

Tami Blumenfield
Helaine Silverman *Editors*

Cultural Heritage Politics in China

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Curtis Ashton is an English teacher, a folklorist, an archivist, and a museum anthropologist. He has worked in university classrooms, libraries, archives, and museums for the past 12 years. He earned his doctorate from Indiana University in 2010. His dissertation research included a year working as a consultant for several museums in Beijing during the build-up and aftermath of the 2008 Summer Olympics. Ashton is currently working with Utah State University's Anthropology Program and the Utah Department of Heritage to develop interdisciplinary distance education programs in museum studies for both traditional students and working professionals. His future plans include forging better partnerships with university museums in China and the US.

Tami Blumenfeld is the James B. Duke Assistant Professor of Asian Studies at Furman University. An anthropologist of China and documentary film producer who earned her doctorate at the University of Washington in 2010, she has spent more than four years conducting fieldwork in ethnically diverse regions of southwest China. Supported in part by a Fulbright fellowship and a grant from the Association for Asian Studies China and Inner Asia Council, she has researched educational practices, cultural heritage politics, and social change. Much of her

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Jenny Chio is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Emory University. She received her Ph.D. in Socio-Cultural Anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley. Broadly speaking, her current projects analyze the intersections between mobility, modernity, and media in China's cultural politics. Her research and teaching interests focus on contemporary rural livelihoods and development in China; tourism, identity, and forms of cultural representation; and documentary image studies. Since 2006, she has been conducting fieldwork in two rural, ethnic minority villages in southwestern China, with a particular emphasis on exploring the impact of tourism on intra-village social relations, individual conceptualizations of self, and local understandings of travel and modernity. She is also an ethnographic filmmaker and completed a film that further explores the work of doing tourism in rural, ethnic China, titled 农家乐 *Peasant Family Happiness*.

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Gary Sigley is Professor in Chinese Studies at The University of Western Australia and Advisor for the UNESCO Arts in Education Observatory for Research in Local Cultures and Creativity in Education (Hong Kong Institute of Education). His research interests are broadly based within the social sciences and critical cultural studies with a particular focus on government, community, and

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Part I
Introduction

Chapter 1

Cultural Heritage Politics in China: An Introduction

Helaine Silverman and Tami Blumenfield

Introduction

In 1966, the People’s Republic of China embarked on a campaign to eradicate the “Four Olds”¹ and literally smash remnants of bourgeois, counter-revolutionary thought and substance in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The ensuing turmoil—what Sofield and Li (1998) term “cultural vandalism”—would lead to the destruction of innumerable sites of religious and historic significance throughout the country. Indeed, Sofield and Li lamented that the “scope of mass destruction nationwide was so grave that it may never be fully chronicled” (1998: 369).

Marking over 20 years of an entirely different approach to cultural heritage, China began celebrating “Cultural Heritage Day” in 2006. Instead of exhorting urban youth to burn books and damage relics, the new ideology officially encourages preservation of historically valuable sites and objects. At the same time, China’s rapid economic transformation and real estate frenzies beginning in the 1990s have made urban demolition a regular sight nationwide and dam construction and other water projects routinely submerge spaces of historical significance. What accounts for these dramatic shifts in a relatively short time period,

¹ The Four Olds included old customs, old culture, old habits, and old ideas.

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and how can the contradictions of simultaneously destroying and protecting heritage be understood? Broadly speaking, how universally embraced is the current rhetoric about heritage preservation? And what, if anything, is particular about the role cultural heritage plays in this nation of nearly 1.35 billion people?

A consideration of cultural heritage politics in China implicates tourism, economic development, government ideology, national and ethnic imaginaries, social sustainability, and intraregional, interregional and international relationships within the framework of China's fast-paced modernization in the context of globalization and China's assertive political maneuvering on the world stage. In 2010 China convened an international conference to consider cultural heritage values, threats to cultural sites, and the involvement of local stakeholders in site protection (Yu et al. 2011). Prominent in the discussions was the recognition of a strong link between increased domestic tourism to places of cultural interest, economic development promoted by the national and regional governments, and increasing stress on heritage "resources." These are topics that have attracted significant attention from scholars in recent years (see, e.g., Harrison and Hitchcock 2005; Leask and Fyall 2006; Smith et al. 2010; Ruggles and Silverman 2009).

Analysis of recent Chinese leadership attitudes toward cultural tradition reveals an official intent to enlist it as "a constructive factor in unifying the Chinese nation... 'China's cultural tradition has become a strong bond for ethnic harmony and national unity'" (Ai 2011: 130) and "official support for cultural heritage has centred around the elements that are most directly aligned with CCP's priorities" (Ai 2011: 132). Cultural tradition is, thus, a political tool and is much about those in positions of power telling stories about the past and present. As such, it is not surprising that "[w]hat is considered 'heritage' is continually subject to interpretation and reinterpretation, claim and counter claim, and negotiation" (Harrison 2005: 7). Heritage in China generates a range of contradictions, such as praise for Tibetan civilization but not Tibetan society and promotion of the Imperial Palace of Beijing as a prime tourist destination while selectively representing the regimes that produced it.

In addition to its World Heritage List sites, thousands of other cultural sites in China are "key cultural relics protection units" (Shepherd 2009: 69, translated from the Chinese term). While this extensive patrimony may seem highly valued, contradictions between rhetoric, policy and practice raise questions about relative power in these valuations. Local governments and government officials in general profit from land sales that involve demolition of existing structures (for instance, in Shanghai, district governments may keep up to 85% of the revenue thus generated; see Hsing 2008: 68). Given these incentives, government officials in charge of heritage preservation may be less powerful than officials who authorize sales that require destroying built heritage.

Without the threat of censure from an intergovernmental organization, little inhibits destruction of wide swaths of historically significant buildings and even mountain landscapes. The obliteration of most of Beijing's *hutong*, or courtyard

lane residences, is but one highly visible example.² Even buildings designated as “immovable cultural relic” by the State Administration for Cultural Heritage’s National Bureau of Cultural Relics have been demolished: the former courtyard residence of architects Liang Sicheng and Lin Huiyin disappeared in January 2012 after achieving official protected status in 2009 (Jacobs 2012; Kaiman 2012). This structure was one of hundreds whose land was deemed more valuable for development than for preservation. A Xinhua commentary titled “Ruin of Famed Person’s Former Residence is Anguished Death of Culture” notes that approximately 44,000 formally designated landmarks have met with similar fates (Xinhua 2012a).

In sites that escape demolition, structural bifurcation exists between heritage offices and tourism offices that usually contract with private tourism companies to develop infrastructure and manage sites. This is a manifestation of the broader privatization that encompasses much of today’s China (Ong and Zhang 2008). Conflicts between managing and protecting inevitably occur. And, as Peter Hessler observes, breaking rules can be an effective strategy. “In China, much of life involves skirting regulations, and one of the basic truths is that forgiveness comes easier than permission” (Hessler 2010: 19). In the case of delicate built environments,³ disregard for regulations may hold long-term and irreparable consequences. Egregious damage to a cultural heritage site may engender public outrage, but violations rarely result in significant penalties beyond rebukes.

China, UNESCO, and Cultural Heritage Bureaucracy

Following a somewhat delayed engagement with the global cultural governance regime of UNESCO, China ratified the 1972 World Heritage Convention in 1985. The next year, China proposed its first five cultural sites for inscription, which was achieved in 1987. As a result of extensive diplomatic efforts—and the careful restoration and reconstruction of structures damaged in the late 1960s—China is now home to 43 UNESCO cultural, natural, and mixed World Heritage sites (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/cn>; Xinhua 2012b). Dozens more sites are on China’s Tentative List (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/cn>) awaiting nomination to the World Heritage Committee, which determines the World Heritage List. No country in Asia boasts more World Heritage List sites. Only Italy (with 47) and Spain (with 44) have more sites. Fyall and Rakic note that presenting

² It is interesting to note that not only did China not seek to inscribe *hutong* on the World Heritage List, UNESCO was powerless when large numbers of these vernacular environments were razed preceding the 2008 Summer Olympics. By this point, the best located *hutong* have been gentrified and now are zones of expensive housing, restaurants, bars, and other tourism sector services, both for the Chinese and foreigners.

³ For instance, the famous Ferrari car maker caused great consternation when one of its cars drove onto the 600 year-old Ming Dynasty city wall of Nanjing (see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-18006291>).

World Heritage nomination dossiers to UNESCO's World Heritage Centre has become an international race (2006: 173).

Today, China's World Heritage properties include important pre-imperial and imperial sites such as Late Shang Dynasty Yin Xu, the Forbidden City's imperial palace of the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Temple of Heaven and the Summer Palace in Beijing, the Mausoleum of the first Qin emperor and the famous Terra Cotta Army near Xi'an, the Mountain Resort and its Outlying Temples in Chengde, and the Great Wall. Major non-imperial cultural sites include Confucius' home town of Qufu and the classical gardens of Suzhou as well as towns with notable vernacular architecture—Xidi and Hongcun in southern Anhui, the *tulou* of Fujian, Kaiping's *diaolou* (multi-story defensive village-houses), Lijiang, and Pingyao. Religious sites are also on the World Heritage List including the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang, the ancient building complex in the Wudang Mountains, Mount Emei and the Leshan Giant Buddha, Dazu Rock Carvings, Longmen and Yungang Grottoes and Tibet's Potala Palace (the latter being a highly contested site).

China's enthusiasm for the World Heritage List reveals three aspects of cultural policy. First, China has been employing a national strategy of cultural soft power on the global stage (see, e.g., Fiskesjö 2010; Kurlantzick 2008). Second, cultural heritage promotion serves goals of regional and local economic development. Third, China has set up a mechanism that brings "properties" of "Outstanding Universal Value" (UNESCO's terminology) into the national cultural treasury first through a comprehensive national system of heritage administration and then by placement in the international repository of wonders. UNESCO's system facilitates China's strategy, for it is states (states parties) that nominate sites to the World Heritage List. In China this has particular political resonance, especially when the sites in question are in minority areas. The Chinese state seeks to incorporate minority ethnic regions more firmly into China through its official heritage and tourism policies (Shepherd 2006: 244). The official recognition of non-Han sites reinforces China's doctrine of itself as a multi-cultural country whose traditions go back thousands of years in an unbroken history. For instance, Yalong is on China's Tentative List. It is identified as "the cradle of Tibetan culture. The extant relics, artifacts and ancient sites demonstrate the early civilization of the Tibetans, including their early religion, culture, arts and society" (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/cn>). As Shepherd observes, China is "harness[ing] Tibetan culture in service to a greater China" (2009: 255).

In the same way that western states have surveyed—literally and ideologically—their territories for the purpose of governance (e.g., Edney 1997; Scott 1998), so too China has attempted to inventory its copious immovable and movable heritage wealth. In the 1950s the new Chinese state undertook the first National Cultural Heritage Survey and Registration; the second one was conducted in the 1980s (Chen Shen and Hong Chen 2010: 73) and the third one was completed in 2011 (Lu Na 2011). Under the current system there is a State Administration of Cultural Heritage within which there is a hierarchy of National Major Heritage Protection Units, Provincial Major Heritage Protection Units and Municipal/County Major

Heritage Protection Units that evaluate heritage sites in a ladder of managerial responsibility (Chen Shen and Hong Chen 2010). Immovable heritage sites are divided into six categories: ancient cultural/archaeological sites; ancient tombs; ancient architectural structures; cave temples; stone carvings and murals; important modern and contemporary historic sites and memorable buildings. Movable cultural relics⁴ are categorized in four grades of descending value: Grade 1 (the most rare), Grade 2, Grade 3, and Ordinary (Chen Shen and Hong Chen 2010: 72–73).

China's tangible cultural heritage is under a hierarchical and centralized state administration. However, increasingly, local governments are seeking to "set their own standards and priorities for the best interests of the region," thereby engendering bureaucratic problems (Chen Shen and Hong Chen 2010: 75). The principal problem for China's tangible cultural heritage is economic development, whose effects can be devastating on the valued physical environment and problematical for the in situ social one.

China's eager participation in the international system is not restricted to the tangible. China is a signatory to UNESCO's 2003 *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)*. A 2005 article observed that upon signing the *ICH* China earmarked 46 million yuan (US\$ 5.6 million) for a special project designed to preserve important cultural forms (Wang 2005). An additional 50 million yuan (US\$ 6.1 million) was allocated for 2005–2010 to preserve Kunqu (traditional musical theater: see Wong 2009), one form already on UNESCO's ICH list.

Ethnicity and Heritage

Cultural heritage politics in China engages the practices of the 55 officially recognized ethnic minorities who, under the Chinese Constitution, are guaranteed the "freedom to preserve or change their own folkways and customs" (China 1999) as well as respect and protection of their religious beliefs. Chinese policy toward ethnic minorities involves different implementation of policies from one locality to the next and one province to the next. Overall, however, China's policy toward its ethnic peoples has been described as a domestic "civilizing project" with the state viewing its ethnic minorities as "in need of civilization" and "education," their ancient ways requiring "advancement" (Harrell 1995: 13). This governmental

⁴ The word "relic" is semantically laden in English in a negative sense—something obsolete and out of time. Magnus Fiskesjö discusses how the term "relic" is used among Chinese antiquities collectors. He quotes a prominent Chinese historian saying "relics are the purveyors of culture" (2010: 231) and a private China Foundation for the Development of Folklore Culture using the word to express the sense of relics as the "concrete evidence of the long history and cultural traditions of a state and a people... the blood vessels that connect the [nation's] present with history [its past]" (2010: 231–232).

approach pushes ethnic minorities to become members of the modern nation, participate in the process of modernization, and cease being an obstacle to the state's goal of nation-building. China exercises governance from a Han-centric position that enforces Han dominance (Han are over 90% of China's population), including sponsorship of Han emigration into heavily minority regions and suppression of minority people/culture when deemed necessary by the state (McCarthy 2009). Thus, notwithstanding China's official ideology and legal framework of cultural pluralism, interdependency, common destiny, and shared interests (China 1999), the policies enabling these concepts frequently falter on the ground as dramatically seen in repeated Tibetan resistance (e.g., Shakya 2002, 2008), Uighur protests (Bovingdon 2010), and the complaints of other ethnic groups or *minzu* (roughly equivalent to "minority nationality"). While the Chinese state promotes minority distinctiveness, it is both vigilant and active in suppressing those who threaten the unity of the nation or its goals of modernization (McCarthy 2009).⁵

The tensions in Tibet and Xinjiang demonstrate that when threatened, the Chinese state responds by weakening protections for cultural heritage. A stark example comes from Kashgar's "Old Town" where nearly two-thirds of the homes, mostly occupied by Uighur residents, were demolished (Holdstock 2012; Wines 2009). Similar bulldozing of vernacular houses is occurring throughout China, often despite protests and other forms of resistance—some coming from cultural heritage promoters within the state bureaucracy—but the ethnic tensions in Kashgar make its situation especially vexing.

Given the circumstances, it should not surprise us that the Chinese government has not actively sought World Heritage site inscription anywhere in Qinghai or Xinjiang, despite their encompassing 24% of China's total area. There are only two World Heritage sites in all of western China: a Silk Road site in Gansu and the Potala Palace in Tibet, compared to the 41 that fill other parts of China. Certainly, any list will be partial and incomplete, and the very notion of a heritage list has rightfully come under challenge (Hafstein 2009). Nonetheless, the selective preservation, demolition and promotion of some cultural heritage, together with exclusions from heritage lists, show how very political the defining of heritage can be.

Regarding ICH, we note that official government policy currently promotes preservation of "traditional cultures" through state-organized folkways specialists and supports professionals from the fields of archaeology and architecture. These

⁵ While qualitative classificatory distinctions between one ethnic group and another are not normally made by the Chinese system of *minzu* classification, it is important to note that significant differences exist between the "minority nationalities" present in Tibet and Xinjiang, and those in, for example, multi-ethnic zones of southwest China. Xinjiang and Tibet can be better understood as "nations within the nation," while zones where smaller ethnic groups like the Naxi and Wa live are minority areas, not nations within a broader nation. This distinction plays out in cultural heritage politics and the way the state interacts with those living in the respective regions. See McCarthy 2009 for further elaboration of this discussion.

specialists collect, edit, translate, publish, and exhibit non-monumental cultural heritage. Performances of “folkloric authenticity” are not just tolerated in China, they are actively encouraged by the state for the purpose of domestic and foreign tourism—tourism being a vehicle for the economic development sought by the government. China is so enthused about ICH that in 2007 the “International Festival of the Intangible Cultural Heritage” was jointly organized by UNESCO and the Chinese Government (along with other Chinese state-level festivals), and has been held biannually since. It is said to be the only thematic festival of ICH in the world. It has a permanent base in Chengdu. The grounds are divided into five districts: Intercontinental Friendship, Century Dances, Architecture Stories, Time Travel, and Folk Plays. The festival is intended to “promote the succession and development of China’s Intangible Cultural Heritage and the international cultural exchanges and cooperation” (<http://www.unima2012.org/Item/Show.asp?m=111&d=24>). The promotional website (*ibid*) casts a Chinese perspective on this International Festival, speaking of its “diversified recreational projects” and characterizing the festival as a “leisure consumption resort” as well as “opening itself to the world as a cultural tourist attraction.” It can be understood in the context of Asian tourism (see Winter et al. 2008).

