Ghosts Festival in Hong Kong) in this volume.

Xidang village: Tourist sites/sights and the local community

Xidang village is located in the Meili Snow Mountains nature reserve on Hengduan Mountains in Diqing Prefecture. Historically, the prefecture belongs to the Tibetan area of Kham but it has been part of Yunnan Province since the 1720s and it is often referred to as an area where the Tibetan world blends with the multi-ethnic Yunnan. Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture consists of three counties: Zhongdian County (Shangri-la), Deqin County (where the Meili Snow Mountains are located), and Weixi Lisu Autonomous County. Together they have a total population of 374,500 people. Diqing Prefecture is home to eleven different minority nationalities (84 per cent), ethnic Tibetans being the largest single group with 33 per cent of the population. The majority of Diqing's population is farmers or, to be more exact, transhumant agro-pastoralists who practise sedentary agriculture and pastoralism, moving cattle from the village to upland pastures during the summer months.

Meili Snow Mountains are a part of the 'Three Parallel Rivers' nature reserve UNESCO World Heritage Site. The whole area is 1.7 million hectares and consists of fifteen nature reserves. Bordering the Tibet Autonomous Region in the north, Sichuan in the east, and Myanmar in the west, the site encompasses large sections of three of the great rivers of Asia, the Yangtze (Jinsha), Mekong (Lancang), and Salween (Nu), which run parallel from north to south through the area for over 300 kilometres. The reason for the nomination as an UNESCO natural heritage site is the unique landscape of these great rivers running in deep parallel gorges with rich climatic variation making it one of the world's biodiversity hot spots.

The case study of this chapter, Xidang village, consists of approximately 80 households, and around 350 people. Farming (agro-pastoralism) is the main source of livelihood, complemented with increasing income from tourism. The main crops are highland barley and corn and every house also has a vegetable garden for its own needs. All families also own walnut trees around the village, and walnuts and wine grapes are the money crops. From the mountains people collect mushrooms (i.e. matsutake) and Tibetan medicinal herbs (i.e. snow lotus) to sell. Although Xidang is located in the nature reserve, it is not the main tourist attraction.

Most tourists stay overnight in Feilaisi, and then hire cars to go to Mingyong Glacier or Yubeng village. Feilaisi used to be a sleepy little village facing the mountain range. It is one of the destinations along the inner pilgrimage route (*kora*) with an important temple that, according to legend,

flew all the way there from India, thus giving the village its name (*feilaisi*, the temple that came flying). The main tourist attraction is the view and there are several stupas honouring the holy mountains. In 2010 a wall was built between the village (which is now more a cluster of hotels) and the stupas and a RMB 60 entrance fee was set to see the view.[2] Also, another viewing platform with stupas was built in Wunongding before Deqin with the same entrance fee. In addition to Feilaisi, Mingyong is a popular tourism site. It is a glacier flowing down the holy Khawa Karpo and there are two pilgrimage temples, Taizi Temple and Lianhua Temple. Finally, Yubeng is a village between the snow mountains and to reach it tourists need to hike or ride on mules from Xidang Hot Springs, which is the end of the road. The main reason the pilgrims visit Yubeng is the Holy Waterfalls. For tourists, there are also other hikes, mainly the Glacier Lake,[3] Holy Lake, and a hike back along the Yubeng River to Ninong.

Although Xidang is right in the middle of these tourism attractions, very few tourists stay there. So far, the mule rides have been the biggest tourism-related source of income for the villagers. There is a rotation system in the village so that everyone gets their chance to participate in transportation and the prices are set. In addition to tourists, all food and other goods were also transported with mules but now the simple path to Yubeng has been upgraded to a road. It is still not much more than a dirt track but passable to tractors and pick-up trucks. Previously, Xidang had a few guesthouses and small shops but in 2014 many houses were turned into guesthouses in anticipation of the high pilgrimage season in 2015, which happens every twelve years. Other income from tourism depends on the family composition and resources, options being car transportation and guiding. It is mainly men that engage in these activities (women do participate in mule transportation if they have time off from farm work). Older men usually stay at home and drive cars from Deqin to Xidang or act as local guides, whereas younger men usually go to Lijiang to work for travel agencies and participate in long-distance driving/guiding. During the busiest tourist season there are hardly any young men left in the village.

2 Only tourists pay the entrance fees; Tibetans can enter these sites for free. A combination ticket to the Great Bend of the Yangtze, Wunongding, Feilaisi and Yubeng was RMB 230 in 2015 and an extra RMB 80 was charged for Mingyong.

3 Although this is officially outside the park and thus nominally off limits, it is very popular among tourists.

Figure 8.1 Khawa Karpo, Mingyong Glacier, and stupas on Wunongding viewing platform

Photograph by Sonja Laukkanen

Heritage as a resource: Tourism development and state appropriation/redefinition of heritage

What is authenticity in heritage? The sense of authenticity depends on the creator and the viewer. In the past, traditions and cultural practices were often condemned as backward and feudal by the Chinese government (see the introduction). For example, the Dalai Lama's former summer palace Norbulinga was opened in 1959 as a museum dedicated to his 'extravagant lifestyle', an example of prerevolutionary feudalism (Shepherd and Yu 2013: 15). What makes the current politics of China different is the fact that cultural practices and materials have been redefined as resources under the guise of development, sustainability (Winter and Daly 2011: 19), and, more recently, the establishment of a 'harmonious society' (Coggins and Yeh 2014: 6). Thus heritage is not seen as a form of preservation against the depredations of 'development' any longer (Long 2012: 207). Part of the discourse of 'harmonious society' is the state's emphasis on a multi-ethnic but unified cultural landscape. Sun calls this celebration of China as a

harmonious multi-ethnic community with a glorious history a form of 'indoctritainment' (Sun 2002: 191), and the sites include not only world heritage sites, but also scenic spots and theme parks, etc. As we can see, the government's idea of authentic heritage doesn't require it to be 'original' or unchanged. Nyíri points out that 'tourism is seen as a two-way civilizing tool, capable of producing positive change in tourists as well as "tourees"' (Nyíri 2009: 154). The Chinese state is quite successfully carrying this out, as government bodies are both stakeholders (co-owners) and regulators in every tourism development project (Nyíri 2009: 163). But as Shepherd points out, 'even when cultural sites become authentic by being toured and hence consumed, state authorities can never be certain these sites are being consumed in the "correct" (state-sanctioned) way, either by local residents, domestic visitors, or foreign tourists' (Shepherd 2006: 252). An example of this is Meili Mountains (as in all nature reserves) where it is forbidden to buy wild animals and wildlife products yet most of the things sold there, in addition to food and drinks, are mushrooms, Tibetan medicinal herbs, and wild animal products, as well as Tibetan jewellery. Not all of the mushrooms and herbs are gathered from the area but some are and families put a lot of effort into collecting them.[4] None of the animal hides on offer are from the park as the ban on hunting is strictly enforced.[5]

In addition to serving as a tool for enhancing development and a harmonious society, Nyíri has argued that 'encasement and uniformity are prominent features of tourism development in China. These are related to the revival of pre-modern representations of *mingsheng* [famous sites], which is in turn facilitated by China's lack of the distinctly modern, romantic, exploratory, and self-bettering discourses of tourism that emerged in the West after the Enlightenment' (Nyíri 2006: 58). This can be seen in the Chinese tendency to travel in groups to famous sites versus the Western search for the 'authentic' and non-touristy places, especially in relation to nature tourism. This has led to the resemblance of nature reserves to theme parks, although there are also archetypal national landscapes in the West similar to *mingsheng* that draw heavily on geographical imagery, memory, and myth (Gruffudd 1995: 220). Thus, the 'authentic' tourism experience is heavily dependent on cultural expectations.

4 See, for example, Yeh 2000 about claims to forest land and matsutake trade.

5 Some villagers are even complaining about the crops lost because of increasing numbers of monkeys and other animals.

With the state's appropriation of heritage for development, heritage sites are transformed for tourist consumption and their search for authenticity although the original aim of the Nature Conservancy[6] was to encourage governments to adopt new models of conservation. However, in the end, many of the nature reserves emerged as mass tourism attractions (Zinda 2014: 105) constructed according to one model with an entrance gate and tourism facilities, but dressed up with Tibetan prayer wheels, prayer flags, *mani*-stone piles, yaks, and colourful locals. The same tendency can be seen in the ever-increasing number of 'old towns' springing up everywhere. Even Deqin is building an old town, which, according to the locals, unfortunately does not look enough like Lijiang which is probably the most famous old town in China and a UNESCO World Heritage Site turned into a mass-tourism site (see e.g. Su and Teo 2008, 2009). So when large-scale domestic tourism emerged, traditional famous sites remained at the core of tourism routes, but song and dance performances, staged religious ceremonies, and traditional 'ethnic' festivals and 'customs' also emerged as standard parts of tourism (Nyíri 2006: 19). Oakes describes how Chinese tourists expect a performance, while Americans and Europeans are looking for the 'real' and 'authentic' (Oakes 1998: 2). Yet even within domestic tourism there can also be observed a sort of nostalgia, a 'longing, not just for 'traditional China', but also for the experience of an unpolluted natural environment' (Kolås 2004: 273) and 'authentic' lifestyles. The same romanticism and nostalgia can be seen in Western views that 'the only real Tibet one can find is in those parts of rural Tibet comparatively unaffected by the Chinese or, better still, in Dharamsala' (Adams 1996: 521), as Lhasa is seen to be losing its authenticity because of Chinese immigration, modernization, karaoke bars, etc.

Bovair calls the Chinese government's promotion of Tibet as a utopian Shangri-la 'neo-orientalism' instead of 'internal orientalism' (Schein 1997: 73), the difference being that the Chinese are neo-orientalizing Tibetan culture for the specific purpose of economic development while at the same time attempting to demonstrate to the world that it allows Tibetans freedom of choice to live their cultural traditions and religion (Bovair 2008: 336). But the Chinese government is hardly alone in this construction of utopia (see, for example, ; Barnett 2001; Mercille 2005; Lopez 1998) nor are the Tibetans the only minority to experience this strategy (see, for example, Oakes 1998; Schein 1997; Sofield and Li 1998). Shepherd suggests that it might be better to see the tourism policies as 'the pacification of Tibet through

6 TNC is a Washington, DC-based environmental organization that started the great Rivers of Yunnan project that led to the Three Parallel Rivers nature reserve.

the aestheticization of Tibetan culture, led by government directed efforts to protect this by working with [...] UNESCO to save and preserve Tibetan cultural sites from the dangers of, paradoxically, tourism' (Shepherd 2009: 255). Moreover, as Tenzin Jinba describes, the orientalization (or sexualization and feminization) of the people 'situates locals in an inferior position constraining their choices and neglecting their concerns, but it also sets in motion their own initiatives in reinterpreting cultural traditions and expressing their modernist pursuits as agents of local social development' (Jinba 2014: 70). An example of this is the locals' participation in the tourism business as guesthouse owners, guides, and drivers or even as performers. However, not all dance performances are aimed at tourists. For example, the villages' women's associations organize dance performances for visiting cadres in order to collect money for women's activities, such as a holiday for the women of the villages every Women's Day. These performances are also an important part of village celebrations in Xidang that are not tourist attractions. Villagers are also capable of inventing traditions. In Yubeng, one guesthouse owner promised 'to preserve the tradition of dancing around the central pole every Saturday' (Interview 5.9.2010), a tradition that actually did not exist before.

The economic importance of tourism is widely recognized among the government as well as local villagers. While Chinese tourist groups, when visiting 'scenic spots', expect the site/sight to be 'developed' (*kaifa*) (Nyíri 2009: 156), both the government and villagers see it as a way for modernization. *Kaifa* has brought with it the expansion of infrastructure and communications. There have been huge road construction projects all over Yunnan, especially to remote areas with the potential to be successful tourist destinations, but *kaifa* has also brought electricity, roads, mobile phone connections, and Internet to small places that previously had none. An example of this is Yubeng village, which now has electricity, mobile services, Internet, and a dirt road.[7] Unfortunately, in the tourism-driven *kaifa* the bulk of rural investment often goes to infrastructural projects, neglecting other social services (Hillman 2003: 550). One instance of this is the discontinuation of village schools and the concentration of students in boarding schools in Deqin and Shangri-la.[8] In addition, in many scenic spots this has meant the construction of cable cars or roads. For example, Mingyong Glacier had a road for electric cars constructed in 2015. The

7 Driving tourists in is forbidden but the road makes the transportation of goods easier and cheaper as well as emergency and rescue services much more efficient.

8 Previously both Yubeng and Xidang had primary schools that are now closed.

villagers receive compensation for lost income as the mule rides have been discontinued, but the road also effectively blurs the site's meaning as a place of pilgrimage and worship. Tourism can also be of great benefit to the poor as it is often very labour intensive, thus creating jobs, and it can be developed in areas where other industries have little chance to develop, usually in poor, remote areas with outstanding scenery and 'exotic' cultures (Hillman 2003: 547).

However, as the number of visiting tourists increases, the religious sites and monasteries tend to be seen as lacking in authenticity. Implicit in these concerns has been the assumption that increasing tourism flows to a site will inevitably lead to a dilution of authentic cultural practices, as local residents take on performative roles and become 'Westernized' or, in the case of Shangri-la, sinified. Critics often point out that the real beneficiaries of the tourism business are not locals, but outsiders[9] who bring experience and capital but leave with the profits. This is partly true for the most popular tourist destinations like Lijiang where most of the entrepreneurs are outsiders, but even there the locals benefit through owning property (for tourism in Lijiang, see Su and Teo 2008, 2009). Yubeng is also attracting more and more outside investors but still many of the guesthouses and restaurants are locally owned and operated, maybe not by the villagers themselves but by Tibetans from nearby villages and towns. And with possibilities for a better income much of the mule transportation in Yubeng is leased to outsiders. In Xidang all the guesthouses and shops are locally owned and operated, as is the mule transportation. Nonetheless, the better-paid positions in official agencies are often filled with outsiders, even if those outsiders are ethnic minorities from other regions. In Shangri-la many of the guides are Sichuan Tibetans who have received their education in Dharamsala and thus speak good English. At Meili the park itself employs locals only at the entrance gate and to collect rubbish.

Finally, not all the visitors to the area are 'tourists'. During the summer of 2014 many of the houses in Xidang were suddenly converted into guesthouses in preparation for the high pilgrimage of 2015. Thousands of pilgrims were expected to arrive as the merits gained from the pilgrimage during this time are believed to be much more numerous. As Katia Buffetrille explains, the choice of the year is 'determined by the year when the pilgrimage was opened by a great religious figure, or by the birthday of a saint or of a Buddhist event' (Buffetrille 1998: 22). Originally,

9 These outsiders range from international capital bringing 'McDisneyization' (Ritzer and Liska 1997) to Han Chinese and 'Hanization' (Oakes 1998).

Khawa Karpo was a fierce *nyen* (Wyl. *gnyan*), or mountain demon, that was transformed into a protector of the Dharma by Padmasambhava in the eighth century (Coggins and Yeh 2014: 4). There is an entrance fee to Meili Snow Mountains nature reserve but this does not apply to pilgrims; it is the tourists that pay, but otherwise pilgrimage does not differ that much from tourism. Nelson Graburn has argued that the different phases of ritual observable in pilgrimage can also be found in tourism (Graburn 1983: 11-17). According to Alex McKay, 'pilgrimage is generally defined as a journey to a sanctified place, undertaken in the expectation of future spiritual and/or worldly benefit' (McKay 1998: 1-2) involving elements of time, separation from usual place, and an element of economic importance making it not so different from tourism. The routes that the tourists use are mostly the same routes used by the pilgrims, mainly part of the inner *kora*, and the most adventurous also hike the outer *kora* around the mountain range. This pilgrimage demonstrates how the Meili Snow Mountains are not only a natural heritage site, but in fact a religious and cultural site of worship.

Holy mountains: Challenging the dichotomy of nature vs culture

The classification of the Meili Snow Mountains as a natural heritage site reflects a Western understanding of heritage. According to Plachter and Rössler, the split of heritage into culture and nature 'can be seen to mirror the separation of human kind and nature in the Western, Enlightenment philosophy. A Eurocentric or Anglo-American influence and an imperialist viewpoint may also be seen in the museum-like attitude to cultural objects and conceptions of "untouched" nature' (Plachter and Rössler 1995: 16-17). UNESCO has tried to address the dichotomy between culture and nature by acknowledging cultural landscapes as one category of heritage in 1992 in recognition of the relationship between people and places. There are three categories of cultural landscapes of which the 'associative cultural landscape' includes landscapes with 'powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element rather than material cultural evidence, which may be insignificant or even absent' (Rössler 2001: 27). At Meili Mountains (as is usual at holy mountains) the cultural part is not absent as the whole understanding of nature is imbued with culture, so much so that many natural sites have been given cultural meaning, smaller examples being springs and rocks: 'It is said that the mantra spring was left by Padmasambhava and the front-left stone was left by the Second

Karmapa."[10] But this cultural meaning is not just superimposed on natural places. According to local understanding, the culture/nature division has no meaning (Huber and Pedersen 1997: 590-591). Tibetan geopiety, which is also associated with theophany, means the manifestation of specific deities and spirits within mundane objects, in this case, terrestrial features such as mountains, forests, waterfalls, springs, and rocks (see, for example, Coggins and Zeren 2014).

Although Meili Snow Mountains are a designated as natural heritage sites, its religious significance is nevertheless included in the site's official narrative. As a signboard in the park demonstrates, the most important actors in this 'supernature' are the mountains, glaciers and waterfalls:

> The middle waterfall is Sinabaxie, meaning Fortune Waterfall, the blessed Kundika water by the Tantric Deity and his Consort (Yum). The right waterfall is Cibameibengqu, meaning the Kundika water of Amitayus Buddha. The follower will eliminate all misdeeds and wrongdoing by pay[ing] a pilgrimage to Sacred Waterfall. It is the triangle karma symbol of Vajrayogini on the right cliff. The sacred water can purify all sins and bless the reincarnation in Dhagpa Khadro. The pilgrims shall prostrate themselves before the Sacred Waterfall, chanting sutra, burning incense and aromatic plant[s], praying, and bathing. According to the Chorography of Holy Kawagebo [Khawa Karpo], the pilgrim to the Sacred Waterfall will obtain blessing and longevity.[11]

At Meili Mountains nature also has agency. The gods residing within these holy mountains 'own' all of the local lands and humans are guests in arable lands at their feet. Tree cutting, hunting, or fishing in sacred areas is believed to lead to retribution in the form of disease, natural disaster, or other misfortunes. The shrinking glaciers are the result of the relationship between the mountain and people (and in part the greed of the rich):

> Once there was a family in Mingyong village which was so rich that they used bowls made of silver and gold to feed their animals. During these times the glacier reached all the way down to where there now is a car park. This family believed that they would stay rich as long as the glacier maintained its size. One day two deer came to their fields to eat the barley and the family decided to shoot and eat them. That night when they were

10 Sign on the way to the Holy Waterfalls.
11 Sign at the Holy Waterfalls.

> cooking the deer meat they heard Khawa Karpo calling the deer by their names. And then the meat in the kettle and the hides started jumping and a colourful steam rose out of the kettle which slowly moved towards the mountain and finally went in it. Now the family realised that the deer they had killed belonged to the mountain god. After this the glacier started shrinking and the family lost its fortune.[12]

Meili Mountain's designation as natural heritage thus glosses over the cultural significance of the place for the local communities. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett among others asserts that it is actually the 'natural' in heritage that is an inappropriate label (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004: 53). Landscapes are not only shaped by cultural practices but they are also symbolic of cultural and social beliefs (Crang 1998: 15). Despite the category of mixed heritage sites, none of the holy mountains of Tibetan Buddhism have been recognized as such, not even Mount Kailash, which is also holy to the Hindus (the Nepali side of Mount Everest is part of Sagarmatha National Park). There is also an important link between cultural and natural heritage since the preservation of a traditional way of life might be crucial to the conservation of natural heritage (Harrison and O'Donnell 2010: 98).