Ethnic groups comprising China are praised in China’s officially sanctioned heritage literature as “crystallization[s] of the wisdom” of these peoples (Luo Zhewen 2005). Thus, Minister of Culture Sun Jiazheng argued that ICH protection should be undertaken “in good faith instead of with the sole goal of fueling local tourism or enhancing publicity” (Wang 2005). But it is very difficult to separate “altruism” from “commercialism.” The fundamental issue is how cultural heritage is managed, by whom, in whose interests, and with what impacts. For instance, vernacular architecture that has been described as “a warren of passageways and ancient mud-brick homes” (Teague 2009) is transformed into a partially rebuilt “ethnic showcase for tourists” (Holdstock 2012; see also Boulton et al. 2012: 198).

Heritage and Tourism: Heritage Tourism

Cultural heritage politics in China is complex and cultural heritage tourism is the genie let out of the bottle. The extraordinary emergence of a numerically large Chinese middle class and the dramatic liberalization of internal movement, along with the creation of three official Golden Weeks when most employees and students are encouraged to travel, have led to tremendous interest in travel through the huge and varied national territory. The state sees tourism “as a two-way civilizing tool, capable of producing positive change in tourists as well as ‘tour-ees’” (Nyíri 2009: 154). This is reminiscent of Bennett’s (1995) “exhibitionary complex,” which posits the birth of the modern museum as a venue of discipline, surveillance, and spectacle (following Foucault). The state organizes its own representation (self-definition) and conveys its power through the museum script. The state presents itself as a spectacle to be consumed; viewers are performers.

The Chinese state promotes “leisure culture” whereby tourism synthesizes “material civilization and spiritual civilization” so as to generate a “desirable citizenry” (Nyíri 2009: 155), much as western European states saw museums as a vehicle for producing desired subjects. Tourism is “indoctrainment” (Nyíri 2009: 159) and its assemblage “disciplines” the travelers for “government bodies (mostly at the county, prefecture, or provincial level) are present as both stakeholders (co-owners) and regulators in every tourism development project” (Nyíri 2009: 163). Chinese tourists may not participate in the ideology underwriting their travels but they engage in tourism as a quintessentially modern activity (Nyíri 2009: 155–156, 165).

But tourism has major consequence for local populations. State-encouraged mass visitation to heritage sites and natural wonders has deeply impacted those who live in and around them for they “have begun to lose control of their economies, cultures, and lifestyles” (Timothy et al. 2009: 97). Moriss has argued that “Whenever tourism is an economic strategy as well as a money-making activity, and wherever it is a policy of state, a process of social and *cultural* change is initiated which involves transforming not only the ‘physical’ (in other words, the *lived*) environment of ‘toured’ communities, and the intimate details of the practice of everyday life, but also the series of relations by which cultural identity (and therefore, difference) is constituted for both the tourist and the toured in any given context” (1995: 180).

Problems generated by cultural tourism are well known. Mass visitation exerts pressure on ancient walls, historic buildings, vernacular towns, and scenic spots as well as the physical environment supporting these. It can deform social relations, diminish community sustainability, transform the local economy, and generate political conflict.

Tsing’s (2005) concept of “friction” conveys the sense of diverse and conflicting social interactions that occur as multiple demands are made on, contested by, and negotiated among those whom state agencies and the global tourism industry have identified as interesting and worthy of attention. We can read into Tsing a framework for understanding much of cultural tourism in China today, particularly in southwest China, which, for centuries (and, indeed, millennia), has been a multi-ethnic mosaic and engaged with a vast territory beyond its villages.

The term ‘global’ ... introduces a way of thinking about the history of social projects, including ‘business’ and ‘local empowerment.’ First, such projects grow from spatially far-flung collaborations and interconnections. Second, cultural diversity is not banished from these interconnections; it is what makes them—and all their particularities—possible. Cultural diversity brings a creative friction to global connections (Tsing 2005: ix–x)... ‘Friction’ [is] the grip of worldly encounter. Capitalism, science, and politics all depend on global connections. Each spreads through aspirations to fulfill *universal* dreams and schemes. Yet this is a particular kind of universality: it can only be charged and enacted in the sticky materiality of practical encounters. (Tsing 2005: 1, emphasis in original).

Friction, as used by Tsing, is appropriate for our discussion for it highlights the lack of ease of the tourist encounter as peoples and their settlements are opened to inspection and exploitation, both from within and without. Tsing speaks of “global

motion” and recognizes that the pervasive flow of goods, money, ideas, and people generates friction in interaction. That global motion coincides with Urry’s “mobilities paradigm” by which he refers to “movements across regions” and “how social relations are performed, organized and mobilized” (2007: 44). Frictions of distance and frictions at local, national, international and global levels of interactions exist and must be greased (i.e., negotiated, mitigated).

Museums and Collections

A large body of literature deals with the role of museums in creating a national identity (Broun 2004; Coombes 2004; Errington 1998: Chap. 6; Kaplan 1994; Kaufman 2004; Kennedy 2004 *inter alia*). Typically, such museums are created in newly independent countries seeking to define their identity in contradistinction to a previous colonial or otherwise “impaired” condition (e.g., Anderson 1991: 179–184). They are a key attribute of nation-states (to have a national museum is to be a nation-state); they are often a venue in the itinerary of official visits made by visiting dignitaries from other countries. Museums in China developed from an engagement with Japanese and European representational practices. The museums promote the national vision of nation-ness and nationalism, authorizing a national history and validating the national imaginary.

Denton (2005) is especially clear in highlighting the propaganda role of Chinese museums and their use by the state for legitimizing purposes. The massive wave of museum construction also speaks to the “important symbolic roles [of museums] in the larger context of the urban environments in which they are located” (Denton 2005: 571). The unique architecture of many of these museums and their new exhibition designs facilitate their “participat[ion] in the market economy by contributing to the cultural life of cities, making them more attractive to tourism, commercial investment and global trade” (Denton 2005: 572). Indeed, China is engaged in a dramatic exhibitionary project across its territory, building museums with such frequency and intensity that this activity has been international news (see, e.g., *The Economist* 2007: 49). China’s “museum boom” (*ibid.*) is manifested in the rush by “[c]ities and towns across China ... to build museums... Local governments, caught up in what the Chinese press calls a ‘museum fever,’ are vying to outdo one another with architectural wonders” (*The Economist* 2007: 49). Already two survey books have been published in English, *China’s Museums* (Li and Luo 2004) and *China: Museums* (Clifford et al. 2009)—and these are by no means complete in their coverage. Whereas in 1990 there were about 300 museums, by 2008 there were at least 2,310 “excluding the newly permitted private museums, new arts centres and vibrant districts and villages dedicated to contemporary arts and culture” (Clifford et al. 2009: 12). Similar to Denton’s (2005) analysis, Li and Luo (2004: 2) place museums in the context of “China’s opening and reform policy as well as... the development of a market economy, travel, tourism, and cultural exchange” over the past 20–30 years.

The Shaanxi History Museum in Xi'an is an example. Shaanxi Province is a place of great historical significance; it was the birthplace of the Western Zhou, Western Han, Qin, and Tang civilizations. Xi'an (formerly Chang'an) was an imperial capital city for more than a millennium. Built in evocation of Tang architecture, the Shaanxi History Museum opened in 1991 and was the first national museum with modern facilities. The museum, located in the heart of classic Han Chinese civilization, evinces no (apparent) ideological conflict or political pressure in its exhibit scripts. It does not have to deal with an ethnic minority, such as the Tibetans, whose unwillingly incorporated population chafes under Han and governmental intrusion in its homeland. The Shaanxi History Museum does not have to prove that the Shaanxi region is part of China. However, its historical purview is explicitly truncated in the museum script: following Mao Zedong's historiography that divides "ancient China" from "modern China," in 1840, the Shaanxi History Museum cuts off its timeline in that year, just beyond the midpoint of the Qing Dynasty.

The Tibet Museum in Lhasa also truncates its time line, in this case ending on May 23, 1951 with the *Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet* (colloquially known as the Seventeen Point Agreement), which is on display. In order to understand the situation of the Tibet Museum it is necessary to consider the official (and unambiguous) discourse of the Chinese state toward Tibet. China expresses the achievements of its ethnic policy toward the Tibet Autonomous Region this way:

... to promote the social and economic development of Tibet, to satisfy the Tibetan people's increasing needs for rich material and cultural lives. At the same time, [the government has] devoted large amounts of human, financial, and material resources to protecting and carrying forward the fine aspects of traditional Tibetan culture, as well as initiating and developing modern science, culture, and education by employing legal, economic, and administrative means. As a result, considerable achievements attracting worldwide attention have been attained. All the people in Tibet, as masters of the new era, jointly carry on, develop and enjoy the traditional Tibetan culture, and jointly create modern civilized life and culture, bringing unprecedented prosperity and development to Tibetan culture. (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China 2000).

Shepherd argues that an important aspect of China's policy toward Tibet is a deliberate creation of a "de-politicized space of 'culture'... a broader policy aimed at the pacification of Tibet through the aesthetization of Tibetan culture" (2009: 255). We see this in the Tibet Museum.

The Tibet Museum took seven years to complete (1992–1999) with an investment by the central government of 11.6 million dollars in the project (Tibet Museum n.d.). The building, designed by a Han Chinese architect from Sichuan province, invokes traditional Tibetan architecture while having a Modernist practical functionality and Postmodernist artistic flairs (Fig. 1.1). The museum is located across the street from the restored Norbulingka, the summer palace of the Dalai Lama.

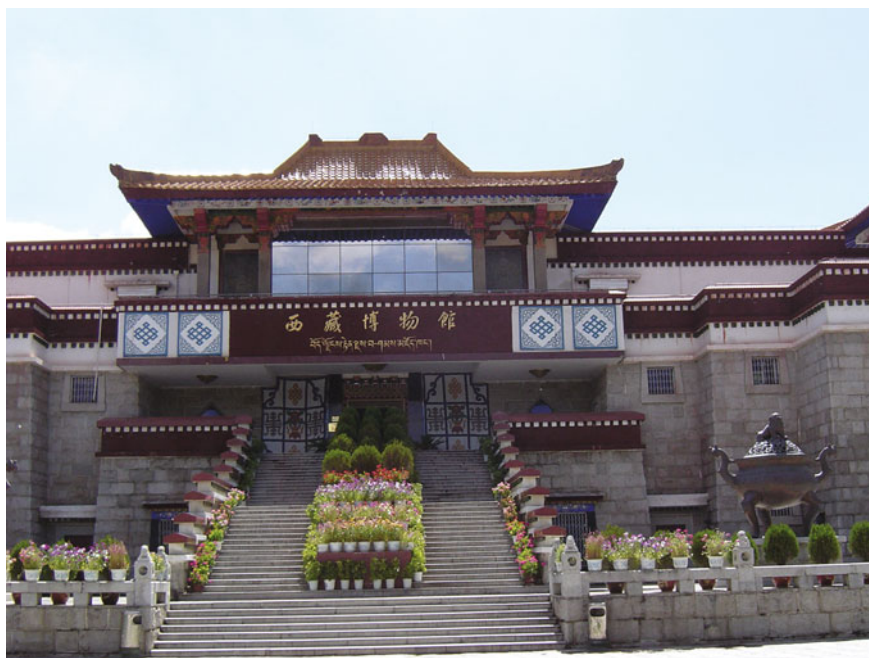


Fig. 1.1 Tibet Museum (photo: Helaine Silverman 2007)

The initiation of the project to create a Tibet Museum in Lhasa took place in the context of official re-Tibetanization, local reclamation of religious tradition, tourism, and economic development. The Tibet Museum was one of 62 government-funded “Aid-Tibet Projects” that were launched in 1994 “in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the formation of the Autonomous Region of Tibet” (Tibet Museum n.d.). The museum was listed as one of Tibet’s “key projects for social development.” The museum brochure (Tibet Museum n.d.) specifically identifies the Tibet Museum as “a fresh new place of cultural interest, attracting tourists from both China and overseas.”

The Tibet Museum opened on October 5, 1999, in honor of the 50th anniversary of the People’s Republic of China and the 40th anniversary of Tibet’s “democratic reform.” The inaugural exhibit was designated one of the “Top Ten National Exhibitions” in 1999 by the State Cultural Relics Bureau, the Chinese Association of Museums, and the *China Cultural Relics Journal*. The museum “was appraised as one of the first national AAAA tourism spots” in 2000 (Tibet Museum n.d.). All these spots are under the State Administration of Cultural Heritage Office, which exercises a powerful role in creating a new collective memory of the past represented by these sites.

The Tibet Museum is more than a national architectural prize-winning building and aesthetically outstanding stunning display. Built in the political context of “reform and opening up to the outside world” (Tibet Museum 2001: 6), the

museum explicitly presents Tibet as an “inseparable” part of China from at least the thirteenth century, and it presents Tibetan culture as a relic culture and culture of relics. This exhibit of artistic treasures and ethnographic masterpieces of the region evokes a comparison with late nineteenth–early twentieth century U.S. museum displays of “pacified” Native Americans (e.g., Errington 1998). It seems that once an indigenous group is no longer a threat to a colonial state, its culture can be extolled. And, of course, the hegemonic state seeks to exert control through display. Nonetheless, ongoing widespread resistance to Chinese presence in Tibet unsettles this effort to assert control, cultural or otherwise.

Papers in the Volume

Local, Regional, National, and International Interests in a World Heritage Era

Chapters in this section are nuanced, ethnographic analyses of how communities in Yunnan, Sichuan, and Zhejiang Provinces grapple with the potential and challenges of a nationally narrated and globally influenced heritage discourse. UNESCO is a willing partner in China’s heritage endeavors for beyond its concern with preservation of humankind’s cultural patrimony UNESCO believes in the power of tourism to effect economic development. Indeed, the greatest challenge of UNESCO World Heritage status is not achieving it (once nominations reach the Tentative List, the politics of the World Heritage Committee appear to play themselves out and a reasonable nomination is eventually approved) but rather managing the aftermath of World Heritage List inscription as the “sticky materiality of practical encounters” (Tsing 2005: 1) that take place among different kinds of tourists (particularly Han Chinese and Western foreigners), hosts, and the various entities that constitute the Chinese state.

That no unitary, top-down strategy or narrative exists is underscored by the variety of experiences in these communities. Nonetheless, the authors demarcate a set of common elements and practices that recur in the context of what Adams (this volume) calls “Chinese heritage management with Western characteristics.” The state in multiple embodiments, private entrepreneurs and development companies, tourists, and a diverse set of local stakeholders all contribute to the fascinating, sometimes disturbing situations described in the chapters.

Swain’s treatment of Chinese cosmopolitanism captures some of the essence of Tsing’s friction. Swain explores the two different conceptions that inform Chinese cosmopolitanism—*tianxia* (a Confucian, heritage-based worldview) and *shijie zhuyi* (an outward-looking engagement with the changing world)—and shows that both are deployed to promote minority nationality unity and global tourism marketing.

China’s “scenic spots,” though natural, also embody deeply intangible qualities. As interpreted by Shepherd these places “evoke the relationship between self and

nature”; tourists there are “searching for their ‘authentic selves’” and the experience of a world far outside their urban lives (2009: 67; see also Nyiri 2009:156). At the Mt. Emei Scenery Area UNESCO, the central government, local government, and international NGOs interconnect and overlap in a confusing arrangement of site management, aggravated by rampant commercial tourism development. Zhu and Li consider the dynamic negotiations between the local and the global at Mt. Emei as multilayered individual, community, national, and global values come into play within the context of China’s social, economic, and political transformations under modernization.

Zhao is especially concerned with the tension between community members and their local government as the economic dimensions of an officially promoted pilgrimage have drastically altered the existing cultural landscape and challenged perceptions of the authenticity of heritage. The complicated histories of religion and the displacement of temple routes in favor of an aesthetically pleasing, infrastructurally sophisticated new zone draw our attention to the discrepancies between maintaining historically rooted structures, usually valued by European heritage discourse, and adapting buildings and entire zones to modern needs.

Peters and Su both discuss concerns over authenticity in Lijiang, home to the Naxi ethnic group and perhaps the poster child for tourism overdevelopment under the UNESCO regime. Peters draws on years of experience in Lijiang, often on behalf of UNESCO, to examine how the extraordinary increase in tourism to Lijiang has generated a wide range of conflicting demands and pressures both for architectural preservation and community and cultural sustainability (see also Logan 2012 and White 2010). The rapid transformation of Shuhe (part of the Lijiang World Heritage inscription but some kilometers away from the Dayanzhen “Old Town”) occurred after the UNESCO designation should have precluded significant redevelopment. This and the subsequent response by UNESCO highlight the challenges facing the heritage preservation office and the Bangkok-based UNESCO monitors.

Su deals with the notion of “authenticity” as he explores the tension simmering in Lijiang as migrant Han businesspeople outcompete the indigenous Naxi in the latter’s own home town. Su explores how the Han understand Lijiang as their new home and negotiate their identity in relation to the Naxi as well as Han tourists, revealing the importance of a fine-grained analysis when considering effects of tourism in heritage zones. It is not only the local Naxi residents but also the migrants from elsewhere in China who are affected by the shifting politics of these areas.