In addition, a dichotomy between 'tradition' and globalization raises questions, one of which is the assumption that global and local values, opinions, and norms are distinct and homogenous. An example of this is how the term 'nature', which is often interchanged with 'the environment', is assumed to be a universal category separate from human-shaped space. Thus, nature reserves free of permanent human presence are seen to be more authentically natural (Weller 2006: 9, 47). Shepherd and Yu see the sacralization of nature as a foundational aspect of environmentalism and the environmental movement takes for granted that all humans form a world community whose values transcend cultural norms and practices (Shepherd and Yu 2013: 34). Instead, Confucianism stresses harmony between humans (and earth) and heaven (nature), Daoism situates humans within nature, and Buddhism stresses the value of all life forms (Shapiro 2001: 213).

The Three Parallel Rivers area, for instance, was recognized by UNESCO as a natural heritage site 'of outstanding universal value' despite the fact that:

> the area has been modified by human activities over thousands of years; note that in 2003 some 315,000 people lived inside the property, with

12 Story in Xidang.

> 36,500 residing inside the core zone. However, much of the site is still relatively undisturbed and continues to perform its ecosystem functions. This is partially explained by the inaccessibility of the higher slopes and the relatively light impact of the subsistence activities of the resident populations. (UNESCO 2013)

As we have seen, the Meili Snow Mountains are not uninhabited nor are they separate from human-shaped space in addition to their significant cultural and sacral meaning which goes beyond the environmental perspective. Many of the international activities have, in particular, revolved around Khawa Karpo Peak. It belongs to the classification of mountains known as '*neri* (Wyl. *gnas ri*), literally translated as "mountain abode", the holiest mountains in Tibetan Buddhism, and the name denotes both the god himself and the mountain where he resides' (Coggins and Yeh 2014: 4). Through 'the process of Buddhicization' (Buffetrille 1998: 21) some of these territorial gods were transformed into Buddhist holy mountains around which pilgrims perform a circumambulation. Pilgrims from all over China visit this mountain every year. In accordance with tradition, scaling the peaks would defile the deity and none of the peaks of Meili have ever been climbed (there have been attempts despite local opposition but they have all failed and the government no longer grants climbing permits to these peaks). But despite the holiness of the mountains, they have been turned into a site for mass-tourism and protected as nature. My fieldwork observations of the signs placed along the tourist routes in 2015 revealed the split of heritage into cultural and natural. Some of the signs give information about the surrounding nature but most of them are related to Buddhism, explaining the sites and sights (some of which are possibly made up). One thing to also note about the signs is that they are written in Tibetan, Chinese, and English, but the Tibetan text only names the place; all the explanations are only in Chinese and English indicating the targeted audience of these signs.

From the signs and recent road constructions we can predict that the villages of Xidang and Rongzhong (the two villages are practically merged together) are soon to be within the main tourist routes. When approaching Xidang from Rongzhong, one comes to a newly built viewing platform with two signs:

> Lancang [Mekong] River Valley is a dry-hot valley since the annual evaporation is far higher than that of precipitation in foehn effect. Due to the favorable dry environment, it has formed unique dry foliole shrubbery

> composed of common shrubs as *Sophora davidii*, *Elsholzia capituligera*, *Bauhinia faberi var, microphylla*, *Excoecaria acerifolia* and herbaceous plants as *Cymbopogon distons* and *Incarvillea arguta*.[13]

> Xiang Wan, a counselor of King Gesar, was born in Rongzhong Village (ancient name Rongdi). It is said that the Ancient Barbican was left by the troops by clan Mu in Lijiang in the Conquest of the West in the Ming Dynasty, or built by the troops of ancient Tibetan Kingdom in south war.[14]

The first sign explains the view from the platform while the second tells the assumed history of the only ancient tower left in these villages (there used to be three but the others were demolished during the Cultural Revolution in order to gain more farming land). They also connect Rongzhong to the story of King Gesar, which is important to Tibetan identity (there are several stories in the villages connecting the places with King Gesar).

The arrangement of signboards and the creation of narratives is a sign of the future development of the Xidang area for tourism. A road construction project through the villages aims to connect them via Ninong village to the main road from Weixi to Deqin, enabling shorter and easier transportation times through the southern route. The starting point of the road in the north is Foshan, where there is a mine which might bring heavy traffic through this heritage site. Also, the main road through the villages to Xidang Hot Springs was widened and paved in 2014. The road conditions were a common grievance among the villagers as the park has high entrance fees but the villagers felt that the park authorities did not invest any of the profits for the benefit of the locals. Another road has been built to Bajur Temple terminating in a brand-new car park. To the left there are two large and 108 small stupas. The small stupas were built during the summer of 2009 by pilgrims from Tibet Autonomous Region and have now been named the 'Hundred Honored and Victorious Pagodas'. Next to the stupas there is a keyhole-shaped impression on the rock. Anyone who wishes to approach the holy mountains should first perform prayers there to gain access.

The official narratives gloss over local, contested understandings of the area. The first incarnation of a local lama called Guru Dakpa, or the fourteenth, took place in a cave near the temple. The sign at the cave reads:

13 First sign at the viewing platform.

14 Second sign at the viewing platform.

Figure 8.2 Ancient tower, road construction, wine fields, and part of Rongzhong village

Photograph by Sonja Laukkanen

'It is the holy land of Vajrayogini (Dakini Dorje Pakmo). Vajrayogini is the female consort of Cakrasamvara Tantra, who is an important Yidam in the Tibetan Buddhism.' In Tibetan the sign reads *Phag-mo-gnas*, which is what the villagers call the cave, but there is no mention of the incarnation of Guru Dakpa. Most of the villagers belong to the Gelugpa school of Tibetan Buddhism but now some villagers have deserted this local Lama whom they have worshipped for generations. The reason for this is that the fourteenth incarnation propitiates a deity called Dorje Shugden (*rDo rje shugs ldan*) and the Dalai Lama does not approve of this. There have been fights and divorces resulting from this conflict, but during the high pilgrimage people reunited by refusing to discuss the matter.

Despite the conflicts surrounding the temple, Bajur is important to the locals also because of the natural rock formations made by the river. According to the sign, it has been named 'the Dancing Hall of Rongsa'aman, the princes of Rong Kingdom and her consorts'. I have not heard the story behind the name but the different rocks, potholes, and crannies have meaning as, for example, places to pray for the health of the sick (a large pothole in a rock with a stone pillar) or to determine whether one will return as a human in the next life (by crawling through a hole between an erratic block and the rock surface).

Villagers are especially proud that the place is not manmade but completely natural. In the local framing of the temple, there is thus no disconnect between the cultural and the natural. In fact, the last sign before starting off on the main tourist path to Yubeng aptly combines nature with culture:

> The community of *Platycladus orientalis* is mainly distributed in the slope between 2,200 to 2,600 meters beside the road from Xidang Village to Reshuitai (Hot Spring Pool). It has formed small trees community in the area without human intervene. In addition to an important species in soil fixation of dry-hot valley and beautifying the environment, it is the necessary aromatic plant for burning in the Tibetan religious rites. Inexplicably, the fragrant *Platycladus orientalis* in Kawagebo [Khawa Karpo] always loose[s] the smell after transplanted in other area.[15]

So, as Ashworth et al. argue, there are many heritages which consist of diverse cultural knowledge, 'the contents and meanings of which change through time and across space and are shaped and managed for a range of purposes defined by the needs and demands of our present societies' (Ashworth et al. 2007: 36). Thus, heritage is also an economic commodity with overlapping or even conflicting roles. Shepherd and Yu suggest that the spatial segregation of either culture or nature, in the form of gated heritage sites, nature preserves, or national parks, illustrates the underlying paradox of preservation: led by UNESCO, the world heritage movement seeks to preserve cultural diversity during an era of globalization which is presumed to carry the eminent threat of cultural sameness, yet in doing so, this preservationist ideology mandates a specific spatial form of preservation that erases cultural differences and paradoxically evokes and promotes this sameness. (Shepherd and Yu 2013: 34-35)

15 Sign near Xidang Hot Springs.

Authenticity as a field of contestations

Meili Snow Mountains, including Xidang village, are thus a site where different actors such as the government and the UNESCO impose framings of authenticity, which are subsequently negotiated and contested by locals, tourists and pilgrims. While the government redefines 'authentic' Tibetan culture for its own economic and political purposes, local villagers also attempt to enhance their agency and have changing views of their culture.

I have alluded to the question of authenticity throughout the chapter. 'Authenticity' is a modern value, whose emergence is closely related to the impact of modernity upon the unity of social existence. The word 'authentic' conflates Greek and Latin terms that combined ideas of 'authoritative', something dictated from on high, and 'original', primordial, and innate (Lowenthal 1995: 125). Authenticity connected with identity is a cultural construct closely tied to Western notions of the individual and our search 'for the unspoiled, pristine, genuine, untouched and traditional – says more about us than about others' (Handler 1986: 2). To quote Charles Lindholm, persons are *seen* to be authentic

> if they are true to their roots or if their lives are a direct and immediate expression of their essence. Similarly, collectives are authentic if their biological heritage can be traced and if the members act in the proper, culturally valued manner. From this evidence, there are two overlapping modes for characterizing any entity as authentic: genealogical or historical (*origin*) and identity or correspondence (*content*). (Lindholm 2008: 2)

Tibetan culture is not listed on the UNESCO World Heritage List but many scholars, activists and the Dalai Lama see it as threatened (see discussion e.g. Barnett 2001; Lopez 1998; Anand 2000). One of the reasons for the perceived inauthenticity of the villagers of Xidang among Western tourists is that they are communists (this is their self-definition). The Chinese flag can be observed on many of the houses and if you visit their homes, you will find an altar topped with statues of Buddha, surrounded by holy thangkas and posters of different Lamas and of Mao.

Western tourists usually assume that people are forced to display these items but that is not the case in this area. Thus, the villagers are perceived as 'changed'; they have lost their traditions and authenticity. Why do the villagers see themselves as communists? One reason is that Xidang is a farming community where fourteen 'original' families previously owned all the land. People who came later worked for these families, essentially just for

Figure 8.3 Altar

Photograph by Sonja Laukkanen

food. So, the villagers feel that the communists gave the land to the people (after collectivization). In the past the villagers were also very poor. One young man told me his grandfather's reason for supporting the communist regime: 'I'm on the side of those who help me' (Interview 6.7.2014). Another reason is that northern Yunnan was never really under the control of Lhasa but more a sort of warlord country where villages raided other villages (mainly for food as there was not much else to steal) (Interview 27.7.2014). So people feel that the communists brought law and order to the area. Sara Shneiderman has argued that we have failed to recognize Tibetan roles as 'dominant orchestrators of their own 'civilizing project'[16] [...], meaning recognizing the difference between 'Tibetan' as a dominant *national* identity which contains its own networks of ethnicity established through civilizing projects, and 'Tibetan' as a peripheral *ethnic* identity within other national contexts, such as China, Nepal and India' (Shneiderman 2006: 9-10).

16 Stevan Harrell defines a 'civilising project' as 'a kind of interaction between peoples, in which one group, the civilizing centre, interacts with other groups (the peripheral peoples) in terms of a particular kind of inequality' (Harrell 1995: 4).

We tend to imagine the Tibetans as a large homogenous group and not see the many internal differences.

As mentioned above, one of the internal differences now occurring in Xidang is the conflict over the local lama (the fourteenth or Guru Dakpa). In fact, it seems that people are talking about different things in relation to this conflict; the supporters of the Dalai Lama speak about 'a ghost' (they cannot mention Dorje Shugden's name) and supporters of the local lama do not talk about deities at all, but speak of the devotion of generations of ancestors, and refuse to desert their lama. So if cultural heritage is understood to be the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present, and bestowed for the benefit of future generations, then, the conflict over the local lama could be seen to be about heritage. However, 'heritage' is not a word the locals would use. All and all, they seem to have a very low opinion of their 'culture'.

Authenticity in connection with tourism is closely tied to identity. The alienated modern tourist in the quest for authenticity looks for the pristine, the primitive, the natural, that which is as yet untouched by modernity. Yet tourism is said to lead to the 'commoditization' (Greenwood 1989: 172) of the local culture as the 'colourful' traditional costumes and customs, rituals, and feasts, and folk and ethnic arts become touristic services or commodities because they are performed or produced for touristic consumption, which creates 'staged authenticity' (MacCannell 1973: 595-596). For example, growing tourist numbers to religious sites are seen to result in the dilution of authentic cultural practices (pilgrimage vs tourism) and the construction and reconstruction of temples and stupas are viewed as the destruction of authenticity, although this might be an act of devotion such as in the construction of the 108 small stupas in Xidang. It has also been suggested that 'authenticity' is a socially constructed concept and its social (as opposed to philosophical) connotation is, therefore, not given, but 'negotiable' (Cohen 1988: 374). David Lowenthal suggests a shift of focus from some imagined original state to historical palimpsest (Lowenthal 1995: 129). Also, Littler and Naidoo have argued that the definition of heritage has 'morphed' over time and in this present context it can be defined as the use of the past as a cultural, political, and economic resource for the present, and we should pay attention to the very selective ways in which material artefacts, mythologies, memories, and traditions become resources for the present (Littler and Naidoo 2004: 331). Thus, the study of heritage does not involve a direct engagement with the study of the past. Instead, the contents, interpretations, and representations of the heritage resource are selected according to the demands of the present and handed onto an imagined future. Therefore, as Ashworth et al. argue,

it is meaning that gives value, either cultural or financial, to heritage and explains why certain artefacts, traditions, and memories have been selected from the near infinity of the past (Ashworth et al. 2007: 3).

Conclusion

The main question in this chapter was: what is authenticity and how is it created, transformed and contested by different actors involved in the tourism and heritage business at Meili Snow Mountains? Authenticity is not given but negotiated. The Chinese government has used the heritage of Tibetans as a resource in the promotion of development in the area. According to the government's view 'cultural sites become authentic by being toured and hence consumed' (Shepherd 2006: 252), which is very different from the Western idea of authentic place and experience as well as undisturbed nature. Yet even within domestic tourism there can also be observed a sort of nostalgia, a 'longing, not just for 'traditional China', but also for the experience of an unpolluted natural environment' (Kolås 2004: 273) and 'authentic' lifestyles. Moreover, the orientalization of the minorities 'situates locals in an inferior position constraining their choices and neglecting their concerns, but it also sets in motion their own initiatives in reinterpreting cultural traditions and expressing their modernist pursuits as agents of local social development' (Jinba 2014: 70). An example of this is the locals' participation in the tourism business as guesthouse owners, guides, and drivers or even as performers. The economic importance of tourism is widely recognized by the government as well as local villagers. While Chinese tourist groups, when visiting 'scenic spots', expect the site/sight to be 'developed' (*kaifa*) (Nyíri 2009: 156), both the government and villagers see it as a way for modernization. *Kaifa* has brought with it the expansion of infrastructure and communications. However, with increasing numbers of tourists, the religious sites and monasteries tend to be seen as lacking in authenticity the assumption being that increasing tourism flows to a site will lead to a dilution of authentic cultural practice. That is why I looked at pilgrimage as a form of 'tourism' that actually enhances the sense of authenticity.

The classification of the Meili Snow Mountains as a natural heritage site reflects a Western understanding of heritage separating nature from culture which does not fit in with the local understandings. UNESCO has tried to address this dichotomy by acknowledging cultural landscapes as one category of heritage yet none of the Tibetan holy mountains have been recognized as such. At Meili Mountains the whole understanding of nature is imbued with

culture, so much so that many natural sites have been given cultural meaning. I looked at the signboards placed along the pilgrimage/tourist routes by the park administration giving the sights/sites more Buddhist narrative, but which still often glosses over local, contested understandings of the area.

In addition, this chapter aimed to show how the villagers of Xidang are affected by several different processes that have affected the sense of authenticity of their identity. There has been a Buddhist 'civilizing project', to use Harrell's term, incorporating Khawa Karpo into the Buddhist holy mountains. The Dalai Lama's ongoing attempt to create a pan-Tibetan identity by forbidding the propitiation of Dorje Shugden has turned some of the villagers into outsiders in the Tibetan 'civilizing project' and caused some to desert the local lama. And, of course, there is the 'civilizing project' of the Chinese state with its development, 'harmonious society', and 'ecological state'. They also have several identities as one *minzu* (nationality) of China, i.e. Tibetans (*Zangzu*), especially as they identify themselves as communists. But they can also be seen as Tibetans as promoted by Tibetan nationalism and represented by the Dalai Lama. They also have local identities, for example, as Khampas or followers of their local lama. In the end, their village is also located in the Meili Snow Mountains, part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a fact that introduces the global conceptions of heritage and preservation, not to mention the increasing numbers of tourists (both Chinese and Western) who have their own ideas of 'authentic' Tibetans and culture. Add to that the conceptions of the pilgrims and those who have returned from their education in Dharamsala, and we might start to understand why some of the villagers of Xidang feel that they are not 'authentic' Tibetans. Thus, not only the area and the culture are differently framed by different actors, also different narratives of authenticity are created. However, according to the villagers, it does not matter who you are because all people in the world benefit from visiting the holy Meili Mountains.

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Section III

Public Debates in Heritage Work: Possibilities and Limitations for Plural Voices and New Forms of Engagements

9 Heritage Visions of Mayor Geng Yanbo

Re-creating the City of Datong

Jinze Cui

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Abstract
The chapter analyses the role and vision of one remarkable political leader, Geng Yanbo, who served as the mayor of Datong from 2008 to 2013. Geng's vision and strong charisma shaped the city's heritage policy. This intriguing case shows the importance of individual leadership, the role of heritage in urban development and city branding, and the complex understandings of heritage among different actors. Geng embarked on an ambitious renovation programme that also included moving, changing, and 'improving' many historic buildings, and even constructing 'fake' historic buildings. The case reveals how expert views, political visions, and public sentiments are complex and sometimes clash. It also illustrates how influential and powerful individual political leaders can be in an authoritarian system.

Keywords: re-creation, identity, heritagization, renovation, debate, system

The Datong City renovation programme was carried out as a reaction to the exhaustion of coalmine resources, sense of victimization, and urgent need for a new identity that would make local citizens feel proud about their city. The strong personal charisma and passion of Mayor Geng Yanbo resulted in a frenzy of heritage restoration and re-creation in the historical city as well as at major heritage sites in the suburbs.[17] From 2008 to 2013, 20 heritage sites above the municipal level faced different kinds of interventions that triggered a heated public debate. The case of Datong offers a vivid example of how various cultural, social, political and economic factors shape heritage

17 See Zhou Hao's documentary *The Chinese Mayor* (Zhaoqi Films, 2014).

conservation in China today. It also demonstrates how different actors create and imagine their heritage differently, leading to contestation and negotiations about how to preserve and promote local heritage. Similar to the Gulou neighbourhood project (see Graezer Bideau and Yan in this volume) and the Zhizhu Temple case (see Tam in this volume) in Beijing, the Datong programme is also carried out as an answer to the previous social suppression or neglect of cultural heritage, and embodies strong emotional attachment from the local people. Moreover, Datong uniquely exemplifies the cultural ambitions of political leaders engaged in urban renewal projects and their complex motivations. The interactions between officials, experts, individual citizens, and the media today significantly influence and complicate the heritage-making process.

This chapter addresses the following specific questions: How can one individual political leader shape heritage-making in China today? How do different actors interact in the heritage-making processes, and what power do they have? How do people understand and relate heritage to their own situation in contemporary society, and what significance does heritage have for identity formation and city branding? The analysis relies on site visits, interviews, online participatory observation, and a study of a variety of documents and reports. The findings show that there is a gap between the professional expert view and the public understanding of 'heritage'. It also shows how the political system in China enables individual political leaders to arouse and manipulate public opinions and emotions as well as to override the jurisdiction of heritage authorities such as the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH).

The history of Datong and the aspirations of Geng Yanbo

The first urban construction of Datong in northern Shanxi Province dates back to over 2300 years ago. The city functioned as the capital from 398 to 494 in the North Wei dynasty (386-534). As the power centre of the northern minority of Xianbei, Datong became an international metropolis on the crossroad of different cultures. The large Buddhist cave temples at Yungang, today's UNESCO World Heritage site, were mainly built during this time period. In 1044, the city became the second capital of the Liao dynasty (916-1125). It kept the name of West Capital throughout the Jin dynasty (1115-1234). The two 'national key cultural heritage' sites inside the historical city, Huayan Temple and Shanhua Temple, were built during this time period. These temples' main timber buildings are still authentic

Figure 9.1 City of Datong in 1922

Photograph: CICM archives, KADOC, KU Leuven

remains of the Liao and Jin dynasties' creations. The urban texture of today's historical centre was formed during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), when Datong became an important military strongpoint at the north frontier. The city was rebuilt on a smaller scale but better fortified. With one historical city centre and three subordinate forts outside the city gates, it was known as the 'Single-wing Phoenix' due to its layout. Prince Dai was enfeoffed here in 1391 and turned the city into a regional administrative and cultural centre. The Nine Dragons Screen Wall, which is a famous place of interest today, was originally a decoration in front of the gate to Prince Dai's Mansion in the centre of the city. These different stages of construction formed the historical urban 'palimpsest' of Datong. Due to the many heritage sites remaining from the heydays of each historic period, Datong received the status of National Famous City of Historic Culture from the State Council of China in 1982.

Despite its rich historical urban landscape, after 1949 Datong was solely valued as an important coal-mining base. The city suffered a lot from the development of heavy industry. Environmental pollution and destruction of heritage sites made the city (in)famous for its dirt and ugliness, and it was not a popular destination for tourists. A report in 2005, however, warned that its high-quality coal resource would be exhausted within thirteen to

sixteen years (Cao et al. 2005). Datong therefore needed a total reorientation of its development model. It also faced a crisis of identity.

In January 2008, a new municipal government came to power in Datong. Geng Yanbo, the previous vice mayor of Taiyuan, provincial capital city of Shanxi, became the vice secretary of the Municipal Party Committee of Datong, and was nominated as the new mayor six months later. Geng was born in a small county in Shanxi Province in 1958. Heritage-related developments had been a constant and central element in his political career. In 1983, Geng had joined a part-time education programme at the Chinese Literature Department of Shanxi University where he showed a great passion for Chinese traditional literature and culture. It is said that the *Analects of Confucius* was his favourite morning reading. Wang's Mansion in Lingshi (Shanxi Province) was Geng's first attempt at 'heritage branding'. In 1995, the residents inside the historical courtyards were relocated and the site was redeveloped into a tourist spot called the Chinese Residence Art Museum. Under the same kind of policy, Chang's Mansion and the Temple of City Wall and Moat in Yuci were renovated and 'branded' by Geng. In 2003, the entire historical city of Yuci was razed and instead a row of new pseudo-historical buildings came to line the streets. Thanks to successful advertising, these sites became national top-ranking tourist destinations after the renovations. Geng's passion for Chinese traditional culture and promotion of Shanxi's heritage sites was appreciated by his leaders, who promoted Geng to vice mayor of Taiyuan (Lu 2014). However, the Yuci programme was ultimately not completed after Geng left his position. In Taiyuan he had planned to carry out a RMB 200 billion urban renovation project, but this was halted after he was relocated to Datong. Before assuming office in Datong, he pleaded to the provincial authorities to allow him to serve a full five-year term this time, and this request was accepted (Shu and Wang 2009).

When he arrived in Datong, Geng climbed on top of the ruins of the city wall and expressed surprise that over 70 per cent of it survived as rammed-earth ruins and that it was besieged by banal modern buildings. On 4 February 2008, at a meeting to announce his new appointment, Geng proposed his vision for the city's future: 'to fully take advantage of the abundant historical and cultural resources of Datong, and to build a worldwide brand of Chinese Famous City of Historic Culture' (Zhao and Jing 2013: 23).

Before Geng began his term, the municipal government had adopted the fourth master plan of Datong in 2006. It included a special conservation plan of the historical city centre that identified four Historic Cultural Districts, covering less than 30 per cent of the main historical city. The three

historical subordinate forts, which were built to protect the immediate neighbourhood outside the city gates, were not taken into consideration, and the intention was to keep the city wall as a ruins park (Cao et al. 2008: 198).

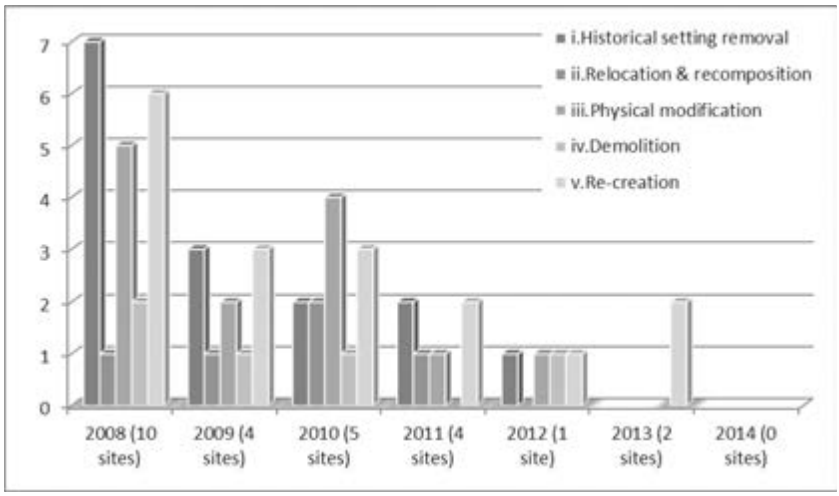
After Geng came to power, on 19 June 2008, the Municipal People's Congress Standing Committee published 'Decisions Regarding the Conservation and Restoration of the Historical City of Datong'. The Decisions criticized the previous 'segmental' and 'passive' heritage conservation policies, and for the first time stipulated an 'integral protection' idea that included a total renovation of the main historical city as well as the three subordinate forts. It was also decided that the city should display cultures from all the past dynasties, and therefore long-gone historic sites, including the entire fortification system, would have to be recreated and all 'non harmonious' modern buildings demolished (Geng 2010a). As a result, over 40,000 families were relocated due to demolitions between 2008 and 2013. The total amount of investment for urban construction during the five years' term of Geng's government was over RMB 100 billion. Before 2008, the annual amount of urban construction investment had only been RMB 30 million (Shu 2013a). Datong was reshaped by the will and views of one individual political leader: Geng influenced the entire renovation programme, from general strategies and heritage 'branding' to detailed design of specific sites.

Manipulated heritage: The Datong renovation programme

During Geng's renovation programme, 20 of the 30 heritage sites above municipal level in the target region, i.e. the Urban District and Yungang Town, faced interventions including demolition between 2008 and 2014.

As outlined in Figure 9.2, re-creation, physical removal, and modifications are three of the most commonly implemented interventions. The Huayan Temple (the two main buildings were built in 1038 and 1140), for instance, was massively enlarged from 2008 to 2010. Over the years of the temple's long history, large parts of the original temple complex had collapsed and gradually been taken over by local residents. Therefore the special urban texture surrounding the temple is proof of the historical evolution of the architectural complex. These historical neighbourhoods were now demolished according to Geng's heritage and urban branding design. Since no archaeological surveys were undertaken before re-creation, the newly built huge architectural complex caused permanent damage to the underground sites and failed to reflect the original appearance. Geng

Figure 9.2 The implementation of heritage-related projects in the historical city and suburb of Datong from 2008 to 2014



Graph by Jinze Cui

filled the whole neighbourhood with new pseudo-historical buildings, which were planned to be luxury shopping spaces but ended up as cheap hardware stores. After 2011, the re-creation of non-existing historic sites became predominant in Datong, when most of the major existing heritage sites had already suffered heavy interventions. One example is the full-scale fictional re-creation of the long-lost Prince Dai's Mansion (built in 1392 and destroyed in 1644), which began in 2010.

Furthermore, physical modification was another common form of heritage intervention in Geng's Datong. One symbolic case is the new 35-metre-high Goose Pagoda constructed on top of the renovated city wall. The original 14.8-metre-high historic pagoda (created in 1624), though listed as heritage site, was dismantled and relocated in 2010, because Geng thought it looked too small compared to the renovated city wall. The municipal government also invested in the relocation and re-composition of heritage sites as in the case of the Imperial City Stage Pavilion (created between 1644 and 1661, facing the Nine Dragons Screen Wall as a stage to host traditional festivals). In 2008, the urban stage pavilion was dismantled and re-established in front of another heritage site, the Temple of Lord Guan, in order to re-create an integral cityscape. During the renovation programme, Datong became one of the biggest customers of antiquities. A large quantity of historical architectural materials was bought and recomposed for the construction

of pseudo-historical buildings. In addition, the Yungang Grottoes (mainly created from 453 to 495 AD), a famous UNESCO World Heritage site, also suffered demolition and dramatic changes. In 2008, the renovation project, which aimed to construct a much larger scenic park, destroyed the historical worship route leading to the cave temples, and in 2010 two historical side halls at the end of the temple axis were demolished and replaced with a wide pedestrian path along the cliff. This project constituted a serious violation of Cultural Relics Protection Law and became the trigger to a heated public debate.

Public debate: The roles, views and impact of different actors

On 18 August 2009, a report in *Science and Technology Daily* questioned the legitimacy of the massive renovation project of the Yungang Grottoes. The authors revealed that the plan of the ongoing project was carried out without any professional consultation or authorization from SACH (Zhang and Li 2009). As a consequence, the report aroused public attention about the renovation programme in Datong. This soon attracted more criticism from heritage experts and professionals which got the public involved, triggering a heated debate. The understanding of the meaning and function of heritage differs quite dramatically between different social groups (similar to the Zhizhu Temple case in Beijing, see Tam in this volume). In the following, the interaction between these social groups partially altered the programme.

Within China's authoritarian political system, public debate is rarely seen due to the lack of transparency in the decision-making process and lack of independent and critical media. During the Datong debate, however, things followed a different path as new online media such as postings on a popular website (Baidu) and the use of the micro-blogging service Sina Weibo (the Chinese equivalent of Twitter) became important platforms for public debates (new online media also played a key role in the bottom-up movement of the heritagization of covered bridges in Taishun, see Svensson in this volume).

A three-party interaction developed between the government, the heritage experts and activists, and ordinary citizens, and each party made use of different types of media. Traditional media was dominated by the government and mainly represented the official view, while new media served as a platform for information and debate for other actors. The government was, however, influenced by and had to pay attention to both traditional

media and new media. This unprecedented heritage-related debate in and through the media shaped the views of different groups. Furthermore, it offers new insights into and possibilities to evaluate the Datong debate.

In the three-party structure of the debate, the government played a dominant role. Having majored in Chinese literature, Geng had an excellent position to mobilize different figures within the cultural and literature circle, as well as to make use of his knowledge to arouse public opinions by playing on emotions and employing cultural references. He commissioned some famous Chinese writers like Feng Jicai and Yu Qiuyu to produce positive images of him and his heritage programme. Many of his own discussions built on references to Chinese culture and history and also referred to and made use of the public debate.

Geng received his strongest opposition not from the provincial or municipal government but from the central government in Beijing. According to the 2007 revised version of the Cultural Relics Protection Law, construction, restoration, and reconstruction of national-level heritage sites in the protection zone or the buffer zone must be approved by SACH. Regarding the three major national-level heritage sites in Datong, the Yungang Grottoes, the Huayan Temple, and the Shanhua Temple, SACH had used its administrative powers since 2008 to order the provincial heritage authorities, as well as the provincial government of Shanxi, to halt construction. This had no effect until *Science and Technology Daily* published a report that received a lot of public attention in August 2009. The circulation of this report on the situation in Datong thus provided a counter-narrative to Geng's vision and showed that Geng was violating laws and regulations. It was thanks to the exposure in the media, that the heritage authorities eventually were able to stop parts of Geng's projects.

SACH dispatched an investigation group as an immediate response. On the evening of 20 August, the director general of SACH summoned Mayor Geng Yanbo to Beijing for an urgent enquiry. The Yungang project was declared illegal and forced to stop (Shu 2013b). All the national-level heritage projects were prohibited and had to complete the missing procedures for authorization. SACH commanded a small number of constructions with the strongest and most direct heritage interventions to be removed and the rest to be modified. As a response to SACH's intervention, the Datong municipality then fined four architectural firms and one local heritage management office. Eight responsible persons, including the director and vice directors of the Datong Municipal Administration of Cultural Heritage, received administrative sanctions from the municipal government (Zeng 2013). SACH does not have direct administrative power over local

governments and Geng himself was not punished for his ambitious programme but he was able to shift the responsibility to his local heritage staff. In the end, the overall renovation programme was only confronted with minor alterations as compromises. Geng was never stopped by his direct superordinate, the provincial government. The unequal power relation between Geng as a local political leader and SACH as the central heritage authority is clearly visible. SACH is almost powerless when confronted with the non-professional vision and manipulation of heritage by local political leaders. The local administrative power is stronger and carries more weight than professional expertise and formal regulations (on how the vertical administrative power affects the implementation of heritage work, see Maags in this volume). The value and use of heritage in China is thus strongly politicized rather than being a subject of academic and formal deliberations (see further discussions in the introduction by Svensson and Maags). However, in the Datong case local citizens also played an important role showing how heritage has become an issue that ties into local identity and aspirations.

When the news that SACH had cancelled the Yungang project was published, over 10,000 local citizens gathered in a square in Datong and signed a petition to support their mayor. Online posts on Baidu and on Sina Weibo initiated this gathering, and the images and information of the gathering were quickly spread online. Without direct government manipulation, supporters and opponents of Geng became involved in a long-lasting bottom-up debate on the new media platforms. In 2013, a heritage student's Weibo tweet which condemned the destruction during the re-creation of the city wall received 851 reposts and 330 comments (Cui 2013). About 64 per cent of the comments were anti-Geng. The debate was quite heated with verbal attacks originating mostly from the pro-Geng local citizens. This heated debate caused the traditional media to step in again. Journalists from traditional newspapers and magazines interviewed active Weibo users who had become well known in the online debate. The Phoenix TV website put up a permanent theme page entitled 'Datong Revival, a Combat between the New and the Old' which covered the reports and interviews regarding the Datong issue. The result of an online questionnaire during the period from October 2012 to May 2014 shows that 64 per cent of the 9784 participants favoured the re-creation programme in Datong and thought it helped to 'promote local culture and bring more space for development' (iFeng 2012). The involvement of the public thus reshaped and broadened the debate to include other opinions apart from those of government officials and experts.

Heritage activists, such as heritage volunteers, students, and scholars, mostly from outside Datong, formed the major opposition against Geng. Ruan Yisan, a famous heritage conservation expert from Tongji University, had once been invited to develop the conservation plan for the historical city of Yuci during Geng's early political career. However, when Geng found out that they could not reach an agreement, Ruan was simply ignored. In 2009, Ruan asked for an appointment with Geng regarding Datong but was refused. Ruan therefore expressed his opinions in a letter that Geng also ignored (He 2013). During the debate, heritage activists accused the Datong programme of faking relics, heritage destruction, misinterpretation and bad construction, violation of laws and regulations, as well as misuse of public funds.

'Faking relics' is the most quoted objection throughout the debate. This forced Geng to construct a whole new vision of 'authenticity' as a defence, something that will be discussed in the next section. Many historians and architectural archaeologists complained about the accuracy and quality of the projects in Datong. For instance, a local historian pointed out that the houses in the restored urban blocks have no chimneys although these are symbolic icons of the landscape of traditional northern Shanxi cities. Guo Zhan, the deputy chairman of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), also argued during an informal seminar in Beijing in April 2015 that the bad quality of the constructions diminished the value of the projects (CityIf 2015). At the same time, the programme has brought about a huge debt for the municipality and Geng was accused of misusing public funds, whereas economists raised concerns about Datong's financial situation. The fact that some protected heritage sites were not restored and protected, while other re-created sites were prioritized, also led to complaints from heritage activists. This kind of criticism was mostly published on new media platforms.

However, local residents' public opinion echoed and supported Geng's heritage vision. The pro-Geng group included local citizens as well as experts in the fields of tourism and architecture. They cared more about other aspects of the programme than whether they were authentic or not, and instead valued the programme because it meant cultural revival, promotion, and transformation of the city. The programme was recognized as a rare opportunity for the transformation of Datong from an industrial to a cultural city and as a possibility to revive Chinese traditional culture. This idea was shared among many nationalistic scholars as well as 'pseudo-historical' architecture design and building practitioners (iFeng 2012). Geng's personal charisma also played an important role in attracting supporters. He worked

on the construction site wearing dirty shoes, refused bribery, and was found eating noodles alone at street stands. These images of Geng, taken by local citizens with their mobile phones, were spread across the Internet. Chinese citizens are not accustomed to meeting local politicians accidentally on their way to work. Therefore Geng was seen as 'a different official' leading to the development of a personal cult. Some local citizens, for instance, even donated money and bought a pair of new shoes for him (Wang 2013).

The media played a key role in stirring up the debate as well as developing it further. Although SACH held a totally different opinion of Geng's programme, its authority did not carry sufficient weight until traditional media stepped in and aroused public attention. The widespread use of new media and slower censorship on this platform made it a perfect tool for citizens to express and exchange opinions. It was also used as a tool to organize bottom-up gatherings, such as those for the petitions among pro-Geng activists in Datong. At the same time, the debate on new media also circulated information and served as an input for traditional media. As soon as traditional state-run media reported an issue, the debate would become more legitimate and have a stronger influence on the government. In the Datong case, traditional media often initiated the public debate, and then heritage activists and individuals joined the discussion on new media and reinforced it. Afterwards, the traditional media rejoined the debate and spread it to a wider group of people, which obligated Geng and his government to respond.