Cultural Heritage and Tourism in Undesignated Sites

The third section of this book examines fixity and mobility in rural communities in Guangxi and Yunnan where concerns about UNESCO World Heritage inscription are not a primary concern. Whereas many case studies of cultural heritage tourism

in China highlight problems in the local community, Chio discusses the 30-year success of ethnic Zhuang and Yao peoples in the Longji Terraced Fields Scenic Area. Here, many households in the two main villages have benefitted economically. But the situation is not uncomplicated. Chio discusses competing claims to heritage and competition for tourism income. Different actors deploy different strategies comprising overlapping processes of identity construction and commercialization. Space is being reconfigured, creating “fences” that serve to reinforce larger claims to cultural authority and identity.

Situated on the border, Liu reminds us that flows of heritage beyond national borders sometimes take center stage in community politics. Liu considers state-promoted community-based ethnic tourism in one particular borderland, the Wa region of southwest China, located adjacent to Myanmar. The Wa are an ethnic minority who have been scripted as “primitive” by state agents and the tourism industry. Liu discovers that unlike the thriving modes of mobile networks, social mobility, and labor migration from the rural Wa regions to cities, Wa ethnic tourist development is predicated on a vernacular built environment of thatched houses and exotic heritage practice. Liu describes how tourism reverses cross-cultural flows and he recognizes subjective voices, coalitions, and contestations among all three groups of players: the Wa as ethnic subjects, state agents, and tourists.

The Politics of Museums and Collections

The fourth section of the book addresses a quintessential space of heritage production: the museum. Like the other spaces where cultural heritage politics are enacted in China, museums are sites of contestation and a particularly vivid zone for visualizing narratives.

Ashton presents a fascinating context for new museums in China. He focuses on representational politics in the Chinese capital itself, Beijing, and specifically as China engineered its most public appearance on the global stage, the 2008 Olympics. He raises the incongruity of museums—by definition past-looking or, at least, past-curating—being mobilized to service the government’s drive for modernization. In a remarkable twist, new and newly renovated museums are being deployed to promote appreciation for “clean, comfortable, modern living” and thereby lessen ties to purportedly dilapidated neighborhoods (such as the *hutong*). At the same time, these museums are fulfilling their well-known function of creating national subjects (see Bennett 1995).

Nitzky’s study of community museums in Guizhou is important in showing the new phenomenon of local empowerment in heritage matters: not just preservation but also interpretation and exploitation. This is truly significant in the context of China’s powerful state which attempts to exercise univocal authority over cultural heritage although, as many chapters in this volume show, not absolute control. There is, to use a colloquial expression, “wiggle room” in the politics of heritage and museums in China, even in regions of ethnic diversity as is the case in

southwest China dealt with by Nitzky. Here it is not just the county level administration that is involved in the ecomuseum in question but, more significantly, the actual township and village leaders. As Nitzky observes, “the township government-village community cooperative seemed to mark a significant turn for villagers from passive subjects of government project intervention to active agents in the heritage protection project of their ancient village.” It remains to be seen how tolerant upper levels of Chinese government will be toward this experiment in democracy and self-empowerment and if it should be understood as safely within the parameters of “public negotiat[ion with] the Chinese state system in order to exercise control over their own affairs. ... subjects understand and engage in their role as subjective actors in a larger program of development and modernization. Community participation in China has become not so much a right but a responsibility of the people in executing government, international agency, and company strategies and programs around economic and social development, forming the participation paradigm in China” –as Nitzky argues. It is also important to put Guizhou in the larger framework of growing cultural tourism to southwest China where tangible and performed ethnic heritage can be converted through commodification into an economically viable resource (Li 2006).

Routes as Heritage: Branding Space in a Globalized China

The chapters in this section move our attention beyond China and beyond fixed space, even though previous chapters have also engaged in analysis of flows and frictions. These chapters demonstrate that it is not just individual towns and discrete places that become tourist destinations in China (or elsewhere). Of particular interest are tourism circuits that engage a region or multiple regions. UNESCO has a category of such heritage that it calls “cultural routes.” Examples include the Slave Route through West Africa, the Catholic pilgrimage Route of Santiago de Compostela, and the Qhapaq Ñan (Royal Inca Highway) through the Andean countries. A Silk Road route through twelve countries has also been discussed (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/events/953/>). Sigley examines how China is actively developing the tangible sites and cultural heritage of the Ancient Tea Horse Road for tourism (not yet for UNESCO) and the imbrication of tourism with concerns about rapid modernization, ethnic unity, and regional identity.

Zhou interrogates the rebranding of Tengchong through an association drawn with another cultural route, the Southern Silk Road. He calls our attention to the road building through Tengchong that forms part of China’s effort to connect Yunnan with Southeast Asia and India. The connections among these areas are deeply cultural and historical (Giersch 2006; Lary 2007; Tagliacozzo and Chang 2011). Yunnan is part of the greater Mekong region and closely connected linguistically to the peoples of Southeast Asia. In Tengchong, local policy makers and cultural elites are reinterpreting or inventing local history and presenting new spatial and historical representations of Tengchong so as to harmonize with the

state's non-heritage oriented process of road construction and position Tengchong at the center of future development opportunities.

Adams also examines how attention to heritage in China carries global implications, a discussion particularly salient in a year when China has become increasingly assertive regarding its maritime sovereignty claims. China's underwater cultural heritage provides remarkable objects and significant historical insight. The seabed is, in effect, a museum without walls. Adams explains the character and direction of Chinese underwater heritage management efforts, including the establishment of the Underwater Archaeological Research Center, by considering how Chinese history, identity and naval policy intersect with contemporary developmentalist and globalist agendas.

Conclusion

World Heritage is a treasured memory for humanity...China's cultural and national heritage belongs not only to China but to the whole world and all of humanity.

(Aoshima 2008: 7)

We have outlined how the politics of cultural heritage are negotiated and expressed in China, including the frictions they encompass and the contradictions related to enshrining tangible and intangible heritage in a rapidly changing country. If China's heritage belongs to all humanity (the UNESCO mantra), one is left to wonder whether the state and the people living within heritage zones retain any rights to modify and shape their heritage.

China's institution of property rights figures prominently in the country's cultural heritage politics, as explained by Tang in this volume. Indeed, the institution of property rights is at the heart of heritage management systems. A key problem in China is that property rights related to cultural heritage emerged in the era of the planned economy and were a vaguely defined government monopoly. The present institution of property rights is a serious impediment to rapid decision-making and acts against the sustainable development of cultural and natural heritage.

Clearly, cultural heritage is a site of intense negotiation within China, and the presentation and representation of this heritage in museums, tourist zones, and along routes conceived as heritage-scapes (Di Giovine 2009) occupy considerable attention from a wide variety of actors. These actors do not speak with a unified voice, not even those who are official representatives of the People's Republic of China. As Hsing reminds us, "The process of exercising state power... is not a zero-sum game between the central and local states but an open, endless project of strategic maneuvering and negotiation among heterogeneous state players" (2008: 70). It is this process that holds possibility for a variety of narratives and projects to emerge.

Perhaps the "heritage fever" that has gripped China for at least a decade will slowly die down. But our prediction is that the great importance attached to

national patrimony and patriotic education, coupled with the increased number of outlets for individuals to voice their opinions regarding heritage preservation (e.g., microblogging services like Sina Weibo, China's answer to Twitter), will allow embodied and intangible heritage to retain support for the indefinite future.

Challenges to physical structures will no doubt continue as long as local governments have incentives to sell land and demolish existing structures. Worrying stories like those of the Beijing *hutong* and the Kashgar Old City will no doubt emerge. China has a pervasive pattern of razing buildings and then rebuilding them anew, thereby creating historical theme parks. Harrison (2005) would ask, does it matter if they are not authentic? Holtorf observes that "Heritage is often less valued for its literal than for its metaphorical content, that is, stories about the past that are much more so stories about the present. As a consequence, it matters little for the story-telling potential if a heritage site has been meticulously repaired, faithfully restored, or entirely reconstructed—as long as it gives a believable total impression" (2010: 50). Whether or not these sites are giving believable impressions—and who determines their credibility—is open to debate.

But if we take the purpose of heritage as the telling of stories about the past to those in the present (and future), and accept that physical structures may hold less significance than the narrativization of those stories (after all, many historically significant structures were already destroyed at least once before being rebuilt in the 1980s and 1990s), then we can shift our question to narrative power. Whose voices will be marginalized as the stories about heritage in China are told? What new structures, spaces, and practices, whether tourist routes, ecomuseums, or transborder engagements, may permit a polyvocal narration? By paying attention to the multiple narrations that emerge in the ensuing years, it is our hope that scholars will be able to continue enriching the fascinating field of study that examines the nuances of Chinese cultural heritage practice and their implications.

We close with a quote from Adams (this volume): "It is only intellectual honesty to accord China its own developmental story, at times mirroring, but never mimicking, the dawning and institutional maturation of a preservation ethos in the West." How a set of internationally approved lists that inevitably exclude as much as they inscribe will influence this story, and what other elements will affect it, will no doubt occupy researchers for years to come.

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Chapter 2

Does the Institution of Property Rights Matter for Heritage Preservation? Evidence from China

Zijun Tang

Introduction

Cultural and natural heritage is the manifestation of human civilization and humankind's environment in contemporary society. This heritage is understood in China mainly as landscapes, relics, monuments, and geological features (Wei 2002). China began to study its own heritage in the 1990s, after China joined UNESCO's World Heritage Convention (Zhang 2008). By 2012, China had 43 cultural and natural sites on the World Heritage List, thereby ranking third in the world.

As elsewhere, this heritage is managed. In China the existing management model of heritage management is government-led. China's concern with heritage owes much to the fact that since the end of the last century there has been much damage to heritage sites and inappropriate utilization has occurred constantly. This situation goes against the notion of the sustainable development of precious heritage resources. This situation eventually triggered a great debate in China on the reform of the heritage management system in China. On the one hand, some scholars believe that heritage is actually a kind of public good and the introduction of market mechanisms for heritage conservation and utilization goes against its public beneficial mission (Chinese Academy of Sciences 1993). On the other hand, some scholars suggest that the traditional government-led model is inadequate in practice due to lack of sufficient funds (Zhong 2007). No consensus has been reached.

This brief paper examines the institution of property rights in China, arguing that a property rights institution is the core of the heritage management system. The paper analyzes the relationship between the property rights institution and heritage conservation and utilization. The first section of this paper presents recent examples of heritage protection and utilization in China (Fig. 2.1 shows the location of key sites discussed in the text). The next section documents the

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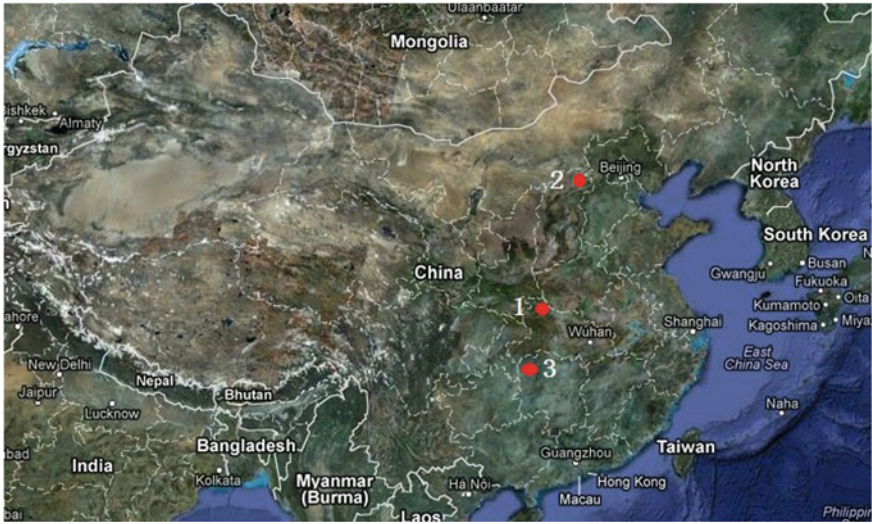


Fig. 2.1 Map of China showing location of key sites mentioned in the text. *Dot 1* = Wudang Mountains. *Dot 2* = Daming Palace Park. *Dot 3* = Bailong Elevator

characteristics of the present institution of property rights for heritage in China. The third section analyzes the practical consequences caused by the present institution of property rights for heritage. The last section presents the conclusions.

The Status Quo About Protection and Utilization of Heritage in China

Since 1985 when China applied to join the World Heritage Convention, heritage protection and research in China have made significant progress. However, generally speaking, the situation faced by heritage protection in China is still severe. Many heritage sites suffer different extents of damage because of inappropriate utilization or over-utilization. Here are some examples.

Fire on the World Heritage List Cultural Heritage Site of Wudang Mountains

“Two suspects have been arrested today for the fire on Yuzheng temple, Wudang Mountains. One is the coach and the other is student of the Kungfu School, which rented the Yuzheng temple as training place.” This is what the *China Cultural Heritage Daily* reported (Zhou 2003). Wudang Mountains, located in Hubei

Fig. 2.2 Wudang Mountains

Province, central China, was inscribed on the World Heritage List as a cultural heritage site in 1994. The palaces and temples on Wudang Mountains exemplify the architectural and artistic achievements of China's Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, containing Taoist buildings from as early as the seventh century (Fig. 2.2). It represents the highest standards of Chinese art and architecture over a period of nearly one thousand years. On 19 January 2003, the representative 600-year-old Yuzheng temple was burned down by a fire accident. Previously, in 1996, the local Bureau of Cultural Heritage Administration had leased Yuzheng temple to a Kungfu school as its training place for 8 years with rent of 15,000 yuan each year (Zhou 2003).

Daming Palace Park was Built on an Important Heritage Site

Daming Palace was a very famous royal palace during the Tang dynasty (618–907 AD), which consisted of many independent buildings or halls. It is located in Xi'An city, Shangxi province, western China. In order to apply to be listed as a World Heritage site, and with the encouragement of the Xi'An municipal government and being able to earn a commission, real estate developers invested 12 billion yuan to reproduce a whole new artificial park on the original site in 2010 (Fig. 2.3). Residents on the grounds were removed. The park was initially designed to become a buffer zone protecting the palace. However, many artificial reproduction buildings with reinforced concrete structures were built directly on the site where relics of the ancient Daming Palace site lie underground, and surrounding the 3.5 km² park there is 19.16 km² of a high-priced commercial real estate. Fu Qingyun, the former general engineer of China Cultural Heritage

Fig. 2.3 Daming Palace Park



Institute, stated “Relocating the residents out of the heritage site and improving the environment are beneficial for protection of heritage, but construction of artificial architecture on the heritage site is actually damage rather than protection because the underground relics will never be able to be unearthed” (Chang 2012). Subsequently, Shan Jixiang, the former secretary of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, stated that he required the “illegal architecture” to be removed; indeed, he came twice to personally supervise the removal on-site during the course of construction. But finally, the Xi’An municipal government removed just one building. The rest still remain.

The Highest and Fastest Outside Elevator in the World

Where is the highest and fastest outside elevator in the world? It is not in New York City or in Chicago. It is in the World Heritage natural site of Wulingyuan, Hunan province, south China! The Bailong elevator (Fig. 2.4) was built in 2002, with an investment of 120 million yuan, on a typical stone cliff in the central area of Wulingyuan, which was established as a World Heritage natural site in 1992. Professor Lingao (Xie 2001) of Peking University stated, “A contemporary elevator building in the protective area of the World Heritage site, which was created during the Cretaceous era, is a damage to this landscape.” CCTV (the National TV Station in China) made a series of reports specifically against the construction of the Bailong elevator. Although receiving significant criticism from across Chinese society, this elevator still operates regularly. The most obvious reason why it continues to function is because it contributes 3 million yuan in taxes annually to the local government, being a great tourist attraction.

Fig. 2.4 Bailong Elevator

Characteristics of the Present Institution of Property Rights For Heritage in China

A state-owned ownership system has been the dominant economic system in China since the founding of the Peoples Republic of China in 1949. This approach to governance also underwrites the management of cultural heritage in China. The first Chinese “Constitutional Law,” enacted in 1954, prescribed that “minerals, water, forests, land and other natural resources are owned by the whole Chinese people.” Since that time this provision has never been changed but has been expanded. The fifth article of the latest “Cultural Relics Protection Law,” revised in 2007, prescribed that “all cultural relics remaining underground or in the inland waters or territorial seas within the boundaries of the Peoples Republic of China are owned by the State. Sites of ancient culture, ancient tombs and cave temples are owned by the State.” These are the provisions that have established the state-owned ownership system of heritage resources in China. The system means that heritage belongs to all Chinese people, everybody has a share of the ownership of heritage, and everyone can enjoy the benefits from heritage protection and utilization. Under this kind of system, the following logic obtains: public ownership means public use, public use means public management. Therefore, the government, always viewed as the defender of public interest, became the actual occupant and dominant overseer of heritage resources. The characteristics of the present property rights institution of heritage in China are as follows:

Property rights of heritage are defined vaguely. The executive power of government replaces the property rights of heritage.

The property rights theory suggests that property rights are actually a band of rights rather than a single right. Property rights can be divided into many domains, such as the right to management, the right to earnings and ownership etc. According to the present legal rules, the ownership of heritage belongs to the State, but the other rights of heritage are not clearly defined. In this circumstance, the government monopolizes the entire realm of property rights of heritage and the executive power of government replaces the property rights of heritage.

First, the exercise of property rights of heritage is mainly reflected as the government administration of heritage; the allocation of heritage resources is closely related to the executive power. In order to manage heritage resources, the government set up different branches according to different types of heritage.

Second, the administrative management system of government replaces the legal rules of the property rights of heritage. Because of the absence of legal rules of property rights, the management and operational matters related to heritage are included in the scope of government decision-making. The administrative system established by the government became the main basis for the exercise of property rights of heritage. In fact, the administrative management system of government replaces the legal rules of property rights of heritage.

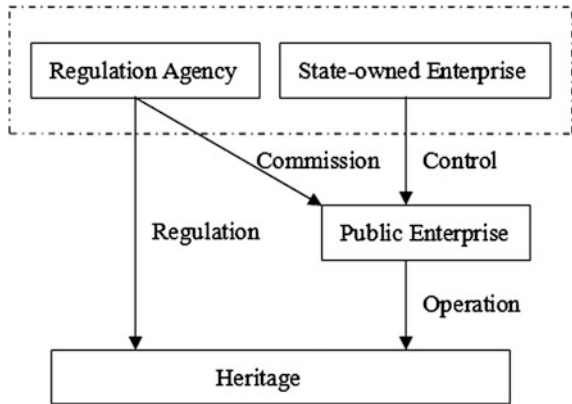
The government monopolizes property rights of heritage seriously. The regulation of heritage changes into the monopoly of heritage.

Since property rights are defined vaguely, the administrative system established by different branches of government requires all matters related to heritage to be within the scope of their authority. Any government branch which has a single right of property rights begins to fight for the entire corpus of property rights of heritage in practice. Eventually, heritage resources are divided intangibly to be owned, managed, and operated by those different branches of government respectively.

Because of the serious monopoly of government, regulation of heritage is actually absent.

In order to protect and utilize the heritage resources, government usually sets up state-owned enterprises to be responsible for the matters of protection and utilization of heritage. Since the property rights of heritage have been seriously monopolized by government, the regulation agency of government and the development enterprises of heritage become the same (Fig. 2.5). When heritage damage and inappropriate utilization occur in practice, the regulation agency cannot make an objective and fair judgment and take effective measures to stop those behaviors because they have common interests with the state-owned enterprises. This regulation system does not aim to maintain the sustainable development of heritage, but rather is concerned with economic profit. Thus, the system will not only be a serious impediment to the formation of a real market mechanism for heritage protection and utilization, but also causes great damage to the precious heritage resources.

Fig. 2.5 The present heritage regulation system in China



The Practical Consequences Led by the Present Institution of the Property Rights of Heritage

The present institution of property rights turns heritage resources into a “free-lunch.”

Under the present institution of property rights of heritage, the subject of state ownership of heritage is unique, but the generalization of this subject is reality. The executive power of government replaced the property rights of heritage, and the free right of utilization of heritage for state-owned enterprises further weakened the effect of incentive and constraint of property rights. Under the guidance of the wrong logic of “public ownership means public use, public use means public management,” people exploit heritage resources in accordance with the principle of maximization of personal utility. The “tragedy of the commons” is inevitable.

The present institution of property rights results in conflicts among different branches of government.

On the one hand, since the executive power of government has replaced the property rights of heritage, executive power becomes an important resource by which different government branches achieve their own interests. Driven by their own interests, different government branches compete with each other for the executive power related to heritage. On the other hand, since the purpose is mainly for economic interests, when they acquire executive power the branches exercise the power in a manner so as to fulfill their own interests. A large number of social recourses are not used to stop heritage damage and inappropriate utilization, but rather to resolve and coordinate the conflicts among them.

The present institution of property rights of heritage hinders innovation in practice.

Under the present institution of property rights, the administrative management system of government replaced the institution of property rights, and the innovation of the property rights institution of heritage is reflected as the transition of the administrative management system. Thus, the property rights institution of heritage

becomes the consequence of sector choice or group choice, rather than public choice as a law. And the spontaneous innovation of the property rights institution in practice, which would not meet with specific group interests but be conducive to sustainable development for heritage, will not develop into law or provisions. We must ask why the present institution of property rights for heritage in China has not changed for such a long time, in which group interests play a key role.

Conclusions

The institution of property rights is the core point in the heritage management system. The characteristics of the present institution of property rights of heritage in China include vague definition, government monopoly, and actual absence of regulation. This kind of institution goes against the sustainable development of heritage resources. Heritage is a special kind of commons. In order to avoid the “tragedy of the commons,” effective measures depend on the various types of heritage. According to international experience, effective measures can be either government-led governance or the market mechanism. There even could be a third way, by which I mean that approaches to solve the same issue should be varied rather than an either-or choice. The key point is to find a specific arrangement for the institution of property rights of heritage that is suitable for China’s specific current situation.

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Part II
Local, Regional, National
and International Interests
in a World Heritage Era

Chapter 3

Chinese Cosmopolitanism (*Tianxia He Shijie Zhuyi*) in China's Heritage Tourism

Margaret Byrne Swain

Introduction

Tourism has been well parsed as an aspect of globalization (Meethan 2001). This global industry also engages cosmopolitan issues that confront us as global citizens, articulating dialectical tensions between universal and specific ideals, such as world cultural heritage with national cultural sovereignty. Understandings of cosmopolitanism in Tourism Studies draw primarily from Western philosophy to encompass ideas about world citizenship, and ethical, political, and trans-cultural issues including diversity, rights, mobility, environmental protection, and consumption, which interconnect our worldviews through globalization.

This chapter asks how our understandings of cosmopolitanism are shaped by national cultures and global concepts, attempting to move beyond an “add cosmopolitanism and stir” approach that uncritically applies Western concepts to non-Western, albeit globalized locations. Recent international scholarship on Chinese cosmopolitanism proposes that both *tianxia guan* 天下观 (Confucian, heritage-based worldview, “all under heaven”) and *shijie zhuyi* 世界主义 (outward-looking engagement with the changing world, literally “worldism”) can be understood to have cosmopolitan meaning. Indigenous peoples’ cosmopolitanism, for further example, can be seen in the rise of indigeneity as a kind of global worldview. From this perspective, Indigenous or Chinese cosmopolitanisms are distinct from Western-defined cosmopolitanism, and I want to explore their commonalities and differences. I argue that cosmopolitanism is a strategic concept useful for all tourism practitioners: from village performers, to academic researchers, to UNESCO officials; and that Chinese and other cosmopolitanisms shape heritage tourism development in China. For example, *tianxia* and *shijie* are used to promote

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minority nationality unity and guide global tourism marketing, while indigenous or ethnic minority cosmopolitanisms can help explain some local peoples' reactions to tourism development, as international tourists evoke their own cosmopolitanism when consuming Chinese heritage. After exploring cosmopolitanisms, and cosmopolitan issues in tourism including World Heritage Sites (WHS), I turn to a brief discussion of indigenous/ethnic and ecological tourism in Yunnan, China drawing from several case studies in the karst "Stone Forest" WHS region to the east, and the three parallel rivers "Shangri-la" WHS region in the northwest. Understanding the role of Chinese and other cosmopolitanisms helps anticipate the future in these enterprises and adds to a global discussion on links between cosmopolitanism and local heritage.

Cosmopolitanism Writ Large

In the now voluminous international literature used to theorize the cultural side of economic globalization, we find multiple cosmopolitanism narratives, including a challenger labeled "worldism" (Agathangelou and Ling 2009). These concepts claim cultural connections to globalization processes, as the ideologies (isms) of the global, named through various languages for "world," often modified as in esthetic, rooted, or critical cosmopolitanisms. Scale has been expressed through the related categories of globality, a local condition or outcome of globalization Schäfer (2007: 8) and cosmopolity, a global result of changes to modern world cultures through globalization, "whether it originated in the East or the West" (Yu 2001: 24).

Worldview and syncretism are key concepts for understanding cosmopolitanism, drawn from decades of anthropological theory on what constitutes culture change. We can see cosmopolitanism as an ontology, a cross-cultural paradigm of "belonging to the world" with multiple epistemologies expressed in worldviews, such as those from various indigenous, Chinese, or Western cultures. Worldviews enact world relations or practices of how to relate to Others and negotiate changing ideas. Appiah's (2006) concept of cosmopolitan ethics that mediate between universal rights and multicultural ideals complements this approach.

Agathangelou and Ling (2009: 90) derived worldism from Greek and Chinese philosophy and post-colonial studies of intersecting worldviews that reframe and retrain peoples' defining concepts, actions, and ways of being into new configurations. Worldism asks how these "syncretic adaptations" can lead to non-violent strategies for social relations, describing possible clues to such solutions. Their focus is on agency, enacting values or ethics through embodiment, performance, and trans-subjectivities. This is similar to a critical understanding of cosmopolitanism (Delanty 2006). From their perspective (Agathangelou and Ling 2009: 65–6), worldism is a much more useful concept than cosmopolitanism which they limit to a narrow definition of an elite, bourgeois, patriarchal position with claims for justice, and equality it cannot support, remaining "an elegant, if remote idea." Despite the elegance of these ideas, cosmopolitan theory remains hegemonic.

Western Cosmopolitanism

Popular discourse on Western cosmopolitanism may refer to elites, or multicultural education, humanitarianism, or worldview, focused on peace, contrasted to nationalism. Its theory often refers back to the enlightenment era philosophy of Immanuel Kant who promoted political ideas about global governance, global citizenship, and perpetual peace as well as a hospitality practice that depends on “the kindness of strangers.” Cosmopolitan theory from the West can be understood as:

- *A political project to build transnational institutions*, either top-down—such as the United Nations, or grass-roots social movements from below, such as environmentalism—going green, or women's rights.
- *A recognition of multiple identities/subject positions and resource claims*, as we will see for example, the rise of indigeneity as a global identity, and transnational communities.
- *A mode of orientation to the world, or ethics*, in Appiah's (2006) terms, cosmopolitan beliefs in both global rights for equality and the value of diversity provide necessary ethical tension for our times. Negotiating these dialectical tensions between universal rights and diverse cultural ideologies calls for development of cosmopolitan global ethics, and world society norms.
- *A set of competencies to negotiate/translate other countries and cultures from consumerism to learning and practice*, to BE cosmopolitan. Cosmopolitan practice involves some configuration of mobility, consumption, curiosity, risk taking in encounters with the Other, map making of one's own society onto different sites, semiotic skill to interpret, and openness to appreciating the Other's culture in physical and intangible culture. These factors arise within local groups' responses to the challenges of tourism, as well as their tourist consumers, tourism industry workers, and those of us who study tourism.

In sum, multiple strands in cosmopolitan theory include political (citizenship, democracy, and civil society), moral (universal rights, multiculturalism, and diversity), and cultural (mobilities, consumption, hybridities, networks, and esthetics) issues (Delanty 2006), played out in the global arena of commerce and enterprise. This discourse promotes an understanding of multiple cosmopolitanisms located in distinct cultures and life experiences (for example to be cosmopolitan whether you are a poor rural villager effected by tourism enterprise or a multi-national tourism consultant). Multiculturalism has become questioned as a cure-all leading inevitably to understanding and peace, without also addressing humanities' great diversities including gender, wealth, abilities, ethnic, and national allegiances that shape huge divisions and challenge social order. So too, the opposition of cosmopolitanism to nationalism is being re-thought, seeing cosmopolitanism as compatible with national solidarity, and possibly complementary paths in modernity (Tyfield and Urry 2010). Social and environmental issues are addressed in nation states, utilizing state agencies to transform society for the cosmopolitan good. The main concepts of cosmopolitanism just noted combine with the growing realization of specific

historical configurations and the agency of individuals' relationships to globalization, creating a more "critical cosmopolitanism."

The early twenty-first century has brought a global transformation of modernity, which some scholars now map as the "Cosmopolitan Condition" (Vertovec and Cohen 2002:9; Beck and Sznaider 2006). This condition connects human mobility information webs and commodity flows in ways that can challenge various racialized, ethnocentric, sexist, national narratives, but critiqued for associated global rootless hybrid cultural forms, standardized mass commodities, images, and practices such as seen in global tourism. Within this condition, a kind of cosmopolitan citizenship develops into intellectual and esthetic orientations toward cultural difference.

Chinese Cosmopolitanism

International scholarship on Chinese cosmopolitanism is on the forefront of this shift as China moves center stage in the global economy. Some Western academics have written on China's cosmopolitanism as a distinct "emergent" internationalized elite social force for change, not derived from the global North, but engaging global mechanisms to encourage international collaboration. John Urry, renown for work on the tourist gaze and mobilities, takes this perspective in a recently coauthored (Tyfield and Urry 2010) study entitled "Chinese Cosmopolitanism?" on China's engagement with global carbon emissions problems. Influence from international regulatory agencies is seen to now challenge Confucian respect for hierarchy and bureaucracy and traditional loyalties to family, and then communist party with a new egalitarian concern for humanity. China's long pre-modern history and multi-ethnic empire is understood as a kind of cosmopolitanism but lacking some major components, like civil society. This in my reading is a one-sided Western-centric understanding. Rather than seeing Chinese cosmopolitanisms only as an elite project, lacking parts or emerging from globalization, other scholars are analyzing distinct concepts, drawing from understandings of *tianxia guan* (all under heaven) and *shijie zhuyi* (worldism). It is this perspective that I want to unpack a bit and apply to tourism development in China.

Some Chinese and Western academics are promoting a Confucian worldview, *tianxia* as Chinese cosmopolitanism (Chun 2009; Zhao 2009; Bell 2009). This inward-looking order, a kind of soft power, shapes official nationalism, state sovereignty, and territorial integrity. Soft power, raising China's profile internationally though cultural exchange, was noted during the 2008 Olympics and is evident in China's Confucian Institutes worldwide, as well as some tourism venues (Barabantseva 2009; Bell 2009) Zhao Tingyang, a Beijing philosopher at China's Central Academy of Social Sciences, has written extensively in Chinese and English on *tianxia* as "worldness." He provides a fresh interpretation of an ancient Zhou dynasty concept, adapted into Confucianism, to describe a utopian social order during this era of globalization (Zhao 2009). *Tianxia* is seen to have three

main components: physical, the earth; philosophical, human heart; and political, global governance. He emphasizes how distinct his theory is from a western nation-states model of global domination, but does not account for how his model will work. Rather, Zhao argues that *tianxia* is a way of harmony for all humanity, much better than a western idea of global citizenship based on “polis” or nation state. His analysis is written in response to his reading of western theorists, as well as Chinese historical texts. Zhou would object to calling his ideas “cosmopolitan” but his commentators use this label for his *tianxia* thinking. Callahan (2007: 88–90) suggests that Zhao overlooks cosmopolitan democracy and “actually existing cosmopolitanisms” because these ideas run against his *tianxia* system’s unitary world institution governed by elites. He sees Zhao as most interested in “... creating an Occidentalized west as the Other, so as to reaffirm the identity of *tianxia* as the all-inclusive self.” Bell (2009: 221) continues this critique of Zhao’s soft power approach, arguing for an ideal of *tianxia* that would allow for actual cultural diversity, deploying Confucian values of modesty, tolerance, and willingness to learn in encounters with other cultural and moral systems.

Shijie zhuyi in contemporary Chinese, is an outward-looking concept, glossed as “cosmopolitan” in other languages and indicates an ever-changing world. *Tianxia* does not account for all of the struggles, tensions, inconsistencies within China’s engagement with the modern world, compared to the *tianxia* civilizing project, *shijie* does not presuppose a division of civilized and barbarian or the acculturation of Other subjects. It stresses a dynamic and relational understanding of the world. *Shijie* as cosmopolitanism is an every changing outward-looking process and politicized practice. We can see *tianxia* and *shijie* as complementary opposites: stability and openness to change. As coexisting concepts, *shijie* complements and combines with *tianxia*, to form a construct of Chinese cosmopolitanism that promotes both stability in order and openness to change (Barabantseva 2009). The complexity and inclusiveness of China’s relations with the world cannot be grasped through simply opposing the traditional Chinese worldview and state cultural authority to the Western-dominated organization of the world. As other scholars have argued (Agathangelou and Ling 2009: 88) “... the legacy of East Asian capitalism grew from two world orders: the agrarian-based, cosmopolitan-moral universe of Confucian governance, and the Westphalian inter-state system of commerce and trade,” although this global system does indeed have “Chinese characteristics” in China.

Indigenous Cosmopolitanism

The geo-cultural category of indigenous generally indicates native people, differentiated from their Others in a specific place. As this concept has internationalized, the term ‘indigeneity’ has come into use to indicate a commonality or global identity among indigenous peoples that has been institutionalized in the UN and by collective practices of indigenous peoples. Over time, the rise of an

international concept of indigeneity has brought greater focus on internal or external colonization as a common factor. An imagined identity community, indigeneity is an evolving construct that has potential repercussions in global governance and equity-based democratic or socialist state regulations (Yeh 2007).

Indigeneity and cosmopolitanism have strong, intertwined strands of legal rights and cultural worldviews woven through their definitions, which resonate with concepts of ethnicity and debates about universal and particular rights. Rights discourses are the bases for states' affirmative action programs, including educational opportunities, local infrastructure, development schemes such as an ethnic tourism venue, and "autonomous" governing zones for ethnic minority or indigenous citizens, as well as peoples' reactions to them. Cosmopolitan rights, such as those hashed out at the United Nations, underlay rationales for universal social justice claims as well as protections of specific diverse indigenous identities.