Geng's heritage visions: Cultural revival and local pride

'Many plans were settled by me,' Geng Yanbo said during an interview in 2009, 'These projects including the Yungang Grottoes were all settled according to my opinion. I completely shoulder the responsibility' (Shu and Wang 2009). It is true that he did not only initiate the whole programme, but was also personally involved in planning and designing the projects. Geng's personal understanding of heritage, interpretation of the programme, and his defence during the public debate are crucial for an analysis of developments in Datong. From the speeches and articles written by Geng, we can infer that he developed his own heritage vision.[18] He often makes reference

18 Unlike most Chinese politicians, Geng reportedly writes his own speeches and articles instead of asking his secretaries to do so. Due to this reason, this study examines his articles and speeches to identify his very personal approach to heritage.

to Liang Sicheng, one of the first Chinese Western-educated architects and the founder of the study of Chinese architectural history and heritage conservation. In some articles, Geng clearly described his understanding of heritage and presented key arguments for his defence. Concerning cultural heritage, he remarked that:

> [C]ultural heritage does not only contain historical, artistic, epistemological and scientific values, but also tremendous *commercial value.* [...] The resource of cultural heritage is the most precious and unique advantage of a city. It is *the banner of cultural ideals*, *the expression of historical sentiments* and *the identity of national spirits.* (Geng 2010a: 215-216; emphasis by the author)

In Geng's eyes, the role of cultural heritage is thus quite comprehensive. On the one hand, he acknowledges the commercial value of heritage and opposes the idea of using heritage as an obstacle for development. On the other hand, he also romanticises heritage as a symbol of national spirit and identity. Geng legitimized his Datong programme mainly from these two approaches.

Commenting on the difference between Chinese and Western traditional architecture, Geng further argued that:

> The obvious differences between Chinese architecture and Western architecture should be noticed. From a material perspective, Western architecture is dominated by stone structures, therefore ruins or detached columns can be preserved in open air to demonstrate the beauty of incompleteness; while *Chinese architecture is built mainly with wood and bricks*, it is hard for a dilapidated house to survive and it will collapse completely without restoration. From a cultural aesthetic perspective, Western architecture masters individual tallness and majesty, while *Chinese architecture admires the artistic conception of a complex*. Without any continuous architectural-complex backdrop, one isolated building cannot demonstrate the beauty of traditional architecture. (Geng 2010a: 215; emphasis by the author)

Geng's view on Chinese traditional architecture was influenced by the well-known expert Luo Zhewen. Geng used Luo's views to support his recreation programme inside the Shanhua and Huayan Temples in order to complete the imagined historic architectural complex.

Geng developed his own vision by relying on the two concepts of 'authenticity' and 'integrity'. In his articles, he, for instance, stated that:

> For the protection of the *authenticity and integrity* of Datong's historic cultural relics, the Municipal Party Committee and the government have decided to adopt the idea of 'one axis, two cities, separate development' for urban construction. [...] The next step is to make plans strictly based on the following principles: *logic is greater than being*; *history is greater than reality*; ecology is greater than economy; planning is greater than rights; *integrity is greater than segment*; *long-term is greater than present*. (Geng 2008b: 204; emphasis by the author)

This is one of his most important quotes and central in order to comprehend the logic of Geng's heritage programme. Geng's aspirations for Datong were based on a sort of intentional correctness rather than historical or factual reality. For this reason, he did not emphasize physical accuracy and the irreversibility of time. In his view, his renovation did not aim to make Datong exactly as it was in the past but strives to make Datong even better than before.

Adding to his narrative of authenticity and integrity, Geng also argued that:

> Datong is a horizontal city, with landmark buildings like the Bell Tower, Drum Tower, Kuixing Tower, Taiping Tower, city gate towers and corner towers standing among sheets of lower residential courtyards with a certain rhythm. The urban space was placid and open. With a well-proportioned skyline, the historic city's cityscape was artistic and unique. *Authenticity is to keep the original appearance of the past; integrity is to protect well the global environment of the historical city.* (Geng 2008a: 205; emphasis by the author)

Furthermore, Geng invoked Luo Zhewen's 'Four Originals' principle as a solution to his narrative of authenticity and integrity. On this matter, he stated:

> During the conservation and restoration of the historical city of Datong, following the basic guidance of Restore the Old as Old, we stick to four basic principles: (1) *Sufficient study of history.* Historical references are searched and historical information is passed on based on archaeological excavations, information collection, research surveys and expert consultations. No designs without historical reference and no constructions without expert consultation, this is our persistence. (2) *Heritage-centric.* Heritage major restoration and re-creation is carried out according to the *building form and style of its own dynasty.* [...] (3) *The 'Four Originals'.* Keep

> the *original architectural form, original architectural structure, original architectural material and original architectural craftsmanship* during maintenance, restoration and re-creation. 'The Four Originals' is the touchstone for the differentiation between faking relics and Restore the Old as Old.[19] [...] (*4*) *Stylistic unity.* Based on the unique value system and aesthetic requirement, Mister Liang Sicheng proposed that the restored part is better to be in harmony with the original, *the new and the old should be integrated in appearance*. This is different from the principle of legibility in the Venice Charter (Geng 2010a: 215; emphasis by the author).

The essential element of Geng's vision was based on the belief that 'logic is greater than being' and 'history is greater than reality'. When we associate this slogan with his heritage practice, especially physical modifications and demolitions, we can see that, in Geng's understanding, 'history' actually means an idealized and romanticized image of the nation's past rather than historicity, and 'logic' is the romanticization of heritage, similar to the idea of Romanticism in eighteenth-century Europe. As heritage is regarded as a significant representation of national achievement, heritage can be modified in cases where it discords with the 'cultural ideals', 'historical sentiments', and 'national spirits'. The so-called sufficient study of history as well as the 'Four Originals' is just intended to make the projects appear to be scientific, but in fact they are intrinsically aimed at creating a 'stylistic unity as an illustration of an ideal' (Jokilehto 1999: 101). Rather than calling this 'restoration with Chinese characteristics', it should be defined as stylistic restoration in academic terms. In 1866, Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, the leading figure of the nineteenth-century French stylistic restoration movement, defined restoration as reinstating a building to 'a condition of completeness which may never have existed at any given time' (Jokilehto 1999: 151). With a sensibility derived from outstanding comprehension of the intrinsic logic of medieval architecture, he restored many important historical buildings, including the Notre Dame de Paris.

However, the difference between Geng and Viollet-le-Duc is that Geng is neither an architect nor an architectural historian. With a strong passion for Chinese history and culture, Geng often compares himself to traditional

19 Luo Zhewen originally raised this principle in order to present an argument in the debate surrounding the introduction of the Venice Charter and the publication of the 'Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China'. Luo drafted the 'Consensus about the Chinese Characteristic Restoration Theory and Practice for the Conservation of Historical Architecture', which was signed by 33 Chinese experts in 2005, also known as the Qufu Declaration. The 'Four Originals' principle was officially published within this declaration.

scholars who designed their own gardens. In ancient China, the concept of art was defined by the scope of the daily life of scholars. Architectural construction was not included in this scope. Confucius, for instance, remarked: 'a gentleman's ability is not confined to any concrete things'.[20] Moreover, in the 'Notes of Yueyang Tower', Fan Zhongyan's famous essay written in 1046 to celebrate the renovation of a landmark tower, there is not one single word describing the building's structure or style. A cultural landscape can be endowed with art, while the building itself is only a manufactured tool holding metaphysical meanings.[21] Geng often visited antique dealers' shops and purchased historical architectural components for the renovation programme in Datong (Lu 2014). He had a clear and specific understanding of the 'age value' of tangible, movable antiquities, which Alois Riegl defined as the 'most modern' value of European monuments since the late nineteenth century (Riegl 1903: 16). When it comes to the intangible composition of architectural components, in other words, the building process itself, the age value is rhetorically replaced by the 'Four Originals' principle. This paradox is deeply rooted in the Chinese pre-modern tradition. It reveals the unaccomplished process of 'heritagization' within the historical architectural tradition in the Chinese social consciousness today.

The victimization narrative as the search for a new identity

Besides Geng's strong personal charisma and his unique folksy image, another important factor that made him extremely popular and supported by locals during the debate is the shared sense of victimization. In Geng's eyes, Datong bears the label of the 'victim of modernity'. He once addressed Datong as the city that 'time and again suffered from terrible destructions, but also repeatedly rose from ruins' (Geng 2010a: 212). However, the destructions were not caused by wars or foreign invasions. When the Japanese occupied Datong in 1937, they created a master plan for the urban development of Datong in which the entire urban area, including the main fortified city and the three subordinate forts outside the city gates, would be protected as one whole historical centre (Li 1999: 271). After the establishment of the PRC in 1949, the city was seen only as a coal production centre. For over 60 years, under the Chinese centrally planned economy, Datong emptied its

20 *Analects of Confucius*, 'Chapter II: Governing'; my translation.

21 The object is to incarnate rites; *Commentary of Zuo*, 'Second Year of Lord Cheng'; my translation.

mountains and contributed 2.5 billion tons of low-cost, high-quality coal for the modernization of the nation. In return, it became one of the ugliest, dirtiest, and most polluted cities in China. Apart from the intentional destruction of antiquities during the Cultural Revolution, all the city gates, the brick coating of the city wall, as well as the elegant historical blocks with courtyards and alleyways were demolished for urban expansion, including the construction of large-scale collective residential buildings for workers.

When Geng visited Japan in 2010, he found the documents of the former urban plan in the national library of Japan. After he returned to Datong, he stated during one work meeting:

> I have been thinking all the time, that if Datong had been developed according to the Japanese plan after the establishment of new China, it would have been an international city by now. […] This time we investigated Kyoto and Nara. The population in Kyoto is over 1.6 million, the number of annual visitors there is over 50 million, and the total annual tourism income is about [RMB] 500 billion. Yet, today, the number of annual visitors in Datong is less than 1 million. […] The Japanese were invaders, they were robbers when they entered the city, but they were able to take a strategically advantageous position and make such a long-term plan for the benefit of Datong. Facing the Japanese invaders who brought deep disasters for the Chinese nation, we must remember the national humiliation and not forget the old hatred, but at the same time we cannot help but look up to this nation for their professional dedication. (Geng 2010b: 209)

The sense of being a victim of China's modernity and the guilt from being a member of the same authority (i.e. the CCP) that caused the tragedy of his home province, made Geng want to create a city that was even more 'historic and monumental' than the one that the Japanese invaders planned to preserve. During Geng's five-year term in office in the municipality, over RMB 100 billion was spent on the renovation programme with over RMB 70 billion in government investment. By the time Geng was suddenly relocated to Taiyuan in early 2013, the city had accumulated a debt of over RMB 13 billion.[22] After Geng's departure 125 projects were immediately halted because of lack of money. However, for Geng this was not a programme for short-term economical promotion but, as he said, an effort to 'let Datong find its position in history; and to make Datong, the Chinese ancient capital, the city under heaven, a

22 This number differs from individual reports with the maximum mount mentioned being 20 billion.

highland of culture and spirit and an ideal city which is walking towards the future full of cultural confidence' (Geng 2010a: 216). So many heritage sites in Datong were relocated, modified, demolished, or re-created in order to create 'cultural confidence'. This deep personal sense of history and responsibility towards the city and history, however, exposed a strong inferiority complex.

Many local citizens in Datong shared Geng's opinion and some of them set up a citizen action group called the 'Fans of Geng Yanbo' to safeguard the 'heritage' left by their beloved city mayor. This action group was established in 2009 to support Geng when SACH summoned him to Beijing over the Yungang Grottoes project. The citizens asserted that they felt more confident since the urban renovation began. Most external critics of Geng or his programme were labelled as irrelevant since 'non-Datongers don't understand the city'.[23] A new identity and pride had thus developed with the re-creation of the city's lost heritage. The 'Fans of Geng Yanbo' have gathered regularly since 2010, and their daily meeting is held at the recreated Four Archways in the city centre, which the activists see as a symbol of Geng's contribution to Datong (An and Yuan 2014).

Post-Geng heritage movement in Datong: The new conservation plan

In 2011, Geng was awarded the title 'Annual Outstanding Figure for the Conservation of Chinese Cultural Heritage' by the China Culture Relics Protection Foundation. Ironically, Shan Jixiang, the director general of SACH who summoned Geng to Beijing in 2009, presented him with the award. In addition, Geng was awarded the title of 'Annual Cultural Figure of China' by the China Culture Promotion Society and the Hong Kong-based Phoenix TV later that year. In February 2013, Geng was unexpectedly transferred from Datong to become the mayor of Taiyuan, the provincial capital of Shanxi Province. In the administrative structure of China, this can be regarded as a form of promotion (Xu 2013).

The new mayor of Datong was confronted with a city greatly altered and halfway re-created by Geng. The new government turned to the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design in July 2013 to commission a new conservation plan, which was in principle approved in April 2015. This is a key turning point in the examination of the post-Geng heritage legacy in Datong. In the new plan, a number of complex judgements, compromises, and

23 This is the most commonly adopted logic backing the pro-Geng arguments during the public debate in new media.

modifications were made: (i) two blocks were designated as Historic Cultural Districts. These districts are almost identical but slightly smaller in size than those in the 2006 plan, and all areas in Geng's urban re-creation programme were designated as buffer zones; (ii) one of the Historic Cultural Districts from the 2006 plan has been removed and another has been made secondary as a 'traditional appearance district' due to mass urban destruction; (iii) the protection zones of the national-level heritage sites were enlarged following the re-created scale, but none of the new buildings inside were recognized as heritage; (iv) all existing heritage sites including those relocated by Geng must be protected at their current locations; (v) the ongoing re-creation project of the Prince Dai's Mansion is allowed to be completed as a cultural exhibition district; (vi) most importantly, the entire recreated fortification system is identified as heritage, and the concerned planning zone for the first time after 1938 includes the three subordinate forts together with the central historical area. In other words, the 'Single-wing Phoenix' was retained (China Academy of Urban Planning and Design 2015).

In this plan it is stated that one of the key points for the urban conservation of Datong is to safeguard the traditional urban structure, especially the spatial relations between the urban landmark buildings. Despite the massive re-creations, the rebuilding of the historic atmosphere must be regarded as the most positive contribution of the Geng era. Geng's legacy in Datong is not only a piece of 'historical fiction', but also a new cultural phenomenon. In 2009, Liaocheng, a small historical city in Shandong Province, also initiated a total urban re-creation programme in its historical centre. The entire city within the existing historical fortification was razed and a brand new pseudo-traditional city was built. In September 2010, the China Ancient Capital Society published a consensus after the annual meeting, also known as the Datong Declaration. In this declaration, Geng's principles and method of urban renovation in Datong were endorsed. Thereafter, similar programmes derived from the 'Datong Model' were carried out in Shuozhou, Tai'erzhuang, Kaifeng, and Fenghuang, among other cities. According to incomplete statistics by the end of 2012, more than 30 cities all over China have carried out total re-creation plans (Peng and Zhou 2012).

Conclusion

The mass renovation programme in Datong and the heated public debate it gave rise to are extreme but vivid examples of how individual political leaders are able to shape local heritage-making processes in China. Regardless of

whether it was a World Heritage site or a national-level heritage site, Geng, with his strong personal charisma, was able to implement his own heritage visions without much obstruction, apart from critical media reports and views on social media. Heritage professionals and heritage authorities are often restricted to the scientific and neutral meanings of heritage, whereas political leaders as well as the general public tend to see heritage as an embodiment of various social values, such as the resurrection from collective victimization, the rebuilding of local identity and as an opportunity for industry transformation. This shows the bigger expectations put on heritage today. Geng's re-creation and heritagization efforts certainly exemplify this trend.

Due to the vertical system of government authority in China that makes local heritage authorities subordinate to local governments and political leaders rather than to the higher-level professional authorities, SACH does not have much power at the local level. As shown in the Datong case, one local political leader can be extremely powerful in the decision-making process. Geng was able to legitimize his vision and to win people's support by speaking to their needs and local pride. He was furthermore successful in using both old and new media channels to convey his vision and stir up public debates.

In mid-nineteenth-century Europe, stylistic restoration 'was strengthened by the political ambitions of decision-makers for whom restoration became a question of national prestige' (Jokilehto 1999: 303). This is not very different from what is happening in China today. The sense of victimization that Geng gave expression to was widely shared by the local community and helps to explain the need to create a powerful cultural image as well as a new identity in Datong. This sense of victimization is shaped by the national pride derived from a romanticized view of Chinese history and culture, and dissatisfaction with the actual poor heritage conditions that have been caused by destruction and ignorance during the twentieth century. Geng's reference to the Japanese urban plan is clear evidence of this. The wide diffusion of the 'Datong Model' throughout the country, in combination with the dream of 'the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation' promoted by President Xi Jinping,[24] reveals the strong appeal of using heritage as a platform for national and local imaginations. Somehow the Chinese are still seeing themselves as 'living in history'. The awareness of modernity and the irreversibility of time in the heritage field is blurry. This is essentially rooted in the unique, non-linear, ongoing socio-ecological modernization process in China. The modern Western-based heritage consciousness backed by academics does

24 This slogan was announced by President Xi Jinping on 29 November 2012 during his visit to the 'Road to Revival' exhibition at the National Museum in Beijing.

not match the pre-modern public epistemological basis. The public debate on the Datong case has demonstrated this issue in a dramatic way.

The case of Datong may also trigger a new orientation for the evaluation and recognition of heritage and conservation in China. Geng's intervention in Datong was not completely negative, which is also visible in the new post-Geng conservation plan, which designates the re-created historical city and the three subordinate forts as one complete planning zone. The definition and justification of the word 'conservation' have also become more and more unsettled today. Perhaps we will recognize Geng's Datong as heritage in the future, as an outstanding example of early-twenty-first-century Chinese heritage re-creations. Heritage is, after all, something that is created by different historical periods and, with the passage of time, comes to be seen as authentic and reflecting local and national culture, aspirations, and imaginations. Whoever has the power to determine the discourse or public views on heritage, can determine how the past is interpreted, and, in other words, what heritage is truly about.

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10 The Revitalization of Zhizhu Temple

Policies, Actors, Debates

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Abstract
This chapter discusses a case of a heated public debate on heritage conservation that revealed a power asymmetry in heritage conservation among various actors. It focuses on the revitalization of the Zhizhu Temple in Beijing, which suffered from years of neglect since its secularization in 1949. A company leased the temple in 2007 and started renovating it, with the aim to turn it into an upmarket recreation venue and art gallery. The renovation earned a UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards of Cultural Heritage Conservation in 2012. Criticism was, however, voiced over the fact that a former temple was being used as a 'private club'. The debate illustrates both complex and unclear regulations and different views among various actors on how to preserve and reuse heritage sites.

Keywords: revitalization, timber architectural heritage, temple, social debate, stakeholder, China

Making use of historic buildings has had a long history and has become one of the main issues in cultural heritage conservation worldwide, including in China. Regular maintenance is one of the most effective means of conservation and strongly relies on daily care. Therefore, a suitable function for historic buildings, which is in line with the visions and needs of responsible caretakers, is significant to the conservation and sustainable life of heritage sites. The functions of heritage buildings, however, alter over time owing to changes of ownership or users. In China, due to dramatic political and economic changes over the twentieth century, a lot of historic buildings have lost their original functions. When they are identified as 'heritage', their maintenance becomes a tricky issue. Incompatible or unsustainable

use of heritage buildings can cause irreversible damage to their value. In China, this has become a pressing issue and resulted in heated debates. In the case of religious buildings, such as temples, the discussions have been particularly controversial. There are three main reasons for this: Firstly, the relative vulnerability of the structure; secondly, the emotional value attached to both the buildings and their original use; and, thirdly, controversial opinions on the reuse of religious buildings. The timber structure of traditional Chinese architecture is very delicate. In Chinese society, people usually have a strong emotional attachment to Buddhist religious buildings as they manifest the main religious belief in China. Furthermore, some people still have doubts about reusing a religious space for different non-religious functions. Nevertheless, there have been some attempts by different actors to recreate a sustainable life for religious heritage. But such attempts have also attracted criticism that touches upon issues of moral and appropriate use, techno-legal limits to reuse, and the private versus public dimension of reuse.