In previous work (Swain 2011), I have asked how indigeneity and cosmopolitanism can be co-produced in relationship to ethnic identities in multicultural, diverse globalized states. Indigeneity could be contrasted to cosmopolitanism in a series of rather useless and sometimes derogatory binaries: local/global; rooted/mobile; barbarian/civilized; timeless/contemporary; tradition/modernity. However, it is productive to think of these concepts as complementary rather than oppositional, and explore the possibilities of indigenous cosmopolitans. In response to globalization, contemporary indigeneity as rooted cosmopolitanism is continually reinvented in ways that challenge conventional understandings of either category (Forte 2010). Tourism provides one location where indigenous cosmopolitans engage changing livelihoods, strategizing with their varied sets of tools as indigenous and cosmopolitan subjects in their local communities, their nation states, and the world at large.

Cosmopolitan Analysis of Tourism

The global tourism industry is one economic arena in a given community or nation state that clearly engages cosmopolitan issues and goals, including tensions between universal rights and the cultural diversity of sovereign nations. Tourism has cosmopolitan potential in conditions, philosophy, institutions, human relations, ethics, and practices. The question is if and how it can meet that potential given the neoliberal push of global capitalism in tourism development. Focusing in on Western cosmopolitan theory helps us to see its articulations with Western, globalized ideas about tourism development, and consumption. Cosmopolitan practices that play out in tourism include: mobility and the means to travel; openness to other people and cultures; reflexivity about one's identities and willingness to risk change; civil society engagement in innovations, citizenship, and NGO involvement; and public, political discourse through global forums and regulatory regimes.

A growing number of scholars see that tourism encompasses cosmopolitanism in terms of traveling people and ideas (Swain 2001, 2009; Molz 2006; Notar 2006; Lisle 2009; Salazar 2010). Tourism is an obvious site of cosmopolitan consumption, encouraging the hopes of post capitalism for local solidarity, international civil society and citizenship in the face of daunting inequalities. Here, we find non-elite local or transnational workers as unlikely cosmopolitan subjects with numerous labels in the literature including rooted or subaltern cosmopolitans (Yeh 2008). Within indigenous/ethnic/cultural tourism, issues of authenticity, a major concept in tourism studies and heritage sites, further shape cosmopolitan conditions, expectations, and practices. Tourism's cosmopolitan practices arise within people and institutions such as local ethnic groups' responses to the challenges of tourism, as well as their tourist consumers, tourism industry folks, and those of us who study tourism. Mobility runs through all tourism, as do issues of openness and imaginaries; reflexivity in authenticity and heritage; and civil society and/or public political discourse, including poverty reduction, care for the environment and valuing local heritage.

Cosmopolitanism in World Heritage Sites

Tensions between local, national, and global claims are inherent in heritage industries. Cultural heritage is a source of memory, providing symbols of a society, the nation, and/or humankind, important for preservation. UNESCO's World Natural and Cultural Heritage Sites (WHS) should remind us of common human roots, human identity. Omland (1997) asks if this is global culture or world identity, concluding that would be unlikely, given fierce competition to achieve WHS designation. The WHS list looks for outstanding universal heritage located in a particular setting, reflecting a cosmopolitan condition of being human within the diversity of human culture. The list reflects both national and cosmopolitan views through the combined forces of globalization that constructs a "common" world heritage while reinforcing local/national identity. Enduring examples of this argument are the Great Wall of China and India's Taj Mahal. These WHS held in common esteem evoke cosmopolitan memories, while the lesser known, perhaps not? It is a matter of scale. A site's cosmopolitan significance depends on viewer's embodied response according to Barthel-Bouchier and Hui (2007). In their analysis, heritage sites shape cosmopolitan memory and such cosmopolitan sites further globality, a local outcome of globalization processes.

Levy and Sznajder (2002: 87) define cosmopolitanism as a process of internal globalization, through which global concerns become part of local experiences of an increasing number of people. Barthel-Bouchier and Hui (2007: 2) utilize this definition to argue for cosmopolitanism as an aspect of globality, a condition of global consciousness, as well as interconnectedness through networks and structures, such as WHS. For a fuller understanding, we should add in cosmopolitanity, global conditions of globalization, which helps to explain the few truly

world-renown heritage sites, while not denying cosmopolitanism at the local level. Cosmopolitan memories of remarkable sites form through direct knowledge by locals and tourists and/or are mediated by education, mass media, and hearsay. Some sites become metonyms for specific events and various, including sacred, associations. The WHS label has become a kind of branding while numerous additions are controversial, seen as either degrading list with lesser known, less cosmopolitan sites, or furthering globality of the list by spreading public awareness (Barthel-Bouchier and Hui 2007: 10).

There are cosmopolitan conundrums in WHS designation. Does a site reflect multiculturalism, national cultural heritage and/or universal human heritage? What ethical and esthetic judgments are made to value one endangered site over another? Barthel-Bouchier and Hui (2007: 13–14) see tourism as an “...important ritual in the social construction of cosmopolitan memories.” They note that this is not an exclusive Western phenomenon, rather Chinese tourism to Europe, and the memories of people from former colonies toward sites of empire are examples of a nuanced, embodied cosmopolitanism. “[H]eritage sites can serve as markers in the cognitive mapping of cosmopolitan memories [that are] part and parcel of the condition of globality.” As Levy and Sznajder (2002: 92) argue “...the cosmopolitanization of memory does not mean the end of national perspectives so much as their transformation into more complex entities where different social groups have different relations to globalization.”

Ethnic and Ecological Heritage Tourism Development

Cosmopolitan ideas engage physical and intangible heritage, localized ethnic, and indigenous cultural identities and ecological sustainability. Without going into the enormous literature on ethnicity and ethnic identity, my touchstone for what constitutes ethnicity in Harrell’s (1995: 5) straightforward “purported common descent and purported cultural commonality.” We can see that ethnic identity and indigenous identity both have claims to territory, cultural and language practices, and common ancestors, while claims of indigeneity focus also on dispossession and/or submission to colonizing forces. Within the global arena, indigeneity and ethnicity are prime sources of diversity, as well as multiculturalism, a concept that is celebrated and debated as a cosmopolitan ideal and as a perceived impediment to global equity and peace. We can apply these ideas to China’s nature and ecological tourism that is often developed within the homelands of ethnic/indigenous peoples. China’s WHS development has been stunning, adding more than 40 sites to the list since 1987 in what Nyíri (2006: 52) has noted as intense competition between scenic spots to attain this most coveted classification, becoming “world-class.”

Tianxia and Shijie in China's Heritage Tourism

Ethnic and ecological heritage tourism development is a market ripe for cosmopolitan analysis and action. The global tourism industry commoditizes exotic difference within the homogenizing forces of transnational capitalism. From the study of ethnic tourism, an understanding of a localized indigenous tourism has evolved that emphasizes both ethnic and ecological resources. Although there is no consensus in China that Chinese ethnic minorities may be indigenous, there is a rising consciousness among specific groups. A model of indigenous tourism development fits some groups well, given their histories and partial but real control over their resources. Sustainable ethnic tourism/ecotourism development in China may use Chinese cosmopolitanism to move from neoliberal to resource capitalism, thinking of both the environment and culture as resources. Dialectically, Indigenous ethnic tourism draws from *shijie* sentiments, while emphasis on minority nationality (*shaoshuminzu*) and nationality unity (*minzu tuanjie*), draws from *tianxia* emphasis. Yeh's (2007, 2008) cogent work on ethnic relations in Tibet interrogates the concept of *minzu tuanjie*. It does not support indigeneity, given that the only acceptable understanding of cultural difference is in the context of upholding national unity (2007:71). Furthermore, the term represents a "hegemonic coercive harmony" (2008:56) that is incompatible with subaltern cosmopolitanism. Rather, this is *tianxia* diversity. Where might indigenous cosmopolitanisms fit in China's cultural landscape as distinct perspectives as well as articulating with *shijie* and/or *tianxia*? One location is in eco-tourism which needs both *shijie* global conservation ideals and *tianxia* nation-state investment to transform current practices into cosmopolitan values.

China is a co-signer of the UN Declaration of Indigenous Rights. The Chinese State's concept of indigeneity supports the efforts of indigenous groups in other nations, but denies that any such peoples exist within their borders. *Tianxia* logic is that all ethnicities in China suffered and struggled together against the aggression of foreign colonizers. Any complications of this scenario naming colonization of minority groups by the Han majority is unthinkable from this perspective. However, members of some ethnic minorities do participate in global indigeneity forums, and reaction to tourism activity in many ethnic minority autonomous administrative units fits a model of indigenous tourism. Unrest in minority areas in response to top-down tourism development indicates very different models of state and group rights, as domestic indigenous ethnic tourism grows exponentially.

Case Studies in Yunnan

By the 1980s, there were four major indigenous/ethnic minority tourism sites in Yunnan: Shilin, Dali, Xishuangbanna, and Lijiang, which were later joined by Luguahu and Zhongdian (now called Shangri-La) in major state promotion. These

newer sites in the northwest are part of The Nature Conservancy's Three Rivers watershed project and featured in the 2010 publication of the first Chinese language version of Lonely Planet's "Yunnan" guide for cosmopolitan independent travelers, China's backpacking "Lonely Planetters." Given that about one-third of Yunnan's population comprises 25 officially recognized minorities, divided into many additional branches, there is continued potential for ethnic/scenic tourism development. Results as elsewhere are uneven and depend on many factors.

Shangri-La and Shilin are each sites within a regional WHS, The Three Parallel Rivers, and The South China Karst respectively, with distinct scenic, cultural, and literary attractions. Shangri-La represents strategic state tourism commoditization of a globalized novel (Hilton 1933) that evokes Western desire for mysterious Tibetan Buddhism emulated by cosmopolitan Westerners, Chinese, and other global citizens. Shilin represents strategic state adaptation of local/indigenous mythic tales of landscape origins (Swain 2005) consumed by the same set of tourists, the vast majority of whom are domestic. From a Chinese nation-state point of view, Shangri-La evokes more *shijie* cosmopolitanism and Shilin evokes *tianxia* globality, while from other cosmopolitan positions, a distinct cosmopolitanism is generated, be it indigenous Tibetan or Yi, Western of various stripes, or another set of cultural memories brought by domestic and international tourists and local residents. Generic minority nationality tourism experiences of Shangri-La or Stone Forest in terms of hotels and performances that look and sound alike, would confirm a *tianxia* approach to tourism, while the branding of these places may contribute to shifts in ethnic identities akin to indigenous, or *shijie* cosmopolitanisms (see Nyíri 2006: 54).

State and non-governmental agencies affecting ethnic/indigenous and ecological tourism connect at translocal, provincial, national, and transnational scales: including different levels of Yunnan's government; the United Nation's World Tourism Organization and UNESCO World Heritage and Geopark designations; the government of China; the transnational Greater Mekong Delta development agreement, as well as local and global NGOS. The Yunnan Initiative (2000) resulted from a meeting convened by many of these agencies to address Indigenous issues in the province. While the extensive report is available online, actual outcomes are not well documented. Much of the leadership in this effort was provided by the ambitious Center for Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge in Kunming, which was subsequently closed.

In and Around the Stone Forest

The Sani and Axi, two of twenty-eight state-recognized branches of the Yi minority nationality, settled centuries ago in the limestone karst topography of southeast Yunnan within and nearby what is now the Shilin (石林, Stone Forest) tourism district and WHS. Based on their subsequent domination by Han Chinese imperial regimes and European colonization, one could call them indigenous

peoples, an identity used by some Yi intellectuals. French Catholicism arrived in the 1880s during an era of foreign incursions. In 1949, the Communist civilizing project brought a new world vision and global social organization that created a new kind of communal citizen. Post-Mao reforms leading to a free market economy opened China to a new world of global capitalism in the 1980s that locally translated into tourism development.

Sani World Heritage

The Shilin Park, founded in 1931, began to refurbish, and long-term regional tourism development plans were in place by 1987. Per capita income from tourism grew rapidly as Sani and Han opened guesthouses, restaurants, and souvenir shops outside the park and locals took various park jobs. In 1997, the county was renamed Shilin as tourism skyrocketed then levelled to about 2.7 million tourists per year. In 2004, Shilin National Park became a UNESCO geopark site, and in 2007 part of a WHS, designations adding tremendously to the park's cosmopolitan lure. Sani intellectuals continue to research the indigenous, but highly manipulated myth of Ashima (Swain 2005). Story elements taken from Sani religious texts were transformed in the early 1950s into a commoditized revolutionary tale. Ashima fights for her rights, only to drown and then transform into the karst landscape, now conveniently identified for tourists in the park. In tourism signs and brochures, Ashima is promoted as a world-class (*shijie*) myth from Shilin, which is one of the (*tianxia*) wonders of the world for a region branded as "Ashima's home town." Local marketers call Shilin Park "world class," and promote international festivals for primarily domestic tourists. Not all is idyllic, however. As the park expands, the Sani village of Wukeshu located at the entrance was scheduled for destruction and resettlement in nearby townhouses during 2011, after years of protest from the villagers. At issue are multicultural rights and cultural diversity versus state hegemony and the greater good of world heritage, a cosmopolitan conundrum that yields to power.

While mythical Ashima in the karst has been heavily exploited, Sani indigenous tourism also derives from tourist demand for an exotic rural idyll. Projects began in the late 1990s to promote "ethnic cultural and ecological village" tourism in Sani communities outside of Shilin Park. One county program successfully focused on buy-in from the local elite and villagers at the onset, creating a complex web of stakeholders driving each project, including Danuohei, renown for its stone crafted houses and revolutionary history. Villagers have recorded intangible and tangible heritage by writing "indigenous ethnographies," making and screening videos of village life, and creating a local museum for the tourist trade (Xie 2011). This is all made possible with resources, planning and investment not available to every village, and even here not everyone agrees or shares equally. Danuohei has become its own rural idyll with happy, singing and dancing, artistic, animistic, and indigenous people. A CNTV (2011) Ethnic Odyssey production on the Yi visited Danuohei, reporting that "walking through a village you get a sense

of the local way of life, simple and pleasant. No matter what village you are in, the sound of singing and dancing fills the air.” As I observed elsewhere (Swain 2013), what CNTV and visiting tourists do not hear are the French colonial Catholic Church bells, just over the hill, marking local Sani’s *shijie* heritage.

Axi Intangible Heritage

By the early 2000s, possibilities for Axi tourism took-off as highways, power lines, and communications improved. The villages of Hongwan and Keyi especially profited from building on indigenous tangible and intangible heritage. An annual Hongwan fire festival was funded by the regional government in 2004 to become a tourist attraction. Folk dance troupes were invited from around the region to participate, and attendance has grown each year. Tourists are charged an entrance fee and organized tour groups were among the some 40,000 domestic and international tourists who attended in 2010, 2,000 of whom paid additional photographer fees (Peng and Lu 2011). This festival celebrates mythical hero Mudeng bringing the knowledge of fire making to the Axi. A re-enactment involves naked men painted with natural pigments who represent their ancestors through a series of rituals that culminate with jumping over new bonfires. Their commoditization as “barbarians by design,” promotes exotic difference sanctioned by a civilizing/cosmopolitan center (Scott 2009).

A bit northeast from Hongwan lies the Keyi Yi Culture Ecological Village named by the government as the birthplace of both the Axi creation epic as well as the *Axi Tiao Yue* “dance under the moonlight.” This village is open for business year round. A CCTV 2006 Travelog program commented that people in Keyi will welcome visitors in “traditional style” with a dance, if you call ahead. The promotional line is that this is an ethnically pure Axi village, obscures its diversity, including Han, Catholic and Muslim residents. Keyi was decorated with wall murals, including one featured on a tourist blog (Ethnic China 2009) showing an enthusiastic Axi couple dancing literally on top of the globe, a graphic sign one could think, for indigenous cosmopolitanism. The *Axi Tiao Yue* joined the National Intangible Heritage List of China in 2008, just before a highly orchestrated annual festival began in 2009, which attracts tens of thousands of villagers and tourists to the Keyi—Hongwan region. While China enacted a national intangible heritage law in 2011, it remains to be seen how this relates to protection for heritage tourism development by local communities and regional governments. In the same countryside, European grape wine production, introduced by French missionaries more than 100 years ago, has been revived as a commodity and another form of globalized “heritage” tourism. Images of beautiful young girls in Axi dress are used to market the wine, especially to cosmopolitan domestic tourists (Swain 2013).

In Yunnan's Northwest

From the early 1990s, there have been a number of global NGOs active in Yunnan's remote and rugged Northwest, including the Ford Foundation, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and World Wildlife Federation. A primary goal of these efforts, working in cooperation with the Chinese state has been to conserve natural resources and landscape while providing culturally informed and relevant economic development for impoverished communities of many ethnicities (Swope et al. 1997). TNC supported the building of a Northwest Yunnan Ecotourism Association website in 2002 (<http://www.northwestyunnan.com/project.htm>) that included a locally run Lashihai green watershed tourism program and the Lijiang Xintuo Ecotourism Company. They linked with other entrepreneurial organizations including Khampa Caravan Tours, which all strive to employ and empower local ethnic minority people and conserve the natural environment. Rob Efrid (2012) has explored NGOs' roles in Yunnan to promote environmental education. His case study of the Beijing-based Tianxiangi NGO explores how they developed teaching materials based on the Lashihai ecosystem that embraced transnational cosmopolitan values about the environment, utilized local cultural knowledge, and ultimately had difficulty sustaining grassroots success. Perhaps *tianxia* in the NGO's name indicates a desire for a Chinese cosmopolitanism that must somehow negotiate top-down hierarchies as well as global values.