The recent case of the revitalization of a temple in Beijing and the resulting heated debate over appropriate reuse illustrate the complex issues at hand. Zhizhu Temple, now known as the Temple Restaurant/Hotel Beijing, is located in the historic centre of Beijing, less than 800 metres from the Forbidden City, a World Heritage Site. During the last century the temple was occupied by different organizations and factories and had decayed into a hollow deserted complex. Starting seven years ago, a company initiated a project to renovate and revitalize the complex. The renovation strategy was based on their idea of reusing the space as a high-end hotel, a restaurant, and an art gallery. The restoration and renovation project took five years and was awarded the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards of Cultural Heritage Conservation in 2012. However, such glory did not just win compliments for the team. In fact, the case has brought criticism from the public and official media. The discussion involves whether it is suitable to have a hotel and a restaurant in a temple, and whether this usage is legitimate. Official media has criticized the use of the former temple as a 'private club' while not providing an accurate definition of 'private club'. The issue is complicated further by the government's efforts to revise heritage law and change heritage revitalization policies.

This chapter aims to discuss the debates on Zhizhu Temple and analyse the social, historical, and cultural backgrounds of these debates. The chapter also investigates the general legislation and policies concerning heritage revitalization and adaptive reuse, based on the analysis of the situation and different institutions involved. It intends to shed some light on the conflicts and discrepancies between the introduction and interpretation

of international standards on revitalization in China. It thus also analyses the practice and implementation at the local level as well as the reactions and views among the general public.

Legislative background

Utilization has always been a means of keeping historic buildings alive. However, not all kinds of utilization are beneficial to the conservation, presentation, and interpretation of the values of heritage. The utilization of heritage is encouraged in China as a basic principle and regulated in national and regional legislation.

In China's national legislation, 'reasonable utilization' is among the four principles that compose the foundation of the legislation system for cultural heritage conservation (National People's Congress 2015: Art. 4). The national legislation emphasizes the social purpose of the use and strongly recommends that a heritage site be used as a museum, a preservation institute, or a tourist location. It also emphasizes that the 'original state' of the heritage site should be kept and the safety of the heritage buildings should not be undermined during utilization. The national law sets down the basic principles and restrictions for the utilization of heritage sites. However, the three suggested functions have limited the choice of reuse. For a lot of the heritage sites it is difficult to create enough revenue to maintain the site as a museum or a tourist attraction, for instance. On the other hand, if the owner or the user of a heritage site would like to explore other functions, the national law provides no guidelines to determine if it is a compatible use or not. It should be noted that even though the national law for heritage conservation has been amended several times up until 2015, the main body of the law has remained more or less the same since 2002. Even as this chapter is being written, the national law for cultural heritage is going through yet another major revision which will inevitably give more weight to the reutilization of heritage. In the latest draft of the national law, the restrictions to the three functions have been deleted. More freedom is given to the utilization of the heritage sites and the regulations are more elaborate (Government of PRC 2016: Chapter 6).

Several municipalities have also established their own regulations for cultural heritage conservation. For example, the Regional Regulations of Cultural Heritage Management of Beijing (Beijing Municipality 1998: Art. 25) and the regulations for the conservation of historic districts and historic buildings of Shanghai (Shanghai Municipality 2002: Art. 4) and Qingdao

(Qingdao Municipality 2012: Art. 3) emphasize 'reasonable utilization' according to the protection levels and categories of the heritage sites. In the more recent Qingdao regulation, it states explicitly that the development of tourism and related businesses that are compatible to historic buildings is certainly encouraged. In addition, it points out that in order to change the function of a historic building, the owners or the users should ask for the stakeholders' consent (Qingdao Municipality 2012: Art. 13). These regulations align with the national law and aim to provide more practical and detailed instructions for practices. They are more responsive to current issues but due to lack of research and guidelines, the content concerning utilization is still limited.

Besides legislation, standards and principles function as guidance to the practices in the field of conservation. In the most recent revision of the 'Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China', a whole chapter about appropriate use has been added. This has so far been the most detailed and specific principle on the matter in China. It defines 'appropriate use' in a Chinese context (ICOMOS China 2015: Art. 40 and commentary) and summarizes the criteria that an appropriate use should meet. They include the following elements: sustainability and public/community benefit. To be sustainable, an appropriate use should be within the heritage sites' capacity limits, without changing its character-defining elements. More importantly, an appropriate use should be an added value and an important means to conserve a heritage site and maintain its vitality. Furthermore, it specifically talks about two situations: retaining historic functions (ICOMOS China 2015: Art. 44) and adaptive reuse. For those that have lost their original functions, adaptive reuse is a means to help sustain the heritage. It points out that the assessment of its value and its current state prior to the determining of a new use for the site is very important. In addition, a selection of options should be proposed and compared. The adaptation should not undermine its value or character defining elements, and should be reversible (ICOMOS China 2015: Art. 45).

In China, policies in addition to laws and regulations have a great impact on the practices of cultural heritage conservation. Since 2011, revitalization[1]

1 There is currently no universal definition of 'revitalization' in international documents concerning architectural heritage conservation. However, this definition is used globally across different continents with essentially similar meanings. Sometimes the similar process is described as 'rehabilitation' (Canada's Historic Places 2010: 16) or 'adaptive reuse' (ICOMOS China 2015: 83). A senior secondary curriculum material created by the Hong Kong Institute of Architects and the University of Hong Kong defines revitalization as: 'To conserve existing (sometimes historic) buildings or districts by putting them to good contemporary use. This

and utilization have frequently appeared in the policies and strategies that concern cultural heritage conservation. In 2011, a Temporary Management Regulation of Profitable Activities of State-Owned Protected Cultural Heritage Sites was put forward. The regulations are only applicable to the state-owned sites that are used as museums, conservation research institutes, or tourist sites (State Administration of Cultural Heritage 2011: Art. 2). It states that it is encouraged to operate profitable activities on such sites, but the activities should be compatible with the heritage sites and should be of public service. They should also be compatible with the cultural attributes of the heritage sites. The State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH) has held conferences in 2013 on the topic, seeking to share experiences between the mainland, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. Increasing the diversity of uses and involving private funds and organizations in the revitalization process are supported, but the public nature of the use is still emphasized. It seemed that, thanks to the shift in official attitude, the revitalization and utilization of heritage sites was on a promising path. However, this was followed by the announcement of a Temporary Regulation about Forbidding Private Clubs in Public Resources of Historic Buildings and Parks in 2014 (hereafter referred to as 'Temporary Regulation') (Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development 2014: Art. 1 and 2). Before this regulation, even though it was not specifically defined, private clubs were believed to be entertainment venues that were open to a selected few. However, in the Temporary Regulation, 'private club' is given a rather broad meaning: high-end catering venues, recreation venues, gyms, beauty salons, entertainment venues, accommodation, and reception venues, etc. (Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development 2014: Art. 1 and 2). Compared to the earlier policy of increasing diversity, this Temporary Regulation condemns inappropriate uses while simultaneously using the notion of 'private club' to cover a lot of entertainment-related uses which are not necessarily inappropriate when well restricted and designed. Upon the implementation of this Temporary Regulation, a lot of these kinds of venues were ordered to close down. On the one hand, this meant that some of the heritage sites were able to obtain a second chance, but on the other hand, some of the sites became vacant and lacked caretakers once again.

approach gives historic buildings and districts a 'second life' by reconnecting them with society' (Faculty of Architecture, the University of Hong Kong 2012: 7). Considering that Hong Kong is one of the pioneers to promote revitalization of historic buildings in the greater China region and much exchange of experience has taken place between mainland China and Hong Kong in recent years, this definition is applicable under the context of this article.

History of revitalization in China

The reuse of old buildings had taken place long before it was considered a question of revitalization. During the first few decades of the PRC very few new buildings were constructed due to the lack of financial resources, so many factories, institutes, governmental departments, and schools simply moved into a lot of existing temples and imperial residences. The previous uses of these complexes were changed and their original functions interrupted. Such changes happened not just in big historic cities like Beijing, but also in small and remote villages. During the occupation, because of the lack of awareness, supervision, and analysis of the values of heritage sites, a lot of occupants built new buildings within the courtyards. To adjust to the new standards of modern life and comfort, modern infrastructure such as ceilings and floors were added. These changes drastically altered the original layout and structures of the heritage sites, and some of them are not reversible. Certain changes diminished the values and affected the authenticity and integrity of the sites. Yet, some of the traces left by such occupation, for instance, slogans from the Cultural Revolution and the 'Great Leap Forward', are evidence of the multiple layers of reuse over time and are now part of the buildings' history.

In the last few decades, a lot of these organizations and factories underwent major changes. Many of them closed down or moved out of the buildings, leaving more and more traditional architectural complexes empty. There are usually two options available to these complexes – to regain their original function or to seek new ones. In the 1980s, a shift in religious policy meant that many religious buildings were returned to religious groups. In rural areas most of them became temples again. Yet, this option is not possible for all religious sites. As the religious population in the urban environment has dwindled significantly, many temples in cities have not become temples again.

When the notion of revitalization was first introduced in China in the 1990s, it mainly focused on modern heritage, such as industrial heritage and colonial heritage. A lot of state-owned factories closed down after the market reforms, leaving gigantic factory buildings vacant. Starting in Shanghai and Beijing, these huge spaces first attracted the attention of contemporary artists and many colonial buildings were also turned into art galleries or cafés (Zhuang 2004). These new functions were considered quite compatible with the heritage buildings. However, this issue becomes more complicated when it concerns Chinese traditional architecture, especially religious buildings. Some of the complications of reuse are related to the

nature of the heritage sites. Chinese traditional architecture is mainly made of timber, is very vulnerable to fire, and requires more frequent and careful maintenance. This limits the range of suitable use. In addition, as Chinese architecture usually consists of many small buildings and open courtyards, it is not so easy to make adaptations without undermining the historic fabric of the sites. Further challenges are related to the matter of management, as most of these sites have a very complex property rights and ownership situation. They may be owned or managed by several organizations, and each of them might have different ideas about the site's future. Moreover, it requires more money and care to revitalize a heritage building than to construct a new building. Without financial or policy support, companies that seek profits in reusing heritage may easily ignore public benefits, while non-profit organizations would find it difficult to operate sustainable functions. Currently, heritage sites that are revitalized as tourist locations or museums are mostly funded or supported by the state. Most other business models either exploit the heritage sites or are not sustainable enough to last. Many heritage buildings are therefore vacant. Once the above-mentioned Temporary Regulation is implemented, it is not hard to believe that even more buildings will be in need of new compatible functions.

Zhizhu Temple: History and the revitalization process

This case study demonstrates the situation in more depth. Zhizhu Temple is one of the many heritage sites that have experienced dramatic changes throughout its history. The recent revitalization of Zhizhu Temple in Beijing has brought many of the issues discussed above into the open, and it helps us understand the challenges of reusing religious heritage sites in the context of China and the conflicts between legislation, policies and practices.

On the site of today's Beijing Municipally Protected Heritage Site 'Songzhu Temple and Zhizhu Temple' lies the main complex of the two imperially built temples from the Qing dynasty. They are located in the centre of historic Beijing. During the Qing dynasty, before Zhizhu Temple was built, Songzhu Temple was already a very important Tibetan Buddhist temple, as it was the temple where Cangkya Khutukhtu III resided in when the Yongzheng Emperor sent for him from Qinghai to Beijing.[2] Cangkya Khutukhtu III spent ten years studying and accompanying the son of the Yongzheng Emperor, who later became the mighty Qianlong Emperor. The

2 Cangkya Khutukhtu III is one of the incarnated lamas from Qinghai Province.

Buddhist monk was one of the most important political figures of his time. Next to Songzhu Temple, there was the Ming Dynasty Sutra Printing Factory (Fanjing Chang). In 1734, Songzhu Temple and the Ming Dynasty Sutra Printing Factory (Fanjing Chang) were renovated. The newly restored and extended Fanjing Chang was later renamed as Fayuan Temple and became the affiliated temple of Songzhu Temple (Cui 2013: 76). In *The Complete Map of the Capital*, drawn in 1750 (the fifteenth year of the Qianlong Emperor's reign), there were only some residential courtyards on the site where Zhizhu Temple now stands (Haiwang and Castiglione 1750). In a Zouzhe[3] submitted by Lord Heshuo Zhuang in 1756 (the twenty-first year of the Qianlong Emperor's reign), he reported the reconstruction and restoration of the complex (Zou Xiao Dang 1756). This valuable text recorded the alteration of the original complex of Fanjing Chang (Fayuan Temple) and also the building of a new temple on the site of some Manchurian residences. The Zouzhe requested the Qianlong Emperor to write the plaque for the temple's title. This new temple, as we see today, is Zhizhu Temple. The three temples, Songzhu Temple, Fayuan Temple, and Zhizhu Temple, stood side by side, representing one of the most important religious complexes in the capital.

Not many written records from the imperial archive can be found concerning the evolution of Zhizhu Temple. However, as shown in historic maps, it can be assumed that the scale and layout of the temple remained more or less the same until the early twentieth century (German East Asian Expeditionary Corps 1907). The temple is also occasionally mentioned as the venue of some activities of the imperial family during the second half of the Qing dynasty. Its function as a temple remained until the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. From the 1950s, just like in the case of a lot of temples and large residential complexes around the country, several factories and organizations took residence in the tri-temple complex. The first new resident in Zhizhu Temple was the Gold Lacquer Mosaic Factory, followed by a bike factory, the Jingshan Binding Factory, and the Jingshan Medical Facilities Factory. They occupied most of Zhizhu Temple. Meanwhile, the last two courtyards to the north of Jingshen Hall (the back hall) were occupied by Beijing Interior Design Institute. In the 1970s, Beijing Dongfeng TV Factory was established, which produced bestselling black and white TVs during that time. This big company occupied most of the buildings of Songzhu Temple and Fayuan Temple, replacing the former two factories. In 1974, the TV factory demolished the gate, the Drum and

3 Zouzhe is the correspondence between the officials and the emperors to discuss about all kinds of issues.

Figure 10.1 An overview of Zhizhu Temple

Photograph by Jinze Cui

Bell Towers, the Hall of the Heavenly Kings of Songzhu Temple, and almost all the buildings of Fayuan Temple. Later, the Dongfeng TV Factory also occupied the front hall and the west side hall of Zhizhu Temple (Cui 2015). Fortunately, most of Zhizhu Temple was spared during this disastrous demolition.

In 1984, the remaining Songzhu Temple and Zhizhu Temple were identified as Beijing's Municipally Protected Heritage Site. Due to the policy of ensuring the property rights of religious organizations, the property rights of Zhizhu Temple and Songzhu Temple were rightfully handed to the Beijing Buddhist Association, with the Dongfeng TV Factory still retaining the right to use the complex. In September 1992, Dongfeng TV Factory was annexed by a state-owned enterprise – the Mudan (Peony) Group. The factory was moved, leaving Beijing Peony Four Star Audiovisual Company on the site of Zhizhu Temple. A small hotel was established in the complex. During this period of reuse, the temple was not well cared for or maintained (Cui 2013: 78-80).

Today, Zhizhu Temple is a sophisticated high-end catering and accommodation venue as well as a cultural and art space. It contains a boutique hotel, an upmarket restaurant called TRB (Temple Restaurant Beijing), a gallery space, and some other areas for cultural events. In 2005, when Belgian banker Juan van Wassenhove, one of the founders of the Temple Republic, first encountered Zhizhu Temple, it was just a hollow, deserted complex closed to the general public. After about a decade of neglect and lack of maintenance, the original structures of Zhizhu Temple had fallen in decay and bore heavy traces of inappropriate adaptations. The courtyard was crowded with one- or two-storey buildings added during the factory

period. But at the same time, Van Wassenhove was amazed at the beauty of the accumulated layers of the temple's 250-year history. In 2007, Van Wassenhove and his business partners Lin Fan and Lixian Chow, who were in the film industry, started the revitalization of Zhizhu Temple. A master plan to guide the whole process of the revitalization was created by the founders. It contained two intertwined phases: The restoration and adaptive reuse of the heritage site. A few months later, the team managed to sign a 21-year lease with the Beijing Buddhist Association, which manages the property of Zhizhu Temple, and the Mudan Group, who has the right to use the site for several decades. The lease allows Dong Jing Yuan, the Beijing subsidiary of the Temple Republic, to restore part of Zhizhu Temple. It also gives them the right to use and manage the operation of the site. The utilization includes using the site as a hotel, a restaurant, and for other cultural and promotional events. After acquiring the approval from the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Cultural Heritage, the team started the five-year-long restoration of the temple.

The restoration salvaged the temple's original structures, especially the Dugang Hall (the main hall), which suffered a major fire in the 1960s. The blaze charred almost half of its main structure. The restoration plan had to be adapted to replace some of the timber components in order to stabilize the structure. The team also tried to preserve most of the original doors, windows, as well as the Qing dynasty frescoes on the buildings. A Chinese traditional art specialist was invited to use the mounting techniques employed in the restoration of Chinese traditional paintings to restore the Sanskrit paintings from the 180 ceiling boards in the main hall. Other original frescoes were also left in place after being cleaned and stabilized, preserving the original material from hundreds of years ago, as well as the historic traces left by time. The plan of the renovation, besides complying with the basic principles of conservation, also took into account the future usage of the heritage site. For instance, floor heating and double-glazed inner windows and doors were added so as to meet the criteria of modern comfort as well as to retain the original facade of the buildings. In order to preserve and present all the layers of history, traces from the later periods of the temple are also preserved. After demolishing several dilapidated extensions that were also interfering with the preservation and presentation of the temple, some of the added buildings from the factory period were maintained and adapted into a restaurant, a hotel, and a conference venue. Slogans from the Cultural Revolution period were preserved in the main hall, telling the story of the temple's dramatic ups and downs.

After the restoration, the venue opened to the public in 2011. In 2012, the restoration project of Zhizhu Temple was awarded the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards of Cultural Heritage Conservation. The award aims to recognize and encourage private efforts and public-private initiatives in successfully restoring structures of heritage value in the region. The restoration project of Zhizhu Temple was the only project from China and the only privately funded project among the 43 projects of that year. The award praised the comprehensive restoration work the team had accomplished and the team's determination to respect the authenticity of the various dimensions of historical and architectural significance. It also applauded the fact the restoration of the temple had 'enabled the rich layers of its history to be revealed, enhanced and celebrated' and the heritage site had been 'restored, interpreted and returned once again to the public with a new function as a venue for cultural events and activities' (UNESCO 2012).