Eco-tourism development in the Jiuzhaiguo National Park and WHS in Sichuan is often pointed to as a positive example of the Chinese state's approach (Nyíri 2006: 52–4). Starting with transportation, for the past decade the park has not allowed tourists' vehicles, but rather navigates them around in natural gas powered buses. Crowds of tourists are contained by well-defined walkways, and the scenery is conserved. Before the park was developed, this area was inhabited by Tibetan communities which were relocated. While *shijie* issues of environmental awareness, stewardship, and climate change are emphasized and experienced by tourists, awareness of Tibetan claims to the area are not, other than dressing up as Tibetans for souvenir photos and the possibility of attending a minority cultures performance.

Indigenous/ethnic tourism development began in the urban centers of Dali and Lijiang, with their discovery by international backpackers (Notar 2006) during the 1980s. Much focus on infrastructure expansion in the region during the 1990s was due to provincial politics. Lijiang, a northwest mountain town, and locale of the Naxi minority was designated a UNESCO WHS in the mid-1990s, needing extensive reconstruction in the old town after a severe earthquake in 1996. The site has since exploded with domestic and international tourism. One dramatic development has been the epic spectacle "Impressions Lijiang" employing hundreds of locals to perform an imaginary enactment of rural Naxi life with a few nods to other local minority cultures, creating a multicultural rural idyll. It is a tribute (albeit fantastic) to the pure 'authenticity' of the performers from a *tianxia* perspective. Similar extravaganzas mounted around China have had varying

success, with the 2011 Chen Kaige show in Dali stirring controversy because of local agricultural demands for reservoir water now incorporated into the set design (CNC 2011).

Search for Shangri-la

In the 1990s as well, there was fierce competition for State destination naming rights, branding in China and beyond of a location in Northwest China as “Shangri-La” (香格里拉) for domestic and international consumption. The Diqing prefecture’s local Tibetan government won, then renamed Zhongdian County to Shangri-La in 2002, promoting tourism development tied to the famous 1933 western Orientalist fantasy novel *Lost Horizon*, by James Hilton (1933). This renaming signaled claim to a cosmopolitan identity for the region, meaningful to tourists and local residents in distinct ways. Shangri-La also denotes a favorable image of Tibetan-ness as utopian, in contrast to old negative ideas found in China of Tibetans as feudal and superstitious. Other players in this development besides the state and private enterprise have been various global, transnational, and Chinese NGOs. This huge effort has poured massive infrastructure investment into the region. There has been considerable analysis of these developments by Western social scientists, including Hillman (2003), Kolas (2008), and Oakes (2007). Oakes looks to the frontier nature of Diqing, a Tibetan enclave firmly grasped into the Chinese nation, through tourism, manifest destiny, conquest, and eminent domain of a *tianxia* nature. He notes (2007:258), similar to Shilin myth building, that the county legitimized its claims to the Shangri-La paradise brand through scholarly accounts that confirmed an indigenous basis to a British story through the local Diqing dialect version of the word *shambhala*, meaning paradise. This dizzying logic is enhanced by the high altitude, challenging to tourists, and over the top facilities, such as the Paradise Hotel where I attended a tourism studies conference in 2011. Sitting in a huge atrium of sub-tropical plants, rests a fabricated snow-capped mountain, with Buddhist stupa (Fig. 3.1).

There is an alternative discourse to the frontier scenario, that of borderlands of mixing and transformation of people, cultures, and other resources. While this may represent a *shijie* focus, imported by tourists, there is more. Internet discourse refracts back onto real-life efforts of minority ethnic groups to claim greater agency in tourism development from paradigms of authenticity, indigeneity, and cosmopolitanism. The subjects are reading their representations and writing their own websites. Khampa Caravan is a highly sophisticated organization in Shangri-La, a Tibetan owned and operated adventure travel company. The staff biographies highlight their diverse international and Chinese educations and cultural competencies. We can see which cosmopolitan discourse they embrace from their English online brochure, (<http://www.khampacaravan.com/>) through their tag line: “Experience Tibet—through indigenous eyes.”

Fig. 3.1 Paradise hotel: Sitting in a huge atrium of sub-tropical plants, rests a fabricated snow-capped mountain, with Buddhist stupa. (Photo by author, 2011)



Conclusions

Chinese cosmopolitanisms shape China's ethnic/ecotourism destinations. We can see *tianxia* and *shijie* aspects, as well as indigenous, Western, and other cosmopolitanisms at work in these destinations, and in Chinese domestic and international tourism in general. Any marketing of cultural commodities for tourist experience raises basic questions about identity and agency of the producers, particularly in tourism based on selling an ethnic/indigenous minority group's culture. Creating replicas or new stages all together for tourism development can lead to disenfranchisement and relocation of the very people whose heritage is being represented. Paradoxically, the more indigenous people mobilize for empowerment, the more they may be perceived as inauthentic, but it is a false dichotomy to assume that there must be a choice between authenticity and political participation or indigeneity and cosmopolitanism (Merlan 2009).

Tianxia cosmopolitanism promotes minority nationality unity in diversity and the common good of national cultural and environmental resources. There are also civilizing projects of the state for Chinese tourists going abroad, learning how to act as global citizens, representing China. I would predict that *tianxia* cosmopolitanism in tourism indicates China's place in the world, China's heritage,

importance of ecological treasures to the world, the unity of China's peoples. It upholds China's soft power and hierarchical order. The same logic extends to the imprimatur of a WHS on a particular scenic spot, that not only honors the location but ultimately reconfirms China's cultural superiority (Nyíri 2006: 76).

Shijie thinking guides global marketing, finance networks, and corporate cultures; and engages indigenous, Western, and other cosmopolitanisms. *Shijie* is used to indicate global modernity, international branding, global agencies collaboration, global environmental concerns and ecological appreciation, and a drive for change. In Beck's terms (Beck 2002: 18) "the defining characteristic of a cosmopolitan perspective is the 'dialogic imagination' [to] ... compare, reflect, criticize, understand, combine contradictory certainties." Such is the case in China's cosmopolitanisms today. It is useful to understand how the terms *tianxia* and *shijie* are currently used in academic analysis as well as in industry reports about and marketing of ethnic and eco-tourism in China. What is strategic, where is *tianxia* used and where is *shijie* use in trade journals and advertisements for what audiences? Terms that are used to indicate a focus of China's tourism in the world in English or other languages (such as world class; first in the world; world heritage) are translated from either term. From my perspective patterns analyzed in these texts will point toward further development of Chinese cosmopolitanism in tourism development.

To conclude, I have argued that *tianxia* and *shijie* cosmopolitanisms promote understanding of diverse worldviews; challenge all people in China's tourism enterprise to be open and ethically grounded; and provide hope for the future of our human and natural environment resources. *Tianxia* and *shijie* have the potential of moderating aspects of Chinese society that each cosmopolitan system engages in distinct ways, including promotion of equality, social justice, and environmental protection, while providing nuanced ideas of and for China in the world.

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Chapter 4

Groping for Stones to Cross the River: Governing Heritage in Emei

Yujie Zhu and Na Li

Introduction

“Let’s work together and build up a heritage governance system for better conservation and sustainable development!” This is the main theme of the Emei Heritage Declaration signed by more than a hundred Chinese heritage managers and scholars when they attended the Symposium of World Heritage Conservation in China. The symposium was organized in December 2006 at the World Heritage Site Emei (峨眉), one of the four traditional sacred mountains of Chinese Buddhism (Nyiri 2006). In the symposium, organized and hosted by the local government agency, the Emei Heritage Management Committee presented the history and experiences of Emei heritage governance and the existing administrative structure. Mr. Qin Yi, the Party Secretary of EMC said,¹ “Emei has been working hard to set up a successful model of heritage governance in China.” As symposium participants, we had the opportunity to conduct interviews with Emei heritage officials and investigate heritage governance of Emei during and after the symposium. Based on this research, this chapter uses Emei as a case study to explore how the local regulatory agency implements and develops heritage governance in China.

Heritage is a value-laden concept, related to processes of commoditization, and used in order to legitimize a national or communal consciousness (Howard 2003).

¹ All the names of interviewees appearing in this chapter are pseudonyms.

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Since the UNESCO Convention was ratified in China in December 1985, the country already has designated 43 World Heritage Sites, and 50 sites in the tentative list (<<http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/cn/>>, as of July 7, 2012), preceded only by Italy and Spain. The increasing number of heritage sites demonstrates China's efforts to embrace globalization and modernization, create authorized discourse (Smith 2006), and promote nationalism through defining and legitimizing heritage conservation and commercialization. For the past two decades, China's socio-economic transition and integration with the world has been profound. When the Chinese appetite for accessing and appreciating the country's historic and natural heritage has been whetted by massive urban construction, expanding industrial capacity, and increasing social mobility, heritage governance has inevitably been put into the spotlight.

In this chapter, we trace the development of a regulatory agency, Emei Management Committee (EMC) at the World Heritage Site Mount Emei (shortened to "Emei"), as a case study to explore the process of heritage governance and the politics of heritage campaign in transitional China. We mainly focus on certain puzzles and tensions in regard to three aspects: how the regulatory agency, EMC, was created and restructured; how it conducts heritage conservation based on local interpretation of authenticity; and how it develops the heritage site through a monopolized company supervised by itself. These questions can only be fully understood through close studies of the operational realities of practice (Yan and Bramwell 2008). Through examining the dynamic development of Emei heritage governance, we illustrate that the state-led heritage campaign gives license to local authorities for developing their own regulatory agencies considering the decentralization of fiscal and administrative power. In the process, conflicts between the official designation and the local attachment and identification of sites exist at different levels. The construction of the heritage site and the tension between local and national ideologies and values underline the contestations surrounding heritage. We argue that EMC develops its own interpretation and practices of heritage conservation for the purpose of maximizing the local social and economic benefits. Through legalization, planning and establishing a state-affiliated tourism corporation, the regulatory agency is capable of monopolizing heritage resources, without profit sharing with other stakeholders. The case of EMC is not unique. It has become a wide-spread model that appears in a number of Chinese heritage sites through exchanging experiences and transferring skills at the local level.

Before presenting the Emei case, it is necessary to introduce the regulatory agency approach we use in this chapter and its main arguments, particularly the application of this approach to heritage governance of China. A brief introduction of our research location, Emei, and research methods is also put forward to enhance the understanding of empirical findings.

Regulatory Agency of Heritage Governance in China

The last quarter of the twentieth century has witnessed the rise of commonly existing regulation in a wide range of geographical and institutional settings. As a benchmark of governance in the new era of globalization, the term “regulation” is conventionally used to refer to government intervention that consists of setting and enforcing rules of behavior for organizations and individuals (Hood and Scott 2000). In other words, it refers to government intervention in economic and social activities mainly via rule-making, not just correcting market failure as the economic theory of regulation contends; in the process, it promotes political control over regulatory agency in the view of some political scientists (Becker 1983; Moe 1987; Yeo 2007).

The concept of governance concerns how societies are governed, ruled or “steered,” and thus it involves the practices for regulating and mobilizing social action, and for producing social order (Bramwell and Lane 2011). Indeed, this is a dynamic process concerned with power, relationships and accountability. It involves “structures, functions (responsibilities), processes (practices) and organizational traditions that the board of an organization [or society] uses to accomplish the organizing mission” (Galley 2001). When the concept of governance is becoming popular, the pursuit of “good governance”² and the intensive globalization not only affect the state’s capacity and sovereignty, but also provide the major driving forces in public administration reform in the global context. As Yeo (2007: 39) points out, the real issue is not the decline of the role of the state, but the institutional shifting of the state and forms of public authority corresponding to governing a global political economy. In this sense, how the state and local government respond to changes in the regulatory mode is a matter of public interest. It is not simply the question of who has the right to regulate, but how to regulate. The increasing importance of regulation as a mode of governance results from several causes—the widespread notions of privatization and deregulation as the outcome of neo-liberalism are especially significant.

Among the most obvious institutional consequences of the expansion of a regulatory mode is the increase in a new breed of specialized agencies and commissions operating at arm’s length from the central government. The administrative demands of rulemaking are best met by organizations that combine flexibility with expertise and are capable of committing themselves to clearly defined regulatory objectives (Majone 1997). While regulatory agencies have emerged in Western Europe as independent institutions in regulating a number of industries (Thatcher 2002), in China, after the 1998 and 2003 administrative

² Some international institutions like the OECD and the World Trade Organization are active in advising policy recommendations that emphasize competition, transparency, and accountability for “good governance.”

reforms,³ new institutional structures and agencies of economic and social governance have been set up to embrace the market-oriented reform in the era of globalization. The reforms were affected not only by internal demands and challenges, but also by external forces, such as the requirements of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and a global wave of regulatory reforms (Yeo 2009). Along with the intensive economic, social and culture exchange and integration derived from globalization, the Chinese government has been involved in the global socio-economic system, and has prepared itself for the acceptance of international principles.

The main strategies in the Chinese administrative reforms lie in the downsizing, streamlining, and reinvention, particularly the administrative restructuring and the emergence of new regulatory bodies. At the central level, new state agencies such as the State Development and Planning Commission were established when streamlining the bureaucracy was particularly remarkable for abolishing or downgrading the number of industrial ministries that directly managed state industries during the planned economy (Yeo 2007). At the local level, given the high cost of staffing of subnational governments, structural streamlining was inevitable (Yang 2004), and the plan of limiting the size of government agencies was implemented. Nevertheless, due to decentralization and deregulation, local governments have become key actors in accumulating funds, redistributing resources, and establishing new regulatory institutions to govern the indigenous economic and social activities, with central government's control only comprising a small part. In particular, new supposedly arm's-length regulators were created with sufficient authority to carry out their formal mandates. At the same time, existing regulatory institutions were restructured to improve governance capacity, deepen supervision of industries, and response to new regulatory demands from modernization and globalization.

Regulatory agencies, in theory, enjoy two significant advantages: specialized knowledge and the possibility of making credible policy commitments (Majone 1997). It is suggested that the establishment of regulatory institutions is a technocratic solution to the problem of lacking expertise of policy-makers (Jordana and Levi-Faur 2004). Meanwhile, the problem of political credibility can be solved by empowering regulatory agencies, since they can commit themselves to regulatory strategies in a long-term solution. In reality, Chinese regulatory bodies are considered to be specialized authorities that credibly commit themselves to

³ The 1998 administrative reform, mainly the government-restructuring program, was firmly pushed by the pragmatic reformer Premier Zhu Rongji. It sought to streamline administrative structure and separate government from enterprise. The 2003 administrative reform was graded as the second batch of the 1998 reform, which aimed to promote the bureaucratic coherence by reducing institutional conflicts of interests. Although the substantial progress of these two administrative reforms was not fully achieved from the perspectives of some critics, the previously fragmented authority of the state on social and economic issues came to be integrated as a result (Yang 2004; Yeo 2007).

long-term strategies in a fairly narrow range of policy issues, such as heritage conservation and development.

When the real comparative advantage of regulatory agencies is viewed as the combination of expertise and commitment, the “agency cost” is also indicated (Majone 1997) in delegating power to an administrative agency. Primary is the increasing policy discretion and therefore, the possibility of regulators to act in their own interests. This also affects the new regulatory agencies to achieve their own legitimacy as non-majoritarian institutions.⁴ In countries like China, which have more than four levels of government, including state, provincial, (prefecture city), county, and township, policy discretion and local interests have complicated the issue of policy-making and implementation. The creation of regulatory agencies for specialized issues across the country inevitably expands the discretion and stimulates the pursuit of local interests. In this sense, the functions and impacts of newly founded or restructured regulatory agencies should be explicitly described and evaluated in different sectors and policy issues, such as heritage governance.

Heritage governance plays an essential role in conservation and restoration planning, as well as in World Heritage inscription procedures. It goes beyond simply the formalization of governmental agencies on heritage protection, but further involves resource allocation (Rhodes 1996), collective action, and coordination with business, community, and other actors (Wang and Bramwell 2012). Due to these multiple functions, it integrates various mechanisms for governing, regulating, decision making, and implementing. In the Chinese context, heritage governance permits the state to pursue its goals of national integration and political stability over all local heritage sites by promoting cultural autonomy and preservation at the national level (Svensson 2006). Meanwhile, it allows local governments to maintain their regulatory legitimacy while achieving economic gains.

According to the “Cairns Decision” issued by the Twenty-fourth Session of the World Heritage Committee in 2000, the number of new nominations to be submitted by each State Party was limited to one. Due to this restriction, heritage in China has become a new form of social-cultural “campaign” (*yundong* 运动) (Peng 2008) by local governments to guide their development through the complexities of investment, production, and consumption (Swain 1990). Local governments actively participate in the heritage campaign to get involved in the nomination procedure since they realize that the brand “World Heritage” can bring them huge economic and social benefits in the long run. Because the nomination procedure involves resources from various departments at most sites, a temporary heritage nomination office is often established, with the integration of human resources from these departments, and directly supervised by the local government. Once a site is successfully nominated to be on the World Heritage List, the temporary office is transformed into a new regulatory agency with sufficient authority for local heritage

⁴ Non-majoritarian institutions are defined as those governmental entities that (a) possess and exercise some grant of specialized public authority, separate from that of other institutions, but (b) are neither directly elected by the people, nor directly managed by elected officials (Thatcher and Sweet 2002).

governance. In this context, the foundational question at the heart of the process is, “How does the local government implement heritage governance via the regulatory agency to achieve the conservation and development goals?”