Today, the venue is a complex with multiple functions. The south of the complex is for public functions, the east side is designed to hold conferences and art exhibitions, the west part comprises hotel rooms, and the north side of the complex is for more private use. The historic buildings in the complex include (from south to north) the gate, the Hall of Heavenly King, two side halls, the Dugang Hall (the main hall), and some side rooms that used to be the monks' residence. Now the ancient gate is used as the entrance to the complex and a small exhibition area, displaying a short documentary and a digital gallery of the restoration project of the temple, as well as some art objects. The Hall of Heavenly King, connected to a factory building on the west side, is used as the reception area of the restaurant, whilst the factory building was adapted into the main dining area. The kitchen and other infrastructures are also located in the factory buildings. Across from the dining area, another building from the factory era is now used as the main art exhibition space. Both the facades of these two side buildings were adapted with traditional Chinese elements so as to make them compatible with the historic buildings and environment in the first unit of the complex. Between the Hall of Heavenly King and the Dugang Hall, there is a two-storey factory building. One has to admit that it seems rather extreme to preserve this building since it blocks almost half of the view to the front facade of the main hall from the central axis. It reflects a different understanding of the values of heritage and the way of continuing its cultural significance: The two-storey building, which now holds several suites of the boutique hotel, offers a close-up view of the main structure – the bracket sets that support the roof are significant components of the facade of Chinese traditional buildings. This view, although fairly limited to

the hotel's customers, would not exist if the two-storey building had been demolished. The sidewall of this factory building is now a screen for open-air projection. During the evening, when there is no activity, the shadow of a tree growing next to it is projected onto the whitewashed wall, creating a tranquil and artistic atmosphere in the courtyard. The Dugang Hall, being the most spacious area in the complex, is reserved for conferences or activities of a larger scale. Despite its outstanding size, which attracts people's attention, the Dugang Hall is no longer the most frequently used space in the whole complex. The focus of the usage has changed. This inevitably shifted people's understanding of the complex in a way that would never have been the case if the complex were still used as a religious space. But it also reduces the frequency of usage and disturbance of the most important historic structure in the temple. Behind the Dugang Hall, there is another factory building that has also been adapted into a conference space, whereas the side halls and side rooms are used as the hotel reception, smaller dining halls, and small hotel rooms.

The neighbouring Songzhu Temple, however, has a very different story. A corporation called Songzhu Famous Courtyard now occupies the remains of Songzhu Temple and the last unit of Zhizhu Temple behind the Dugang Hall. The venue is completely closed to the public and is used as a luxurious private club. During its adaptation, a few historic buildings were torn down or disrespectfully modified for the new function. The newly repainted Jingshen Hall of Zhizhu Temple, now seen over the wall that cuts through the temple and separates the two venues, creates an obvious contrast to the timeworn counterparts on the other side of the wall. During the restoration of Zhizhu Temple, a beautifully carved stone base was unearthed during the search for the original ground level of the temple. It belongs to the moon platform[4] of Jingshen Hall on the other side of the wall. Even though Dong Jing Yuan does not use the building, the team altered the restoration plan so as to preserve the historic remnant.

For almost a year after the temple's low-profile opening, only a limited number of people had actually been inside the temple, partly because only the wing of the restaurant was open and the price range is somewhat above average. But since receiving the UNESCO Asia-Pacific award and the opening of the hotel wing and art gallery, the temple has seen an increase in the number of visitors. The venue is now not only an important heritage attraction, but also a tasteful space for cultural events and art exhibitions,

4 A moon platform is a platform space in front of the hall, extended from the base of the building.

Figure 10.2 Zhizhu Temple after revitalization

Photograph by Lui Tam

including the only James Turrell light art installation in China. Up until recently, the main complex and the art exhibitions have been open to the public for free during the restaurant's opening hours. The number of customers can reach up to more than 4000 a week. In addition, there are visitors who just wander into the complex. Most of the visitors enjoy the historic beauty that was re-established by the restoration and the serene atmosphere of the complex despite the hustle and bustle in the centre of the capital.[5]

Debates and critical voices: What should heritage be used for?

However, the revitalization of Zhizhu Temple did not just bring the team compliments. Even before the temple was reopened in 2011, there were already critical voices. The notion of revitalization is still very new to China. Whenever a site is reused as a profitable space, it draws attention from conservationists and the public. This is especially the case for the revitalization of a former Buddhist temple and a heritage site. Hence, when it became common knowledge that the temple was going to be a high-end

5 Based on an online survey conducted in January 2015, over 90 per cent of the people who have been to Zhizhu Temple give very positive comments on their impressions.

Western restaurant, doubts and criticism flooded the Internet. According to the initiators, the team was very discreet about getting media attention for the UNESCO award due to the fear that it might cause a negative effect. Nevertheless, as increasing attention was brought to the site, the public opinion started to vary and the public debates became more and more heated. Some made positive comments on the restoration project and reckoned that the revitalization was based on a respectful organization of the heritage site, whilst some others opposed the idea of reusing a religious space as an entertainment and catering venue.

The discussion went viral when the state media criticized the project for using the temple as a 'private club' (Li et al. 2014). In the report, 'private club' referred to the notion mentioned in the Temporary Regulation, but for the majority of the public, the definition is still rather unclear. The news is also clearly confusing the Temple Hotel with the Songzhu Famous Courtyard. The way the article describes the functions of these two venues and the activities that occur in them is very misleading. People that have never been to the two complexes would not be able to tell that these are two completely separate venues. The information given in the news about the Temple Hotel also appears to be less than thorough since nothing about the restoration project and the UNESCO award is mentioned. It is, however, understandable as there are many negative precedents in similar situations. Heated discussions also began on social media. The immediate response from most of the readers was to criticize both of the venues, but there are also other readers who know more about the actual situation and try to clarify it, some of who are in the conservation or related fields. The discussion has also extended to whether it is justified to use religious temples as catering venues. An argument written by one sociologist in the conservation field titled 'Why Couldn't Zhizhu Temple Be a High-end Restaurant?' is widely believed to be one of the most well-known arguments against the state report (Yan 2014). It should be noted that this article was intended to be posted in the official media. However, it did not pass media control because of its controversial views. After the news report by the *Xinhua Press*, several influential media outlets tried to conduct more extensive research and provide more objective reports (Zhang 2015). The situation became quite confusing for the public since different reports told various versions and provided sometimes contradictory stories. In January 2015, another news report from Phoenix Press claimed that the 'private clubs' in the complexes have closed down while copying the misleading information reported in the previous accounts.

The departments for cultural heritage are also among the actors steering the direction of the discussions. The State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH) kept silent in the beginning. In fact, it never gave a clear statement on the subject and it also never tried to clarify the situation. Only when more information was made public did SACH show its support for the Zhizhu Temple's restoration achievement, albeit in a very discreet way. In contrast, the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Cultural Heritage, which is the supervisory department responsible for the protected site, has allegedly been trying to close down both venues. The different attitudes among the departments show that the public discussion had put a lot of pressure on them.

In response to the extensive discussions and confusing coverage in the media, an MA student from Tsinghua University, Mingxia Zhu, carried out a small online survey to better understand the situation and people's actual opinions (Zhu 2016).[6] Over 200 samples were collected during the one-week survey. The age of those surveyed covers the range between 18 and 65. About 52 per cent of them had no background related to cultural heritage work. Even though it was a small survey, its results still reveal a variety of opinions on the issue. The survey shows that more than half of those surveyed have read about related reports on the issue, but a lot of them are not sure about the definition of 'private club'. To their knowledge, a 'private club' means a place where the public normally cannot visit. Despite that, about 80 per cent of those surveyed think the reports in the official media on the situation are not accurate or convincing enough. People tend to have strong opinions against using a temple as a private club, but when asked for opinions on using the non-historic buildings in the complex, more people think it is acceptable. The result is similar when 'private club' in the questions is replaced with 'restaurants'. In fact, more than half of the people surveyed think it is acceptable to use non-historic buildings in the heritage site as restaurants. And more than 90 per cent of them think that it is acceptable or should be encouraged to use heritage sites as profitable venues on condition that the conservation of the heritage sites is guaranteed.

It should be noted that a lot of people who hold very strong opinions against reusing a heritage site or a temple as profitable venues have never been to Zhizhu Temple, or do not know that Zhizhu Temple is open to the public. These opinions are held by people with professional background in conservation and heritage work as well as those without such expertise. Even when those surveyed were told that the exhibition area is free and open to the public, about 9 per cent of people still do not believe it is true. Over 50 per

6 All statistics are credited to Mingxia Zhu.

cent of those surveyed do not know much about the restoration projects of the temple, let alone the fact that the restoration project won the UNESCO award. The reasons why people have never been to the temple or are not planning to go to the temple are mostly that the price range is beyond their capacity or that they reckon a temple should not be used as an entertainment venue. The sophisticated atmosphere and the high price range create a certain mental obstacle for a lot of people. Among the opposing comments, Buddhist believers state that profitable activities stain the purity of a Buddhist temple. And some think that a high-end restaurant in a heritage site diminishes its public attributes. Those who hold neutral opinions tend to think that reasonable utilization is positive for the conservation of the heritage sites, but they also state that supervision and regulation are necessary, and a more accessible function could be beneficial. Nevertheless, over 90 per cent of those who have visited Zhizhu Temple give very positive comments of their impressions of the site. They appreciate and are impressed by the effort of the restoration as well as the artistic and cultural atmosphere created in the complex.

In the survey, people are also asked to choose which kinds of functions they think are suitable for the revitalization of heritage sites. Functions with public attributes are usually people's first choices. Museums and libraries are the top two options. As for profitable venues, culture-related functions such as bookstores are most welcome. People tended to choose a function that is open to the public over one that is not – among other suggestions mentioned there are community centres and performance spaces. The cultural and public attributes of the heritage sites are clearly valued.

As shown in this case, several factors contribute to such heated debates on various levels across the spectrum of the society. There was a clear miscommunication between the public sector, the private sector, the media and the general public due to the lack of transparency and accurate information. The information received by the public was distorted by incomplete news reporting, while the different views among the authorities on various administrative levels also contributed to the unclear situation. The various stakeholders in addition had different interpretations of what a positive revitalization of a religious heritage site would look like.

Urban heritage and the challenges of revitalization

The Zhizhu Temple case illustrates the challenges facing revitalization of traditional architectural heritage in China today. The lack of a clear legislative framework coupled with a complex ownership structure as well

as the lack of stakeholder involvement and effective information channels are among the central factors that lead to conflicts and difficulties.

The complexity of the property rights of heritage sites in the urban environment remains one of the biggest obstacles preventing sites from obtaining a new lease of life. In practice, the property owners sometimes do not have the power or the will to ensure the conservation of the heritage sites, whereas the private sector, which is willing to help, does not have the access to subsidies or professional support. There are still very few people in the private sector that are capable and willing enough to carry out revitalization projects. Without the financial support from the government, the task of restoring and adapting heritage sites for compatible uses requires a lot of commitment.

In the case of Zhizhu Temple, the supposed caretaker of the heritage site – the Buddhist Association – did not carry out its responsibility to conserve the temple as it is stated in the national law. The Temple Hotel, the private sector company that conducted the conservation, did not get the official acknowledgement and support needed because of a lack of management mechanism concerning revitalization. This is especially true concerning the attitude of SACH. Even if the administration wanted to support the projects, the lack of related legislation has tied their hands. It is important to understand that state resources can no longer sustain all of the heritage sites that are pending revitalization. However, private actors need guidance in the maintenance and management of heritage sites.

According to international and Chinese standards for conservation, during the revitalization process, conservation of the heritage sites is essential and not to be compromised. Reasonable utilization should not only results in no harm but also add actual value to the heritage site. To be specific, a good revitalization project usually includes effective restoration or maintenance of the heritage sites and avoids inappropriate adaptation that would damage the significant fabrics and features of the site. It is also beneficial and sustainable to respect and continue the cultural significance of a heritage site (Australia ICOMOS 2013: 3-4, 6-8; ICOMOS China 2015: 50).

In the case of heritage buildings that are no longer used for their original purposes, their cultural significance can be continued by preserving the historic layers. If a new use is necessary, the adaptation may not undermine the elements that reflect its cultural significance, but rather preserve and present them for visitors. Sustainability also means that the new use is supposed to bring vitality to the heritage site so that cultural significance can develop organically. Where possible, functions that have connections with the site's historic and spiritual associations should be considered (Canada's Historic Places 2010: 16).

This is especially important when it comes to traditional religious heritage buildings. Even though the criticism towards reusing temples neglects the fact that many of the temples have long lost their functions, the case of Zhizhu Temple nevertheless shows that the emotional attachment to temples is still deeply rooted in Chinese society. Zhizhu Temple has not been used as a temple for over half a century even though the Buddhist Association is now the managing department. One has to admit that the functions of a restaurant and hotel do not have a direct connection with the temple's religious history, but the revitalization project did bring vitality to the complex, and by organizing art and cultural events it has helped develop the site's cultural significance. The tranquil atmosphere of Zhizhu Temple has been well maintained and visitors are able to enjoy the historic enchantment of the temple. The complex is freely accessible to the public during the opening hours of the restaurant. The local community, on the other hand, has not been involved much so far, but without the support from the government, involving the community is very difficult for the private sector.

The revitalization of heritage sites has attracted a lot of public attention in recent years (compare also the chapters by Grazer Bideau and Yan and Cui in this volume). Public debates help bring different opinions to the heritage debate and work. The discussion on the Zhizhu Temple was influenced by unclear and contradictory media coverage. This reveals both the lack of a common understanding of the basic concepts underlying heritage conservation as well as the growing interest in heritage issues among broader segments of Chinese society (see also Svensson and Maags). Public participation in the decision-making process has proved to be quite challenging. The proposals for revitalization projects are usually not a result of open competition and it is not compulsory or recommended to acquire public opinions during the decision-making process. This is one of the reasons why the Zhizhu Temple became such a heated and controversial case. The public had no in-depth knowledge of the project and its main features, nor did they have a chance to express their opinions before the project had been completed. Hence, speculation and feelings of powerlessness were some of the reasons behind the critique of Zhizhu Temple. The Songzhu Temple, in contrast, escaped criticism because of the lack of media attention and public interest. Information and education on heritage issues as well as channels for public involvement are vital for gaining grassroots support from the public.

The challenges of restoring historic buildings are recognized by both the government and other actors today. The media has played an

important and yet controversial role in this process. It has, on the one hand, raised public awareness on the topic, but, on the other hand, has sometimes led to confusion and conflicts due to misleading coverage. This is exactly what happened in the case of the Zhizhu Temple. The revitalization of the temple can be considered as a positive case because it brought significant improvements to the site. The project may also serve as an inspiration for innovative revitalization at similar heritage sites in China. However, it also revealed the complex relationship between different stakeholders and that if not based on correct information, public debates may lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. This study thus argues the importance of clearer legislative frameworks, conservation policies that support sustainable revitalization, coordination among different stakeholders, responsible and transparent information channels, and closer involvement of the general public, for successful revitalization projects.

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Annex: Online Survey on the Revitalization of Zhizhu Temple and Other Heritage Buildings

Questions	Percentage among those surveyed					
Age group	<18	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65
	0.8%	34.94%	40.16%	16.87%	5.22%	2.01%
Profession	Cultural heritage related			Not related to cultural heritage		
	47.79%			52.21%		
Have you read the news report about closing down the private clubs in Zhizhu Temple and Songzhu Temple on http://news.ifeng.com/a/20150112/42914474_0.shtml?	Yes			Just know about it		Not interested
	51.81%			35.34%		12.85%
Opinion on the news report	Objective and reveals the corruption			Not objective enough and does not include opinions from different parties		Inaccurate and misguiding
	20.48%			50.6%		28.92%
Knowledge about the accurate definition of 'historic buildings' and 'private clubs' in the '*Temporary Regulation*'?	Very clear	Clear		So-so	Rather unclear	Don't know anything about it
	6.83%	20.48%		17.27%	36.55%	18.88%
Opinion on reusing temples as private clubs	Strongly against it			Neutral		Acceptable
	44.18%			38.96%		16.87%
Opinion on reusing the non-historic buildings in temples as private clubs	26.91%			31.73%		41.37%

Questions	Percentage among those surveyed				
Opinion on reusing temples as restaurants	33.73%	33.33%		32.93%	
Opinion on reusing the non-historic buildings in temples as restaurants	19.28%	23.29%		57.43%	
Do you think a protected heritage site should be used for profitable practice on the condition that the security of the heritage can be guaranteed?	It shouldn't 9.24%	Reasonable utilization is okay 72.29%		Should be encouraged 28.11%	
Have you been to the TRB restaurant	Yes 17.27%	Planning to 30.92%		No and not going to 51.81%	
Do you know that a part of Zhizhu Temple is accessible to the public for free?	Have visited 17.67%	Yes, but haven't been 22.49%	Just know about it 51.41%	Don't believe this 8.43%	
Do you know about the restoration of the temple by the users?	Know it very well 4.42%	Know about it 16.06%	Just know about it/so-so 18.88%	Not really/not interested 33.73%	No idea 26.91%
Do you know that the restoration project of Zhizhu Temple won the 2012 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Conservation Award?	16.06%	23.29%	45.38%	15.26%	

Questions	Percentage among those surveyed					
Which kinds of functions do you think are suitable for the revitalization of heritage sites (multiple choice)?	Museum	Library	Bookstore	Café	Restaurant	Governmental office, open to the public
	92.77%	79.12%	74.3%	59.44%	46.99%	40.16%
	Hotel/hostel	Shop	Bar	Others	Vacancy	Governmental office, not open to the public
	39.76%	39.76%	32.93%	12.45%	7.23%	5.62%

11 Heritage 2.0

Maintaining Affective Engagements with the Local Heritage in Taishun

Marina Svensson

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Abstract
This chapter addresses how the Internet and social media enable new forms of engagements with heritage that are more individual, performative and visual in character. This is explored through a case study of the Taishun (later China) Covered Bridges network. Most of the members come from Taishun, although the network also brings together experts and enthusiasts from different parts of China. They engage with heritage in different ways, documenting local history and traditions, calling for the protection of sites, and creating awareness on heritage issues, all while integrating online and offline activities. Through sharing information and sentiments, commenting on each other's postings, and uploading images and news in real time, they are able to reflect upon and build a stronger affective engagement with heritage.

Keywords: Internet, social media, affective engagement, photography, covered bridges, migration, intangible heritage

This chapter discusses how a group of individuals who have left Taishun – a county in the Wenzhou municipality, Zhejiang Province – remember and engage with their heritage, and how this affective engagement is expressed and experienced both offline and online. These individuals are rediscovering and showing appreciation of a heritage that they were, in many cases, ignorant of or indifferent to in the past. Although the situation is complex and also differs between individuals, one could argue that the heritagization process has prompted people to rediscover their heritage and place-based identity, at the same time that they are

co-producers of this heritagization. Nonetheless, the individuals in my study also exhibit views and perform heritage in ways that depart from the authorized heritage discourse (AHD), or constitute 'heritage from below' (Robertson 2012). Some sites and cultural practices elevated to cultural heritage are more important to them because they carry deep personal, tactile, and sensory reminiscences, whereas others have lost their importance due to socio-economic changes. Digital technologies, including in particular social media, have offered new possibilities to share and engage with memories, identities, local culture, and heritage. The connective and affective affordances of social media strengthens the performative dimension of heritage experiences as well as creates a 'co-present visuality'.

The chapter provides insights into the heritagization process in Taishun while focusing on a group of individuals who are connected through the Taishun (later China) Covered Bridges network. It got its first online presence in 2000 when the founder set up a website, whereas today the network of friends and enthusiasts are connected on social media. In my analysis I draw on theoretical insights from critical heritage studies as well as recent work on social media. My study is based on ethnographic work, both online and offline, site visits, and participation in different activities, including travelling together with individuals from Taishun, and interviews with members of the social media group Covered Bridges' Village (*Langqiao cun*) and with other actors such as transmitters and villagers in the county.[1]

The history and heritage of Taishun

Taishun county is situated in the Wenzhou municipality in the mountainous border region between Zhejiang Province and Fujian Province. This geographical position has influenced both its cultural and economic development (Liu 2001). The county is home to people from many different parts of China, many families having migrated there in the Ming and Qing dynasties, as well as to the She minority. Travel was very difficult in the past but several important trade routes (today referred to as *gudao* [old

1 I first went to Taishun in 2007, and then again in 2009, twice in 2015 and most recently in 2017. I have also interviewed people from Taishun during visits to Wenzhou and Shanghai in 2015 and 2017. For a discussion on methodological issues related to using social media, see Svensson 2017.

roads]) crossed the mountain ridges and linked villages within the county, and Taishun with cities in Zhejiang and Fujian. Many of my interviewees who were born before 1970 could recount long walks over the mountains in order to reach other villages and the county town. One man told me how he walked for two days, passing several bridges, before he reached the river where a boat took him downstream to Rui'an.

Taishun was for a long time known as the poorest county in Wenzhou, and one former teacher originally from Rui'an told me that due to her 'bad' family background, coming from a family of landlords with ties to the Nationalist Party (Guomindang GMD), she was sent to work there in the 1960s. The county's per capita income is still below the average in Zhejiang and there are few industries. The county has several dams and is today a so-called National Ecological County (*Guojiaji shengtai xian*) and Nationally Designated Eco-Demonstration Region (*Guojiaji shengtai shifan qu*). In 2010, the county had 233,400 permanent residents and a rather large out-migration to Wenzhou and cities farther away. It has been mentioned that since the reform period as many as 140,000 people have left the county to work and set up businesses elsewhere.[2] The natural environment has shaped the architectural style of buildings and resulted in the need to build bridges that enabled people to cross the many streams and rivers. The unspoilt nature and scenery is today one of the county's assets and tourism is a growing business that has been facilitated by investment in infrastructure and roads, which nowadays has shortened the driving time between Taishun and Wenzhou to two hours.

The history and heritage of Taishun is well documented in a range of books published by official institutions, individual scholars, and local amateur historians and enthusiasts. The covered bridges (*langqiao*) have emerged as the foremost symbol of the county's heritage through a range of different initiatives and activities. Villagers and other citizens, experts on architecture, media institutions, and the heritage bureau have all been involved in the heritagization and branding of the bridges. The heritage bureau started to pay attention to the bridges in the late 1980s, and in the 1990s the first of them were listed as protected sites. In the 1990s, studies of the bridges' history and unique architectural form attracted both national and international interest (Liu and Shen 2005; Knapp 2008). In 2006, fifteen bridges were listed as national heritage sites (*guojia wenwu baohu danwei*).

2 This figure is provided on the Covered Bridges website, see http://www.langqiao.net/web/forum.php?mod=viewthread&tid=29882.

Experts and the local government have also been very active in trying to get the bridges listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and through joint efforts with local governments in other parts of Zhejiang and Fujian, which also have many of these kind of bridges, the bridges were added to the Chinese UNESCO preparation list in 2011. In the meantime, because the knowledge and skills to build the bridges were threatened and rapidly forgotten, the craftsmanship was nominated and entered the UNESCO Urgent Safeguarding List in 2009 (UNESCO 2009). Several carpenters were also nominated as transmitters (*chuanchengren*) and the local government took different measures to protect and promote the craft among younger workers.

Taishun has a range of other buildings and sites that have been listed as cultural heritage, including individual buildings such as the Bao Lineage Ancestral Hall and the Hu Lineage Mansion, as well as whole villages. A number of cultural practices have also been listed as intangible cultural heritage (ICH) since 2003, including six on the national-level list, fifteen on the provincial-level list, 99 on the municipal-level list, and 142 on the county-level list (Wenzhou Government Information Catalogue 2016). Among the six national-level ICH items, apart from the craftsmanship of constructing the covered bridges, are the puppet theatre (*mu'ou xi*) and the making of puppets, as well as the She minority folk songs. There are three national-level transmitters, sixteen provincial-level transmitters, and 58 municipal-level transmitters in the county. The Taishun's puppet theatre was once an important part of the ritual and cultural life in Taishun and many villages had their own troupes. In the 1960s, during the Cultural Revolution, the puppet theatre was criticized because of its connection to old traditions and belief systems, and many puppets were destroyed, as were many other cultural artefacts at that time. After 1976 the puppet theatre was revived in the villages and the cultural bureau also established the Taishun County Puppet Theatre to promote the art. Both performers and puppet makers have now been listed as transmitters of ICH.

Place, identity, and heritage: Senses of belonging in a mobile society

Places are defined by and made up of individual and collective memories, histories, and practices associated with being in that particular place. Feuchtwang defines place-making as 'the centring and marking of a place by the actions and constructions of people tracing salient parts of their daily

lives as a homing point in their trajectories. Places and their features are in turn triggers of memories of their lives, reminders of whatever longer senses of time they have' (Feuchtwang 2004: 10). Places can mean different things to different people and their meanings can also change over time. The heritagization process, as well as different cultural productions such as visual representations and narratives circulated in the media, may change how people identify with a place, and how they remember and experience it. Places are thus constantly made, remade and negotiated as different factors and processes, including personal changes such as migration, mediatization, heritagization, and globalization, influence people's sense of place. These processes are particularly dramatic and complex in China today.

Chinese people's references to and sense of home/hometown (*laojia*/*guxiang*) do not exclusively refer to their place of birth but often to the place where their father or ancestors came from. Genealogies (*jiapu*), regularly revised, provide information about the ancestral home and the lineage's history. Family and lineage ties often bind people to a specific village. In the village many different landmarks and buildings commemorate and celebrate these family and place-based identities, including shrines and temples, ancestral halls, pavilions, pagodas, bridges, and graves. In south China ancestral halls were often the most central and architecturally magnificent buildings where many important ceremonies and rituals were held throughout the year. Other rituals include the grave-sweeping ceremony of Qingming, and different temple festivals to celebrate local gods that protect the lineage and the village (Feuchtwang 1996). During imperial times, aside from lineages, so-called native place associations (*tongxiang hui*) served as supportive networks (Goodman 1995). After 1949, the CCP suppressed lineage ties, condemned ancestor worship, and confiscated ancestral halls, and forbade many religious manifestations. The more ideologically relaxed environment since the 1980s has, however, seen a revival of lineages and the rituals associated with them (Svensson 2012). This development is particularly striking in south China, and Wenzhou is known for both its successful economic development as well as for its active lineages and religious communities.

Taishun, like many other rural areas in China, has seen a large out-migration of young people since the reform period began. However, migrants often retain close contacts with their hometowns and villages, particularly if their parents still live there, and travel home for Chinese New Year. Many of them also identify with their old hometown rather than with their new places of residence, and they do not experience any close

attachment to the heritage in the cities. There are many markers of place-based identity, including dialect, food, and customs, that set migrants apart from the host community. All of the individuals I interviewed who were connected on the social media group Covered Bridges' Village, ten of whom lived in Wenzhou city and three in Shanghai, self-identified as *Taishunren* (a person from Taishun) despite having in some cases lived in the city in question for more than 20 years. They also felt close to others from Taishun based on a shared background and history, including dialect and food preferences, memories of the same places and natural scenery, as well as having experienced similar struggles leaving the countryside and trying to make a life in the city. Their common identity was also fostered due to the region's geographical isolation and past poverty. Several of my interviewees mentioned that people from Taishun had long been looked down upon (*kanbuqi*) in Wenzhou and called 'people from the mountains' (*shantou/shanli ren*). Apart from the Covered Bridges' Village network, many were involved in various other place-based associations and networks, such as a school alumni network and business associations, which provide support and a sense of community. Several people talked about having their '*geng*' (roots) in Taishun and not having any roots in the city. Many also acknowledged that as youngsters they had been eager to leave Taishun and had not felt any special attachment to local history and heritage, whereas things had changed as they became older. It was not only age that made them view their hometown in a more positive light and express interest in local history and heritage, they were also influenced by the growing focus on heritage and traditions in society and in the media. The Internet and social media in addition made it easier for them to follow what was happening in Taishun, and find and share information about local history and connect with others from the county. The heritage status bestowed on different sites and practices, and the high praise of experts, also awakened their interest and made them feel proud of their heritage. Although their memories and personal stories were attached to more local sites, mostly in the villages they grew up in, and in most cases they had not travelled much within Taishun in the past, they united to celebrate their Taishun identity at the same time that they also discovered the county's history and many new heritage sites outside of their own village. In the following I will try to analyse the many dimensions and expressions of these individuals' attachment to and understanding of heritage, and how they are related to the AHD and to their social media use.

Social media, affect, and heritage: New forms of engagement and 'co-present visuality'

Within heritage studies there has been an increasing emphasis on feelings, emotions, affect, and performativity in people's engagement with heritage (Crouch 2015; Smith 2006; Waterton 2014; Waterton and Watson 2013). Harrison has, for example, argued that it is 'important to bring the affective qualities of heritage "things" more squarely back into the critical heritage studies arena [...] [and to explore] its corporeal influences on the bodies of human and non-human actors, and the ways in which heritage is caught up in the quotidian bodily practices of dwelling, travelling, working and 'being' in the world' (2013: 112-113). Waterton likewise emphasizes that through 'affect' we can better understand how people interact with heritage in everyday life. What heritage is or feels like is fluid, shifting, and constitutive of both individual and collective memories and experiences, and through the way those memories and experiences are mediated and shared among people and in society. As Waterton puts it, 'narratives of heritage are mediated in affective worlds that shape their reception, tapping into everyday emotional resonances and circulation of feelings of inclusion and exclusion' (Waterton 2014: 824). Social media is increasingly incorporated into people's daily routines and affective worlds, and can thus 'invite and transmit affect but also sustain affective feedback loops that generate and reproduce affective patterns of relating to others' (Papacharissi 2015: 23), as well as, I would like to add, to artefacts, sites, and places. Social media can, in other words, enable and strengthen people's affective engagement with heritage.

Recent works have focused on how digital technologies, including smartphones and social media, encourage and enable new forms of engagement with heritage (Aigner 2016; Freeman 2010; Giaccardi 2012; Pietrobruno 2014). These technologies, at least in theory, provide a more participatory and democratic platform for discussions on and celebrations of the cultural heritage. They enable individuals and local communities to bypass traditional heritage institutions and instead document and celebrate heritage in different ways, or heritage that these institutions may have overlooked or refused to acknowledge as such. People can today thus create their own digital heritagescapes, museums, and archives (Aigner 2016). It is not only established grassroots organizations that make use of the Internet and social media, there have also emerged new online communities formed around topics of shared interests, specific cultural practices, or centred around affinities based on place and heritage (Freeman 2010; Volland 2011).

Social media can thus support both the formation of new publics or communities by enabling strangers to share experiences with places, historical events, and cultural practices, as well as enable existing communities to strengthen their ties and help them remember, experience, and perhaps re-imagine their own heritage. Papacharissi has in a recent work defined 'affective publics' as 'networked publics that are mobilized and connected or disconnected through expressions of sentiment' (Papacharissi 2015: 125). Whereas she focuses on the sphere of social protests and politics, I here develop a notion of 'affective heritage communities' that borrows from her insights into the affective affordances of digital media.

The ubiquitous use of images and film, and the mobile or locative nature of smartphones and social media platforms, is of special importance in the creation of affective communities. While visual representation and mediatization have always been an important aspect of heritage-making (Waterton and Watson 2010), the emergence of smartphones, social media, and the Internet has changed the ways images are produced, stored, shared, and viewed, as well as enabled more people to produce images. The portable nature of smartphones and the visual affordances of social media open up new possibilities to engage with and perform cultural heritage in everyday life. Taking photos and sharing them is a way to commemorate, experience, and perform heritage, as well as a tool to communicate and maintain or create relationships with objects, sites, and other people (Freeman 2010; Pietrobruno 2014). The mobile and locative nature of new digital technologies creates what Hjorth fittingly calls an 'ambient, intimate, and mobile visuality' (Hjorth 2015: 25), and what she and others also refer to as 'co-present visuality' (e.g. Hjorth and Pink 2014). These scholars thus draw attention to the visuality of connectivity on social media and its mobile, embedded, and embodied nature. They argue that the portable nature of smartphones gives rise to a heightened everyday visual awareness and a new engagement with place, and, I would argue, also heritage. 'Through sharing playful pictures of places as part of everyday movements, camera phone practices provide new ways of mapping place beyond just the geographic: They partake in adding social, emotional, psychological, and aesthetic dimensions to a sense of place. Camera phone sharing shows the importance of copresence sociality in the practice of place as something more than just geographic or physical' (Hjorth and Pink 2014: 42).

Social media, such as, for example, WeChat in the case of China, can thus activate and sustain feelings of belonging and place identity, and so produce a sense of affective community. It may furthermore stimulate reflexivity and visual awareness regarding heritage and place. Affect is

demonstrated through sharing stories, sentiments, experiences, and images related to heritage, and liking and commenting on posts, including using a range of emoticons to express sentiments and produce affect. Of particular interest is whether these stories and narratives align with or diverge from the official heritage narrative. As I will discuss below, new affective heritage communities that are digitally enabled to some extent produce heritage from below or, at least, disruptions and interruptions of the official narrative. They give voice to a more ambient, personal, performative, and visual experience of heritage.

Adapting to the digital age: The emergence of the Covered Bridges network in Taishun

There are very few formal organizations devoted to cultural heritage issues in China, but an increasing number of loose networks focus on issues related to heritage.[3] Individuals involved in these networks early on realized the potential of the Internet, and today increasingly use social media such as Sina Weibo (China's equivalent of Twitter) and WeChat (a messaging app that combines the functions of WhatsApp and Facebook). A growing number of Chinese citizens are thus today using a wide range of digital technologies to document, celebrate and debate local traditions and heritage. These online networks are built around topics of shared interests, specific cultural practices, threatened heritage, or specific places and cities. The Covered Bridges Website, which was established as early as 2000, is one of the earliest such networked communities. The Old Beijing website established by Zhang Wei in 2001 is another example.[4] Zhang Wei, whose family home had been demolished, wanted to document the rapidly vanishing number of courtyards and hutongs in Beijing. The website encouraged people to post photos and share them online, and members of the network also gathered to explore and take photos in different parts of the city.[5] With the advent of Weibo in 2009 and WeChat in 2013, and the rapid spread of smartphones, new possibilities for interactivity and user-generated content have emerged that facilitate debates and the sharing of information. The

3 The most well-known organization that is also formally registered is the Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Centre that was established as early as 1998; see http://www.bjchp.org.

4 The website has undergone different changes over time but still exists at http://www.obj.cc/. Zhang Wei today also has a Weibo account with some 2400 followers.

5 I took part in one such walking session in 2010.

activists from the Old Beijing Net and new activists and concerned citizens later turned to Weibo, where they, for example, discussed the threat to the Gulou area (see further Graezer Bideau and Yan). In the case of Datong, as discussed by Cui, both supporters and critics of Mayor Geng Yanbo made active use of social media.

Zhong Xiaobo was studying at university in Sichuan Province when he came across an article on Taishun's covered bridges that made him look at his hometown with new eyes.[6] He had previously not given much thought to the bridges, or been aware of their historical value and uniqueness, but the article made him rediscover his hometown and feel proud. Since Zhong Xiaobo was an early user of the Internet (he later came to work for China Mobile) he realized its growing importance and decided to establish the Taishun Covered Bridges Website in 2000; in 2005 the name was changed to China Covered Bridges Website.[7] At the time when Zhong established his website, the bridges were still not very well known and few of them had been listed as protected sites. Zhong's goal to raise public awareness about the bridges met with success and the site attracted many visitors and supporters. Many of them came from Taishun whereas others were netizens interested in nature, tourism, and backpacking. A network of supporters and volunteers quickly developed that would also meet up in person and travel together to different bridges in Taishun. Zhong Xiaobo has continued to keep up with digital developments, and first set up a Weibo account, which at its height had 327,000 followers, and later a public WeChat account in 2013 with almost 10,000 followers, and two WeChat groups that gather around 200 of the more enthusiastic members of the network. In recent years some members of this original network have established another public WeChat account as well as a WeChat group. There are also other WeChat accounts that address local culture in Taishun; a woman, for instance, set up a public account devoted to the She minority culture. When Zhong Xiaobo briefly returned to Taishun to work after his studies, he and his friends set up the Taishun Covered Bridges Association, an unregistered organization that engaged in many different activities. In 2009 they established the Wenzhou Covered Bridges Cultural Association (*Wenzhou shi langqiao wenhua xuehui*) registered as a non-profit organization under the local China Federation of

6 His personal story and the creation of the website have been told many times in the local media and on the website. For a recent report, see http://www.langqiao.net/web/forum.php?mod=viewthread&tid=30027, and for a report on Taishun TV in 2015, see http://v.qq.com/x/page/a0153h1c2n9.html.

7 See www.langqiao.net.

Figure 11.1 Members of the Covered Bridges network on a visit to Xianju Bridge

Photograph by Li Yongzai

Literary and Art Circles (usually known under its abbreviation *Wenlian*), which today shares an office with the Taishun Business Association. Since 2004 Zhong Xiaobo has lived in Wenzhou with his wife, whom he met thanks to the Covered Bridges network, and the whole family devote a considerable time to the network and continue to travel to explore Taishun's heritage.

The core members of the social media group are mostly well-educated, middle-class people in their late thirties and forties, and a majority today live outside Taishun but retain close contacts with their hometown. The network has close links with Chinese scholars and experts, some of whom are also members of the WeChat group.[8] Furthermore, it has good contacts with local authorities and Zhong Xiaobo has also received several awards for his work to promote Taishun. The website and the public WeChat account provide rich information about the bridges and other heritage sites and cultural

8 Liu Jie, a professor of architecture at Jiaotong University, Shanghai, has written several books and also organized conferences. In 2006, Liu Jie and Wu Songdi, a professor at Fudan University, a native of Taishun, together with Peter Bol from Harvard University, organized an expedition with the international organization Earthwatch to document Taishun's history and architecture. In 2007 they organized a smaller group of scholars and students from China and Taiwan, of which I was also a part. Wu Songdi has continued to undertake research with his students and written several articles and books.

practices in the county. It makes use of media reports, official documents, and academic work, but also publishes its own reports and announces the network's activities. Apart from publishing materials online, the association also publishes an annual magazine/book with articles from its network of experts and concerned citizens. In addition it organizes talks (often uploaded on their public WeChat account), cultural events, and trips to Taishun.

Senses of home and heritage: Community building, affective engagement, performativity, and 'co-present visuality'

The WeChat group Covered Bridges' Village consists of some 200 people, although some are more active than others. The choice of name suggests an ambition to create a sense of identity and community united around and defined by the covered bridges as a symbol for home. It also reflects nostalgia for life in the 'village' where people know each other and also share each other's daily life and events. The members describe themselves as 'villagers' (*cunmin*) and the founder Zhong Xiaobo jokingly as the 'village head' (*cunzhang*). Many of the postings in the group also resemble that of small talk among neighbours who run into each other in the (virtual) village. This nurturing aspect of social media was also emphasized by one of my interviewees who himself set up another group consisting of people from Taishun. Most of the people know each other or have met thanks to the network and its activities. Although people might not meet up so often in person, the online 'meetings' and everyday chatting make up for this lack of physical meetings while sustaining and nurturing a joint identity as people who are concerned about Taishun and its heritage. People also plan offline meetings on the platform, talk about forthcoming trips home, suggest joint trips to some specific site, and invite others to visit them.