This is exactly the case in Emei. The regulatory agency EMC used to be a temporary office devoted to the nomination of the World Heritage Site. After the successful nomination, it was restructured as a regulatory body to supervise and implement heritage conservation and tourism-related operation and development. Due to the central government concessions, local experiments and innovation in Emei present a seemingly decentralized and diverse collage of frameworks. As a specialized regulatory agency on heritage governance, the new institute EMC conducts the functions of heritage conservation, resource allocation, and tourism operation.

The regulatory agency perspective outlined here is adopted to evaluate how the heritage regulatory institute of Emei is restructured for local heritage governance in the wake of a globalized and nationalized heritage campaign. This case portrays the landscape of regulatory agency in Chinese heritage governance, which is influenced by both global forces and domestic administrative reforms. In this case, theoretical assumptions are reflected by the functions and practices of the regulatory agency, while empirical data offers more explicit evidence to enrich the academic discourse.

Introducing Emei and Research Methods

Located in central Sichuan Province, Mount Emei rises 2,600 m from the western margin of the Chengdu Plain. The site is an area of natural beauty by virtue of its high plant species diversity, with a large number of endemic species. Emei is also a place of historical significance as one of the four sacred Buddhist Mountains of China, and is traditionally regarded as the bodhimanda, or the place of enlightenment, of the bodhisattva Samantabhadra (*puxian pusa* 普贤菩萨). The history of Emei has been documented and recorded for over 2000 years since Buddhism was introduced in the first century AD via the Silk Road from India. The long history witnesses a rich Buddhist cultural heritage, including cultural relics, architectural heritage (more than 30 temples), collected calligraphy, paintings, ritual, and martial arts. Because of the outstanding natural landscape and the rich Buddhist culture, Emei was inscribed as a cultural and natural heritage site by UNESCO in 1996.⁵ The World Heritage Committee of UNESCO described the site with the following words:

⁵ The Leshan Giant Buddha Scenic Area, located about 30 km away from Mount Emei, is notable, with its Giant Buddha Statue as the largest carved stone Buddha in the world. Due to the similarity of both sites, local governments decided to combine them for the world heritage nomination. Since both sites are administratively located in two different cities, each site developed its own heritage agency separately supervised by their own government after the inscription was successful. This chapter focuses on the heritage governance of Emei.

The Committee decided to inscribe the nominated property under cultural criteria (iv) and (vi) considering the area of Mt. Emei is of exceptional cultural significance, since it is the place where Buddhism first became established on Chinese territory and from where it spread widely throughout the east. It is also an area of natural beauty into which the human element has been integrated, and natural criterion (x) for its high plant species diversity with a large number of endemic species. It also underlined the importance of the link between the tangible and intangible, the natural and the cultural (<<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/779/>>, accessed on July 7, 2012).

Since then, Emei has become one of the most popular destinations in China for both domestic and international tourists. In 2011, Emei attracted 2.6 million visitors, with 907 million yuan as a total income of tourism (Emei Bureau of Statistics 2011). In the book *“Scenic Spots: Chinese Tourism, the State, and Cultural Authority,”* Nyiri (2006) introduces his travel experience in Emei and argues that the site has been “themed” and endorsed as a scenic spot by the government and commoditized for the entertainment of the tourists who visit. To better regulate the heritage site under the influence of tourism development, a local regulatory agency, the EMC,⁶ was established after the market reform underwent restructuring. EMC also established a tourism company for promotion, developing, and marketing. The proliferation of commercially constructed tourism development has increasingly become a challenge to heritage conservation, not least with regard to the notion of authenticity. The local heritage and tourism agencies recognize the commercial value of what they perceive to be “the appropriate culture,” and conserve the value with its cultural expression accordingly (Su and Teo 2009).

Considering a regulatory institution that has governed a World Heritage site for decades, this case study offers a vivid illustration as part of a large project that examines how heritage conservation is interpreted, administered, and practiced in China. In this study, data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Textual analysis in the first phase of data collection was based on written materials regarding various aspects including heritage governance in China, heritage and tourism development in Emei, and its management and operation system. In the second phase, we conducted fieldwork in Emei from October to December 2006, and November 2007. Ethnographic fieldwork as a key anthropological method has been successfully applied to organizations (Brumann 2012). We were invited to attend two heritage conferences in Emei (World Heritage Conservation Symposium organized by EMC in 2006, and The Third Conference of World Natural Heritage by UNESCO in 2007). During the conferences, we participated in panel meetings, presentations, discussions in the official session time, and informal conversations. Interviews with key participants have profited from session insights and motivated new observational sensibilities (Brumann 2012). Sampieri et al.

⁶ In 2008, the Emei Heritage Committee and the Leshan Heritage Committee (for Leshan Giant Buddha Scenic Area) merged to one committee for better planning and management of these two sites. The main purpose of this merge is streamlining and downsizing. The administrative mechanism and procedure have not been significantly changed. Hence, in this chapter, we use EMC to refer to the regulatory agency even it changed the name after 2008.

(1996) claim that, in certain studies, it is also necessary to acquire the opinions of experts, particularly in qualitative and exploratory studies. Hence, after the conferences, we carried out interviews with people who contributed to the practice of heritage governance and development in Emei, particularly cadres of the heritage committee, the director and staff of the company, local community, and tourists. Our interviewees talked about the status quo of the heritage site, their own understanding of heritage, conflicts between economic development and conservation, and their vision of the future. These interviews constitute primary data that is essential for accessing the complexities of heritage governance of the site.

Restructuring Agency for Heritage Governance

Before exploring how EMC as a new regulatory agency was established to meet the development of heritage governance, it is necessary to introduce the history of heritage administration in China. Originating from Europe, World Heritage system has gradually been recognized, introduced, and accepted in China after the country joined the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1985. The state's regulatory framework and policies on heritage are designed to both "transmit and recreate traditions in line with new economic and national imperatives" (McLaren 2010: 31). In 1988, the State Bureau of Cultural Relics (which later changed its name to the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, or SACH) was established under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture to be the encompassing agency for cultural heritage conservation in China. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Construction (which later changed its name to the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development) is in charge of the nomination of the tentative list of natural and mixed heritage sites. However, the current heritage management system still adopts the compartmentalization in the planned economy. Apart from the Ministry of Construction and the Ministry of Culture and their local branches, other government departments such as the industry and commerce bureau, the public security bureau, the forestry bureau, the religious affairs bureau, and the tourism bureau are also highly involved in the process because their resources and administrative functions are related to the heritage sites. Thus, in most places of China, heritage governance is a complex and dynamic process with a multi-management framework.

Emei has benefited from a long tradition of conservation and management. It has received protection as a sacred place as early as the mid-tenth century, when a monitoring agency was set up at the Baishui Temple (currently Wannian Temple) for the management and conservation of the area. In 1945, the Republic of China founded the first general management agency—the Mount Emei Administrative Bureau (EAB). After the establishment of the PRC the administrative framework of Emei has undergone numerous changes resulting from the varying division of administration, but EAB still acts as the regulator of the site, although its authority and functions are limited. In 1982, the State Council of PRC declared Emei to be

one of the first branches of the national tourist scenic spots (*guojia zhongdian fengjing mingshengqu* 国家重点风景名胜区) (Nyiri 2006). Like most Chinese national scenic areas, the heritage governance in Emei used to be a multi-management solution that involved a number of government bureaus. However, in order to be successfully inscribed as a mixed (both cultural and natural) heritage site by UNESCO and fulfill the requirements of the World Heritage criteria, a series of administrative changes were conducted and the new regulatory framework, particularly a new regulatory agency, was set up with the purposes of streamlining and restructuring governance.

EMC was launched in 1988 to integrate resources and govern the heritage site in accordance with the Regulations on Scenery Areas (*fengjing mingshengqu tiaoli* 风景名胜区条例), the Regulations on World Heritage Protection of Sichuan Province (*sichuansheng shijie yichan baohu tiaoli* 四川省世界遗产保护条例), and the Regulations on Scenery Areas of Sichuan Province (*sichuansheng fengjing mingshengqu tiaoli* 四川省风景名胜区条例). The State Council also approved the Master Plan of Mount Emei Scenic Area (*emeishan fengjingqu zongti guihua* 峨眉山风景区总体规划) in 1995⁷ as the guiding document for the World Heritage application. The renovated agency is a comprehensive regulatory body with 27 functional sections under the supervision of the Department of Construction of Sichuan Province, and the Ministry of Construction at the state level. EMC has four administrative offices that are in charge of the daily management of the site at Baoguo Temple, Jiulaodong, Wannian Temple, and the Golden Summit (*jinding* 金顶). Currently, EMC is staffed by more than 600 people, half of whom have the status of civil servants.

Compared to the former administrative body EAB and its functions, there are two visible innovations with respect to the establishment of EMC. First, the Emei Municipal Government directly supervises this regulatory agency, taking responsibility for conservation, planning, management, and construction of the heritage site. This mechanism guarantees the sufficient authority of EMC to make and enforce regulations and rules. Second, the new regulatory institution plays multiple roles which were previously taken on by different administrative bodies, such as preservation of cultural relics, environment protection, forestry and agriculture maintenance, business development, services provision, hygiene monitoring, public security, and fire control. Various kinds of resources, functions, and personnel are integrated into one single regulator for the purposes of unified

⁷ This General Plan includes specialized plans such as the Plan for Conservation and Management of Emei Wild Animals and Plants (*emei yesheng dongwu he zhibei baohu guanli guihua* 峨眉野生动物和植被保护管理规划), the Plan for Conservation and Management of Emei Cultural Relics and Ancient Buildings (*emei wenwu gujianzhu baohu guanli guihua* 峨眉文物古建筑保护管理规划), and the Plan for Emei Fire Control (*emei huozai kongzhi guihua* 峨眉火灾控制规划). These plans are subject to related laws and legal instruments including the Regulations of Scenic Areas (*fengjing mingshengqu tiaoli* 风景名胜区条例), the Forest Law (*senlinfa* 森林法), the Law of Environmental Protection (*huanjing baohufa* 环境保护法) and the Law for Protection of Cultural Relics (*wenwu baohufa* 文物保护法).

management and efficient operation. It is also regarded as an innovative regulatory framework for Chinese heritage sites. A leading officer at EMC states,

The Management Committee (EMC) is a new regulatory agency for heritage governance. As a ‘mixed heritage site’, Emei must learn from both the Chinese and international experiences to optimize our management mechanism. The new system can help us to implement the revised Master Plan (*emeishan fengjingqu zongti guihua* 峨眉山风景区总体规划) for better conservation and site management.

The restructured agency has both expertise and commitment to heritage governance due to its integrated regulatory setting and empowerment from the municipal government for comprehensive management. The agency becomes a key actor in redistributing heritage resources and establishing regulations to govern socio-cultural and economic events without constraint from the central government. However, the overwhelming power and policy discretion can influence the policy making and implementation along the lines of own interests, namely local economic booms or departmental profit. In other words, the new regulatory agency lacks sufficient checks and balances and transparency. Thus, monopolizing and profiteering in heritage conservation and tourism development become possible at the heritage site, which will be illustrated in the next two sections.

Interpreting Authenticity in Heritage Conservation

During the heritage inscription of Emei in the Twentieth Session of the World Heritage Committee in 1996, the World Heritage Committee encouraged EMC to involve Buddhist monasteries in the heritage conservation activities at the site (<<http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/2973>>, accessed on February 11, 2012). This recommendation has been mentioned several times in different UNESCO Reports. As a response, EMC decided to use Buddhist religion as the main theme for site planning, conservation, and management. In cooperation with the Emei Buddhism Association, the Section of Religious Affairs in EMC was formed to protect and manage the monasteries. The reconstruction project of the Golden Summit, as one of the main Buddhist monasteries in Emei, has been taken as a pilot project by EMC considering heritage conservation and construction.

Located at the peak of Emei, the Golden Summit was given its name because of its bronze-coated roof. The temple was originally built in 1615 during the Ming Dynasty. It was destroyed several times throughout history due to fires (in 1890, 1923, 1931, and 1972). The temple was continuously reconstructed accordingly; the most recent reconstruction work was conducted in 2002 by EMC. The newly built temple was constructed from a mixture of reinforced concrete and brick. During the Cultural Revolution, the temple was regarded as feudalistic superstition (*fengjian mixin* 封建迷信). Therefore, the temple was demolished and instead, a broadcast tower and a weather station were installed to symbolize technology and



Fig. 4.1 The newly built giant Buddha statue at the Golden Summit (photo by Yujie Zhu 2007)

modernization (*keji yu xiandaihua* 科技与现代化). In 2005, EMC removed these non-religious constructions and started to build a 48m tall statue of Samantabhadra with a weight of 600 tons on the site in cooperation with the Emei Buddhism Association (see Fig. 4.1).

On June 18, 2006, a grand opening ceremony was held to celebrate the new Buddha Statue at the Golden Summit under the eyes of 3,000 visitors. The ceremony was hosted by 300 notable monks with Buddhist rituals including script chanting and singing. According to the statement of Mr. Li, a cadre of the Emei Buddhism Association as the ceremony organizer, this event celebrated the establishment of the biggest Samantabhadra statue in the world. The event was reported in various media including local and national newspapers, television, and the Internet. The establishment of the new Buddha statue became a new “scenic spot” and attracted more religious tourists to visit Emei for both sightseeing and worshipping. However, some of the tourists and media criticize that the newly built Buddha Statue functions as a new “money maker”, legitimizing EMC to increase the admission fee.

Notwithstanding different voices from tourists and the media, the EMC authorities are very proud of the Golden Summit project. Mr. Xu Ning, a Section Chief of EMC, presented this project in the World Heritage Conservation Symposium in 2006 as propaganda of successful heritage restoration. He said,

In cooperation with the Emei Buddhism Association, the restoration project⁸ is our response to the recommendation of UNESCO. The project aims to restore the temple and the Buddha statue for presenting our rich Buddhist culture. It fully meets the criteria of authenticity and integrity of the cultural heritage.

Mr. Xu uses “authenticity” as a key concept in his presentation. Indeed, this concept plays an essential role in cultural heritage management, conservation, and restoration planning, as well as the World Heritage Convention’s inscription procedures. In recent years, “authenticity” has been adopted by SACH and written into official conservation guidelines such as the Law on Protection of Cultural Relics (*wenwu baohufa* 文物保护法) in 1982 (revised in 2002), and the Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites (*yichan baohu zhunze* 遗产保护准则) (adopted by ICOMOS China in 2000, printed in 2002), known as the “China Principles” (Zhu 2013). These “professional guidelines” comply with the present legislation, and link the international concept of authenticity with the Chinese concept of “original state (*yuanzhuang* 原状)”,⁹ which recommends the respect for original fabric and authentic documentation. According to the law and the “China Principles,” reconstructions of historical buildings and monuments are allowed only when enough scientific information about the architecture from all historical periods can be provided.¹⁰

The reconstruction of the Golden Summit is not “authentic” according to both the international principles, such as the World Heritage Convention, and the national law and the “China Principles.” Since several rounds of reconstruction were undertaken, much information pertaining to its original state has been lost. The reconstruction of the current Golden Summit project is purely “invented” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) and does not incorporate any historical information of the original architectural predecessor or respect the historical condition, in line with national conservation guidelines.

⁸ Mr. Xu called it a “restoration” although in fact it was a “reconstruction”. As a heritage official on heritage conservation, he does not carefully deal with the terms that crucially impact on the nature of the conservation work. Indeed, the term “restoration” is better for propaganda making for heritage conservation.

⁹ This term first appeared in the Article 21 of the Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics (*guojia wenwu baohufa* 国家文物保护法). The article suggests “keeping the cultural relics in their original state.” The Chinese version is “*bugaibian wenwu yuanzhuang* 不改变文物原状,” which literally means, “do not change the original state of cultural relics.”

¹⁰ Article 22 of the Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics (*guojia wenwu baohufa* 国家文物保护法) states that, “Where immovable cultural relics are totally damaged, the ruins shall be protected and the damaged relics may not be rebuilt on the original site.” However, the State Administration of Cultural Heritage may be asked for consent, “where under special circumstances it is necessary to have such relics rebuilt on the original site.” In case a rebuilding of a major site that is protected at the national level is suggested, “the matter shall be submitted by the People’s government of the relevant province, autonomous region, or municipality directly under the Central Government to the State Council for approval.”

EMC apparently has its own understanding of authenticity and heritage conservation. Mr. Xu's speech shows that EMC may not explicitly understand the norms of these international and national principles, but it strategically utilizes the term for promoting and propaganda making. Together with the removal of the broadcast tower and the weather station, and the construction of the grand Buddha statue, the project of the Golden Summit intends to present Buddhist culture as the main theme of the heritage site. The stated aim to "establish the biggest Buddha in the world" illustrates the government's preference for ambitious and ostentatious projects to demonstrate their capability on heritage governance. The authenticity of heritage conservation by EMC is not objective-oriented based on the scientific evidence from "original state", but rather performative (Zhu 2012) for its own meaning and value-making.

As mentioned, the SACH supervises the restoration and conservation of monuments and cultural relics in China. However, as a mixed heritage site, the Ministry of Construction monitors Emei as well. This administrative arrangement gives EMC space and discretion to negotiate with the global and national principles and regulations of authenticity. EMC finds its own way for heritage conservation through continuously interpreting and utilizing the external norms and standards for its own interests against the backdrop of the site's economic development. UNESCO's recommendation to involve Buddhist monasteries in conservation work gives EMC legitimacy of place marketing and tourism development. Regarding the practice of heritage conservation, EMC and the Emei Buddhism Association have made a consensus to develop the project of Golden Summit based on the mutual benefit of promoting Buddhist culture, which drives both sectors toward common social and economic goals.