The WeChat group thus serves many different functions but it is particularly devoted to the sharing of information, news, and images related to Taishun and its heritage. We find some reposting of news and reports from other sources, including from the public WeChat account, but the majority of the posts consists of brief comments, reminiscences, and images related to heritage and hometown. People, for example, post images when they travel home to their villages, including images of the natural scenery, old buildings, and of course the bridges, which prompt comments or just a 'Like' or the use of an emoticon such as a 'thumbs up' or a 'rose'. Sometimes people ask questions about the site/place and a longer conversation develops. People also post photos of themselves and others during their visits and travels,

although selfies as such are not used. A favourite topic is food, and photos of local dishes give rise to strong emotions and reminiscences, which shows how food, memory, place, and identity are closely connected (e.g. Chan 2010).

The urge to share with others reveals how deeply social media practices have become embedded in people's everyday life and activities. The sharing of information, personal stories, and images constitute an engagement with heritage itself and is a performative act, but it also serves to connect people and is an example of the co-present visuality and sociality discussed by Hjorth and Pink (2014) among others. What is striking is thus how people perform and create their own heritagescape through 'embodied engagements, social relationships, and ways of moving with camera phones' (Hjorth and Pink 2014: 54). People are not primarily focusing on the age or authenticity of the heritage sites, so prominent in the AHD, but more express attachment based on personal memories and emotions.

To illustrate this co-present visuality and how people use social media, I will conclude this section with some more examples. On one occasion I was invited to give a talk for the association – this information was spread on both their public account and on the WeChat group. During the talk, which was filmed and later shared on these platforms, many participants took photos that they instantly uploaded. Others present at the event commented on the photos, as did several of those in the network not present. After the event we took some group photos that were also shared and commented upon, and later a report of the whole event was published on the public WeChat account. That weekend several of us went on a trip to a village in Taishun, which was also documented and shared on the WeChat group. The images posted, apart from scenery and old buildings, included several from our dinner and of the local dishes we ate. The posting and sharing of news, images, and experiences on social media today comes naturally for many people and is embedded in everyday life. For this particular group, heritage is the main focus and something to be performed and shared with those not present in order to stimulate affective responses. The postings also serve as a memory device that preserves the moment and the experiences of heritage for the future.

The multiple meanings and uses of the covered bridges: Expert-led AHD, brand, and site of memories

The covered bridges are today a symbol and brand of Taishun owing to the work of experts, officials, and local citizens. Although the bridges are protected and celebrated due to their age and architectural qualities, they

are also sites of local and very personal memories. It is fair to say that the Covered Bridges Website triggered an interest in the bridges and their history among people in Taishun and those who had left the county and, like Zhong Xiaobo, had hitherto not paid much attention to them.

There are around 900 old bridges of different kinds in Taishun, most of them are rather simple bridges made of stone, including so-called block bridges, and different wooden beam bridges. It is, however, the wooden bridges built in the form of a corridor with a roof, or one could describe them as having a building on top, nowadays most often known as covered bridges (*langqiao*) that are the pride of Taishun. Today some 33 bridges still exist with the oldest originating from the Ming dynasty. The bridges were obviously built to serve a specific function, but apart from transportation they in fact had many other functions. Many also had religious functions and housed shrines in the form of alcoves on the bridge, or had shrines at the end of the bridge, where both travellers and local residents would come to pray and make offerings. The bridges were also a place for travellers to rest, and sometimes inns, teahouses, and shops were built close to the bridge. The bridges in addition served as a public space where people could sit and talk, as they offered protection from both rain and sun and were pleasantly cool in the summer.

In the past people would refer to the bridges using many different names, whereas today, however, they are known and branded under the generic name 'covered or lounge bridges' (*langqiao*). Local residents would, for example, in the past refer to the wooden arch bridges, one specific type, as 'centipede bridges' (*wugong qiao*) because they resemble the body of a crawling arthropod, or simply as 'flying bridges' (*feiqiao*) because of their structure. Many of the bridges have local place names, such as Xianju Bridge, or were named after the lineage that built them, for example, the Xue Hamlet Bridge. Some bridges were simply known by their nicknames such as the Two Sisters Bridges (*Jiemie qiao*) at Sixi, or referred to as the new bridge when the old bridge had been destroyed.

Building and renovating the bridges was the responsibility of local villages and done by skilled carpenters and craftsmen. Today, however, much of this knowledge has been lost because the old bridges do not fulfil their original functions anymore due to the fact that cars cannot cross them and new roads have been built elsewhere. Several bridges have over the years been destroyed in storms, demolished to make way for new bridges, or simply left to collapse due to lack of repair. However, after experts discovered the bridges in the late 1980s and 1990s, they have been listed as cultural heritage, and their repair and upkeep are now the responsibility

of the heritage bureaus and the government. In 2006, fifteen of the bridges were listed as national-level protected sites, whereas eighteen of them are today provincial-level protected sites. After 1954 when the Red Army Bridge was built no more bridges were built using the old technique until villagers and the local government in Beiling township decided to rebuild the Tongle Bridge. The funding came from the local community and from wealthy individuals. The bridge was finished in 2004 with the help of one of the remaining carpenters, Dong Zhiji, who remembered the old technique. Mr Dong became a national-level transmitter in 2008, and several initiatives have been taken by the government to protect the craft and encourage young carpenters to learn the technique (UNESCO 2009). Few young people, however, are interested in spending time and effort learning a skill that does not earn them much money. Nevertheless, Zeng Jiakuai became interested in the craft and was later nominated as a provincial-level transmitter. It is estimated that at least ten new bridges have been built since Tongle Bridge. The villagers and local governments involved in this work have lamented the loss of the old bridges and felt that a covered bridge is an important symbol for the community, not to mention a potential tourist attraction.

Carpenters and villagers who were once involved in repairing and building the bridges have a special tactile relationship with the bridges, which for them also represent workmanship and skills, as well as local pride. This was evident in my interview with Dong Zhiji in 2007. At that time he was already 83 years old and had spent his whole life working as a carpenter, which also included building and repairing ancestral halls and temples. According to the now prevalent narrative retold in many articles and books, and also told to me, he had long nurtured a dream of one day being able to build a bridge in the traditional style.[9] He said he wanted to build the bridge to honour and help his hometown, showcase the bridges' architectural and technical splendour, and spread knowledge of the covered bridges worldwide. When I interviewed Zeng Jiakuai in 2015, a lot had happened since 2007 and although he himself did not have the same memories and experiences as Dong, much of the same rhetoric was evident.[10] Pride in the local history and achievements, and a wish to contribute to the hometown, was also evident in my conversations with Zhou Wangong in 2007. In 2002 Zhou set

9 The reference to a dream, or master Dong's 'dream of a covered bridge' (*langqiao meng*), is mentioned in numerous news reports on the building of the bridge; see, for example, *Wenzhou wanbao*, 6 February 2007, http://news.sina.com.cn/c/edu/2007-02-06/1524111179828s.shtml.

10 CCTV 3 screened a programme on Heritage Day in 2016 on the bridges in which Dong Zhiji and Zeng Jiakuai both appeared; see http://tv.cctv.com/2016/06/13/VIDEp67CWfxymhvZMOSJf2p1160613.shtml.

up a private museum exhibiting the history and architecture of the covered bridges; it was housed in one of the old shops close to Beijian Bridge in Sixi.

The heritagization of the bridges has resulted in the appropriation of new symbols and language. For the local government the bridges constitute an important cultural capital and are used in place branding and tourist promotion. In promotional materials the county is often referred to as the 'county of covered bridges', and as a 'museum of covered bridges'. One of the more striking examples of creative appropriation is the use of the American film *The Bridges of Madison County*. The film's title has been translated as 'Langqiao yimeng' in Chinese, and so made the concept of 'covered bridges' well known and associated with dreams and romance. Dreams are a recurring trope, whether it is having the dream of building a bridge, or the dream of getting the bridges listed as a World Heritage site. Nowadays, the language of China Dream, as put forward by President Xi Jingping, is also linked with the bridges. A competition to make short films on the theme 'China Dream, Covered Bridges Dream' was, for example, recently announced. In the heritagization process there is a strong aestheticization of the bridges, which is evident in the way they are showcased in promotional materials and photographed by professional photographers. This aesthetic gaze is also prevalent among tourists and the members of the Covered Bridges network. There are clear national and global aspirations linked to the bridges and what they can do for Taishun. The fact that the original Taishun Covered Bridges Website was renamed as the Chinese Covered Bridges Website is an example of these aspirations. The attempt to push for World Heritage status is another. The bridges thus have some 'scale-jumping' qualities for Taishun as they become national symbols as well as aspire to become international heritage (compare Oakes 2005).

People in the Covered Bridges network whom I interviewed seldom mentioned the age or architecture of the bridges. For them the bridges instead evoked a sense of home and childhood. Their memories and experiences of the bridges were also very tactile and sensory. One of the most frequent stories I heard from my interviewees was about crossing the bridges on their way to school and using them as play areas. Many talked about swimming in the streams and catching fish and shrimp beneath the bridges. One of them who later discussed the bridges and his memories with another man on the WeChat group wrote that 'I grew up 100 metres from the bridge, and as a child swam naked under it' (*guang pigu zai qiao xia youyong*). Another man said to me that for him the bridges were actually less important than the streams and rivers. He remembered falling asleep to the comforting sound of running water. Many interviewees talked about the bridges as a natural meeting place or community space (*gonggong changsuo*) where young and

old in the village would gather. They also claimed that they had not really paid much attention to the bridges but had taken them for granted as children. In their memories they existed as quite mundane sites that were a natural part of their environment. These childhood memories and experiences are today overlaid by information about the bridges that show them in a new light and make people appreciate and experience them differently, as revealed in, for example, their photographic practices. Many now also explore bridges in Taishun that they never saw as children and this experience is both visual and embodied. Travelling and walking are important ways of experiencing and appropriating new heritage sites, and many have also discovered and walk on the old roads (*gudao*) that once were the only mode of travel in Taishun. Several of my interviewees expressed regret that the natural environment around many bridges has been destroyed. New buildings now, for example, surround Xuezhai Bridge whereas a park has been built at the sister bridges in Sixi.

People's strong emotional attachment to the bridges was revealed when a devastating flood swept away three bridges on 15 September 2016.[11] The three bridges, Xue Hamlet Bridge, Wenchong Bridge, and Wenxing Bridge, were all national-level protected sites. As the flooding occurred during the Mid-Autumn Festival many of the people in the WeChat group were at home, or had relatives and friends who were able to forward news and images of the destruction on social media. The Covered Bridges' Village WeChat group thus rapidly filled up with information and images, including dramatic films taken on smartphones, as people shared the information they had and expressed their concern and sadness. Several people later mentioned that they had cried when they heard the news, and the destruction also triggered a flood of reminiscences. Many people at the scene immediately sought to salvage the bridges' timber that had been swept away by the floods, and put them on a safe place so they could be used when rebuilding the bridges. There was no doubt within the local community that the bridges needed to be rebuilt and calls to rebuild the bridges were also spread in the media. Different actors, including the Taishun Covered Bridges Association, began to raise money although in the end the majority of the funding came from the government. This was not the first time that Taishun's bridges had been destroyed in storms and floods. Wenchong Bridge had, for example, been rebuilt four times throughout its history. This time, however, the work was not led by local villagers but by the local government and the heritage

11 Although I was in Sweden at the time of the disaster I was able to get instant information and follow developments on WeChat as they unfolded. In early November I travelled to Wenzhou and Taishun for follow-up interviews and to see the destruction for myself.

Figure 11.2 Children playing at the foot of the Beijian Bridge

Photograph by Marina Svensson

bureau as the bridges were of national concern and cultural symbols rather than fulfilling any practical use for transportation as in the past. For local residents and people who had left Taishun the bridges were more than a cultural symbol, however, and the loss of a familiar feature in the village was keenly felt. Many local residents expressed a sense of displacement and often came to look at the empty place in disbelief.

Depending on people's personal experiences and situations, their relationship with the bridges takes different forms at the same time as new dimensions have been added over the years due to the heritagization process. The covered bridges today serve as identity markers for people from Taishun and they have also become important in Taishun's place branding. In the heritagization process, and also due to socio-economic changes, some aspects of the bridges' history and centrality for the community have been lost. The bridges were in the past striking landmarks, important nodes for transportation, and central community spaces, but today they are not needed for transportation and are surrounded by new buildings. Fewer people linger on them and their religious significance has also dwindled and is not important for most young people. Instead, the bridges today fulfil a new function as heritage and tourist sites that are visited by new groups of people such as tourists, artists, and photographers.

Figure 11.3 Xue Hamlet Bridge (destroyed by a flood in September 2016)

Photograph by Marina Svensson

Selective heritage: Generational differences and a new socio-economic environment

A range of sites, buildings, and cultural practices have nowadays been elevated to cultural heritage status in Taishun, but not all of them carry the same meaning and importance to all people. We can detect both generational and individual differences and changes over time. Due to social and economic changes, a number of cultural practices are no longer integrated in local cultural and social life. The puppet theatre was in the past part of the annual ritual calendar with plays staged during the Chinese New Year and major ritual events. One man recounted how plays would be performed in honour of a Daoist deity in his home village. Before TV and the Internet these performances were also a rare opportunity for entertainment in the countryside that was much appreciated by both young and old, and where people would come to watch a story unfold over many evenings. Many of the people I interviewed had fond memories of watching the puppet theatre as children but said that neither themselves nor their children today had the interest and patience to watch a full play. Today the puppet theatre is

often performed in the form of short excerpts of plays for an audience who watch it more out of curiosity (*haoqi*) and as a spectacle and performance (*biaoyan*).

There used to be people in almost every village in Taishun who would get together during slack periods or for special events to organize performances. Although there still exist some grassroots troupes, the art would today not survive without government support.[12] The making of puppets and the performance itself has now been listed as intangible cultural heritage and some individuals selected as transmitters. The transmitters I talked to all acknowledged that prospects for survival were not bright because few young people were interested in learning the art.[13] The making of puppets and the performance of plays are nowadays often showcased in museums and other cultural exhibitions in Taishun and outside of the county. Transmitters are also required to take on disciplines, teach in schools, and perform in different spaces (on new expectations and changes in life circumstances for transmitters, see also Maags and Blumenfield in this volume). There is considerable local pride and promotion of the puppet theatre, and its history is well documented by the ICH department and in books written by both experts and enthusiasts. However, it has lost much of the significance it once had for the local community, and for people who left Taishun it is even more distant and seen as a cultural form that belongs to the past and is not part of their life anymore.

Although some traditions and rituals have disappeared, many still remain and survive in Taishun without having been listed as cultural heritage. Lineages and religious communities continue to play an important role and they are involved in many different ritual practices. Since the 1980s lineages have begun once again to revise their genealogies on a regular basis and have also recovered and renovated their ancestral halls where important rituals such as the Hungry Ghosts Festival take place. While several ancestral halls today have obtained status as cultural heritage, for example, the Bao ancestral hall is now a national-level protected building, the original initiative to protect and restore them came from the lineages themselves, who also continue to use them for ancestral ceremonies. In

12 It is said that 72 troupes still exist.

13 I have interviewed a municipal-level transmitter of a puppet theatre, a national-level puppet maker and his daughter, a provincial-level transmitter. I have seen some performances, including a performance at Fudan University, and also visited exhibitions in the Wenzhou Intangible Cultural Heritage Museum and a temporary exhibition in Hangzhou.

2007 and 2009 I visited several ancestral halls and interviewed villagers during the Hungry Ghosts Festival (also known as the Yulan Festival). The ceremony is found in many parts of China (including Hong Kong, where it has developed a unique form suited to the needs of the new society, as discussed by Chan in this volume). Although the general purpose and origin is similar – it takes place on the fifteenth day of the seventh month in the lunar calendar to ensure the safe departure of the dead and to prevent them from an existence as ghosts – the festival in Taishun exhibits some different features and organization. It has not been listed as intangible cultural heritage and it is organized by lineages and held in the ancestral halls. The lineage invites Daoists to perform but the rituals have both Buddhist and Daoist elements. The performance may continue for one or two days and throughout the night, and involves readings of scriptures and sacrifices to send off the dead. Memorial tablets over the dead (*paiwei*) are kept in the ancestral halls and during the ceremony family members bring tablets for people who died during the past year to the hall. The ceremony also includes a large communal banquet for the lineage members. Older people in the villages are in charge of the ceremony but some young people who have migrated and live in cities also come back for the event. However, none of my interviewees in Wenzhou and Shanghai said they would come back for this ceremony although their fathers and grandfathers may be present. Most of the interviewees, however, try to return to celebrate Qingming, which since 2008 also is a national holiday, and they would also return for the Chinese New Year. One of my interviewees mentioned that he made a special point of taking his son with him for Qingming so he would know where the graves were located (as the old graves were spread out in the countryside and not found in the public graveyard). On WeChat postings and images of temples, ancestral halls and rituals are quite strikingly absent, which seems to underscore that this type of heritage is not so important to the younger generation, or at least not something they choose to share online.[14] Nonetheless, although many young people are not so interested, knowledgeable, or active in lineage activities today (it is mostly the responsibility of the older generation), they generally seem to support them and might become more involved as they grow older.[15]

14 This contrasts with another WeChat group of which I am a member that consists of members of the Ye lineage who more celebrate their clan and often post images from rituals and ancestral halls.

15 On a recent visit one of my interviewees showed me an old genealogy that he had discovered at home, whereas another man proudly showed me his lineage's recently revised genealogy.

Negotiating and adapting to heritagization: Memories, affect, and 'co-present visuality'

This chapter has discussed what home and heritage signifies for a range of people from Taishun, including, in particular, those who have left their hometown, and how people in different capacities and different ways are involved in the complex heritagization process that we currently observe in China. The way an individual is affected by and uses heritage is shaped by previous experiences, embodied memories, and circulated and mediated representations, including official and expert narratives and prescribed emotions associated with nationalism. The chapter has drawn attention to and analysed how digital platforms, including, in particular, social media, open up for more performative, reflexive, and affective experiences of and with heritage. People are today often articulating their emotions, memories, and experiences of heritage in new online communities, and thus creating both new affective heritage communities and their own individual heritagescapes. One of the more striking aspects is the central role of images and how they are being used to express engagement with heritage and also connect with others, which creates a 'co-present visuality'. Heritage is a complex embodied experience that engages different senses, and it is increasingly experienced with a camera or smartphone in hand. It is obvious that most people appropriate and negotiate with rather than challenge the AHD, but perform heritage in a more personal way where certain sites and cultural practices for both individual and socio-economic reasons are more important than others. There are certainly individual differences, including different motivations, levels of engagement, ambitions, and economic interests, and abilities to have their voices heard within the Covered Bridges group as well as within the population in Taishun in general that needs to be further explored. The heritagization process is not neutral. It can strengthen people's identity and thus empower them at the same time as it might disempower or marginalize other individuals and their heritage.

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Abbreviations

ACHS	Association of Critical Heritage Studies
AHD	Authorized heritage discourse
BICP	Beijing Municipal Institute of City Planning and Design
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CHP	Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center
EKCA	East Kowloon Chaoren Association
FHKCCO	Federation of Hong Kong Chaozhou Community Organization
HKSAR	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
HUL	Historic Urban Landscape
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
ICCROM	International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
ICH	Intangible Cultural Heritage
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
RHUL	Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscape
SACH	State Administration of Cultural Heritage
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WHITRAP	World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region

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