Tourism Operation in Heritage Development

Besides heritage conservation, EMC also takes responsibilities of operating and developing the site. The growing interest in heritage resources opens new perspectives for developing the tourism industry at heritage sites, which in turn provides the heritage governance with the challenges of management and operation (Jansen-Verbeke and Lievois 1999). The relationship between heritage and tourism is generally assumed to be interdependent (Ashworth 1993). However, recent studies recognize that a tension exists between heritage protection and tourism development, especially in developing countries (Li et al. 2008). The tourism industry and other commercial activities like real estate development at the site have the overriding aim of becoming profitable businesses by treating heritage as an economic value. The widespread belief that the development of heritage sites for tourism purposes results in the commoditization of culture is a legitimate concern (Wall 1997). Government interventions can be important for determining priorities between heritage protection and tourism-related development at heritage sites (Wang and Bramwell 2012). This raises the questions of who

has the power to obtain and operate the benefits, and in what ways. Indeed, the focus is the debate over whether the regulatory agency on heritage governance should take charge of commercialized tourism operations.

Some scholars think that heritage regulation and tourism operation should be integrated. As Xu (2003) states, like the management system of National Parks defined by the IUCN, the cultural and natural heritage properties are public goods and common resources. Instead of being profit-oriented, the heritage agency should insist on nonprofit principles based on the social and cultural mission. Xu further argues that the high costs involved in heritage conservation make the revenue from tourism indispensable. However, the income from tourism development at the heritage site should not be distributed to the staff but instead, should be saved for the next round of heritage conservation and development. On the other hand, some scholars argue that the jurisdiction of the heritage agency should not integrate commercial functions (Zhang et al. 2004). Based on the market economy, they believe that cultural and natural heritage properties can be operated as public resources by the involvement of other stakeholders, especially private sectors. Following the rules of the tourism market, all related agencies would be able to mutually check and balance one another for the maximal socio-economic benefit in the long run.

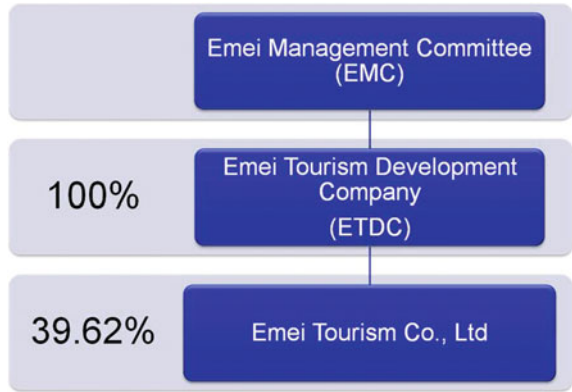
In the real world, diversified practices of heritage governance have emerged in China based on local economic conditions, predetermined value preferences, and historic administrative procedures. The current Party Secretary of the EMC states, “Emei is searching for its own way to develop the heritage management system. We establish our tourism company as the operator for better utilization and integration of heritage resources.”

In 1996, Emei Tourism Development Company (ETDC) was established for the purpose of tourism planning, promotion, and marketing of the Emei scenic area. ETDC is a wholly state-owned enterprise supervised by EMC. By establishing ETDC as a tourism operator, EMC’s intention is to separate government functions from enterprise management. EMC signed a contract with ETDC in 1997 to empower the company to manage tourist admissions, from which 50% of the profit would be shared by EMC. According to the contract, ETDC is also responsible for environmental protection, infrastructure, and tourist facilities building. As the sole commercial body that operates various tourism activities in Emei, ETDC has rapidly become a business giant in the Chinese tourism industry over the past decades. Its main business now includes tourist admission management, cable car operation, local transportation, travel agency, and hotel management.

In 1997, ETDC initiated the Emei Shan Tourism Co., Ltd and released public shares in the stock market. This limited liability company legitimizes ETDC to seek commercial loans from banks and other sources for investment.¹¹ Now, this

¹¹ Chinese laws prohibit local governments from directly obtaining bank loans or secured loans. This is the main reason that EMC established the state-affiliated tourism corporation.

Fig. 4.2 Relationship of management tiers (designed by Yujie Zhu and Na Li 2012)



state-owned enterprise holds nearly 40% of the company’s stock. The set-up of the limited liability company reflects a step towards marketization and commercialization in the operation of the heritage site. It seems that administrative authority and business activities are separated through the founding of a marketized operation body and the involvement of private capital. However, many senior managers of ETDC are retired cadres or cadres transferred from EMC or other government departments. The close relationship between EMC and ETDC, particularly the personnel connection between the regulator and the operator, makes it questionable that such institutional arrangement will lead to a joint-management framework involving multiple stakeholders, including both the public and private sectors (Fig. 4.2).

The charismatic leader Mr. Ma Wenhua and his career path demonstrate how the regulatory agency and the commercial entities are connected and integrated. Mr. Ma took a leading role during the Emei heritage nomination procedure when he was the Deputy Party Secretary and the First Deputy Mayor of the Emei Municipal Government. After the heritage nomination in 1996, he became the Director and later the Party Secretary of EMC. In the meantime, he was elected as the Chairman of ETDC and then the Chairman of its subsidiary limited liability company. Since then, he has spent more than 10 years working in both EMC and ETDC, building a tight connection between these two institutions. Mr. Ma has received several international, national and provincial awards as a powerful and talented leader, however, in parallel, he has also been criticized for working both as the regulator and practitioner, which helps him gain significant benefit for the tourism company. On one hand, this overlap strengthens the governing authorities and capacities of both EMC and ETDC. On the other hand, the perceived mutual benefits may possibly drive both institutions to act in their respective interests without sufficient monitoring from other sectors. During the period of Mr. Ma’s taking charge of both agencies, EMC gave license to ETDC for infrastructural construction, investment, and tourism promotion, and marketing as the sole operator. Mr. Ma left his position at EMC but retained the leadership in ETDC in 2008, and thus the company still monopolizes the tourism resources in Emei.

ETDC gains enormous economic benefit from tourism development with the help of EMC. A tourist admission is one of the main incomes. In the past decade, the admission fee has increased several times from 80 to 150 *yuan*. According to their recent report, the total assets of the company have amounted to 1.59 billion *yuan*. In 2011, its total operation revenue achieved 1.16 billion *yuan*, while the net profit was 200 million *yuan* and the tax payment was 130 million *yuan* (<<http://travel.people.com.cn/GB/41636/41644/16861979.html>>, accessed on March 9, 2012). The integrity of the report has been questioned by the media, who speculate that there may be a misappropriation of funds. As a response, EMC endeavors to justify their operation by stating that their profit is only used for heritage conservation and local community supporting. As Mr. Ma says,

We help to generate economic benefit while simultaneously supporting the preservation of local heritage. For example, our investment on the Emei tea as one of the flagship tourism products has gained 6 billion *yuan* in 5 years. We also aid the local community through creating employment opportunities. Almost 2,000 local farmers are employed by our company. They are working in the museum, the visitor center, hotels and restaurants.

ETDC also gains from tourism business through managing hotels, restaurants, and cable cars at the site. In Emei, the heritage property as inscribed in the World Heritage List includes land used by local farmers. For unified land use and development, EMC makes the rules of land acquisition to encourage local farmers to transfer their rights of land use, and then empowers ETDC to use these lands for tourism development (in most cases, for building up luxurious hotels and restaurants). Farmers who transfer their lands can either work for the company as staff or open their own business at the heritage site. Compared to the farming work, most of the farmers are willing to transfer their lands, being employed with a higher salary by the company, so ETDC can acquire the land without barriers. The smooth process of land acquisition accelerates the reinvestment and further development of the heritage site. Besides, EMC set up a system of franchises and standards for opening souvenir shops at the heritage site to specify the categories and prices of products and the location of shops. One shop owner, Mr. Xia Ming, mentions,

The tourism development of the heritage site brought dramatic change to my family. I am working in my own tea shop every day. I used to be a farmer, and now the company built a hotel here. My son was just hired to work in that 5 star hotel. Although I do not have the land any more, my life is getting much better.

However, some farmers, who transfer their lands but do not get a license to run their own businesses because of their incapability to fulfill the requirements, complain that the company's monopoly makes them lose their lands without sufficient compensation. Some farmers even express their anger and powerlessness when they lost their lands by force. One of them, Mr. Wang Yuan, says,

They forced us to give up our land and gave us a lot of pressure. They started with persuasion and material inducement, but later it became moral compulsion and even bodily repression. I do not have any choice but to give up. They are really arbitrary and

only care about the money. Compared to what they gain such as big houses and fancy cars, the compensation is really nothing.

Mr. Wang's words voice a common concern among the local farmers who have been excluded from this process of arbitrary heritage and tourism development. This also illustrates that the close relationship with EMC makes ETDC monopolize the tourism development of Emei without sufficient public participation in rule-making and enforcement. Due to the policy discretion of the regulatory agency and the monopolized tourism operator, EMC and ETDC are able to enjoy a great degree of consensus and shared interest without control mechanism, while gaining economic benefit from the tourism operation activities. The separation of regulatory functions from business management is a milestone of heritage governance at Emei. However, the joint-management mechanism meets the criteria of monopoly. Through establishing ETDC, the regulatory agency EMC obtains a strong entrepreneurial spirit for selling heritage resources in the tourism market to gain economic profits.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the regulatory agency perspective is used to illustrate how the agency EMC on heritage governance has been restructured and how it implements heritage conservation and development in Emei. This perspective encourages the assessment of Emei's heritage governance in the context of society's wider reciprocal relations between heritage, tourism, culture, economic, and social values. First, the case indicates that a campaign-oriented solution is followed by Chinese heritage governance. The nomination of the World Heritage site stimulates the restructuring of the existing management system and creates the local regulatory agency that specializes in heritage conservation and development. Due to its integrated resources and functions, EMC has the expertise and authoritarian power for a comprehensive and unified planning and management at the site. Second, the Golden Summit project at Emei shows that heritage conservation is not a public welfare undertaking, but an economic and political project (Su 2010) firmly controlled and manipulated by the regulatory agency. EMC has the authority and discretion to negotiate based on national and international standards of heritage conservation. Notwithstanding the existing national regulations and international guidelines, EMC is capable of continuously interpreting the external norms for the interest of local social and economic development (Zhu 2013). Third, the heritage agency attempts to separate its regulatory function from the tourism operation at the site by establishing a commercial corporation. However, the joint-management mechanism becomes a monopolized system that exploits heritage resource for maximizing economic returns and excludes other stakeholders from decision-making and benefit-sharing.

What is the implication of our findings, related to heritage politics and governance in China, as one of the main themes of the book? Indeed, heritage governance and the local agency's activities cannot be understood without revisiting China's broad economic and political background and the local socio-economic context. Under the pressure of increasing GDP, Chinese local governments have become economic interest groups with their own entrepreneurial pursuit and policy agendas. For local authorities, heritage is not only the object of regulation, but a means of production for profit-making.

In the past decades, a number of criteria have been put forward by both the national and international authorities to guide the conservation and development of heritage sites, such as "National Key Cultural Relic Protected Unit" (*guojia zhongdian wenwu baohu danwei* 国家重点文物保护单位) issued by the SACH, "National Key Scenic Areas" (*guojia zhongdian fengjing mingshengqu* 国家重点风景名胜区) and "5A Level of Tourist Scenic Spots" (*5A ji lvyou jingqu* 5A级旅游景区) by China National Tourism Administration (CNTA), and the World Heritage Sites awarded by UNESCO. These standards not only specify rules and principles for heritage governance, but also stimulate the benefits pursued by the local heritage practice, because the branding of the model scenic spots or the nomination of heritage sites often leads to the growth of tourism income. In this context, the local regulatory agency has been established to obtain the brand name, and then manage the site for the purpose of maximizing local economic benefit and maintaining state control of tourism resource. In the process, local governments and heritage regulators have organized a number of conferences, workshops, visits, meetings, and personnel exchanges, to explore their own paths of heritage conservation, and tourism development. This illustrates the policy of decentralization that local authorities follow in present-day China; more importantly, this process offers opportunities for local agencies to learn from each other and promote models or pilots of heritage governance. The experience of Emei is regarded as such a model, particularly its rich tourism revenue brought by the monopolized corporation under the strict supervision of the powerful regulator. Similar practices can be found at many heritage sites in the country. For instance, Su (2010) describes how the authoritarian regulatory agency and its affiliated corporation are established and operate in Lijiang (another World Heritage Site listed by UNESCO in southwest China). In this case, commercial purpose and economic interest dominate the conservation and development of the heritage site.

The Emei case demonstrates the heritage governance with "Chinese socialistic characteristics" that is situated in a wider, market-dominated playing field (Cerny 1995). Chinese society has been strongly influenced by neo-liberalism and involved in the wave of globalization; nevertheless, the authoritarian state is still dominant in local heritage governance, since the tourism resources of heritage sites are deemed to be a cash cow that produces revenue to stimulate the local socio-economic development. This dominance is significant and monopolistic, with other sectors' participation comprising only a very small part. The founding of the regulatory agency and its affiliated tourism development corporation strengthens state control

and portrays the local heritage governance trajectory that results from the integration and negotiation between political rules, social norms, and cultural values.

Just like Deng Xiaoping's approach to the ideology of development by stating "crossing the river by groping for stones", heritage governance in China is still on its way to crossing the river. The instruments of governance must be understood as occurring within particular frames and images of governance, rather than in isolation (Hall 2011). The case of Emei offers an opportunity to look into the emergence and development of the omnipresent regulatory agencies in governance practices that reflect the transitional characteristics in contemporary China. This chapter opens a discussion about the complicated relationship between the local heritage agency and the central authorities in heritage governance and broader practices of administrative activities. Further studies are therefore needed to examine the deep connection and dialectic interaction between the micro-scale agency and the macro-scale political and economic structure.

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Chapter 5

Local versus National Interests in the Promotion and Management of a Heritage Site: A Case Study from Zhejiang Province, China

Wei Zhao

Keywords China · Heritage · Heritage Management · Vernacular Architecture · Folk Religion

Fangyan is located in the middle of Zhejiang Province, China, about 220 miles to the south of Shanghai.¹ The landscape of Fangyan is an example of *Danxia* physiognomy, which is characterized by red cliffs and a range of landforms created through erosions. Because of its unique landscape, Fangyan was inscribed as a National Park of China in 2005, and was one of the 208 National Parks recognized by the state as of 2012. The designation National Park of China is a heritage classification and management system established in China in 1982; it recognizes natural sites and cultural landscapes with beautiful environments that can be used for tourist, scientific, and cultural activities.² In addition to its scenic beauty, Fangyan is renowned for its historic and vernacular built environment and the unique cultural and ritual activities associated with *Hugong Dadi*,³ one of the few

¹ Part of this chapter is based on a larger scale research study I completed as a research fellow at Tsinghua University, Beijing, China between 2007 and 2008, which focused on the vernacular architecture of the Fangyan area, Zhejiang Province, China. Some of the material in the first section of this chapter, the creation of the man-made god, was previously published (Zhao 2010).

² The National Park in China is also referred to as National Tourist Scenic Spots on earlier application dossiers for World Heritage Sites. For more information regarding the National Park in China, see *Fengjing Mingshen Qu Tiaoli [The Regulations for National Park of China]*, which is available at the official website of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China: <http://www.gov.cn/zwgk/2006-09/29/content_402732.htm>.

³ Hugong Dadi means "the great god of Mr. Hu" in English.

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Fig. 5.1 The worship of *Hugong Dadi*. (Photo by author)

emperor-appointed gods remaining in modern China. The worship of Hu has been centered in Fangyan for the past 900 years, and it has extended to the entire southeast of China, including Taiwan (Fig. 5.1).

Drawing upon fieldwork and archival research,⁴ this chapter first analyzes the historic and cultural background of the creation of *Hugong Dadi* as a focus of a regional pilgrimage in China, resulting in a pilgrimage site. It then presents the rich cultural, ritual, and economic activities associated with this folk religion. Political and commercial motivations have been part of the subtext in both the creation and the preservation of this folk religion from the very beginning. However, in recent decades, the underlying political and commercial agenda held by the local government of Yongkang has a new direction, which has been causing a deterioration of this cultural heritage. Therefore, this chapter critiques the interference of the local government in managing the cultural heritage and the reconstruction of the built environment since the 1980s. In particular, it questions the “holistic relocation” of the villagers since 2009, which is intended to *recreate* a World Heritage Natural Site. In addition, this chapter interrogates the social and cultural values of the recently reconstructed cultural heritage and the to be

⁴ During the course of this research I have consulted—with permission—many family records, historical documents, and government publications. These records are not authored. Some of them have no publication year and no page numbers. See “Other References” list at the end of this chapter.

reconstructed natural heritage as these values pertain to the tourists and, more importantly, as they pertain to the locals, who have been creators and guardians of the tangible and intangible heritage for 900 years.

The Creation of the Man-Made God

Hugong Dadi is the honorific title that pilgrims gave to Hu Ze. Hu was a local resident of Fangyan. In the spring of 998 B.C., Hu entered reclusive life in Dabei Temple on the top of Fangyan Mountain to prepare for the imperial examination and taught the young monks in the meantime.⁵ After receiving a high rank on the exam in the following year, Hu became an official reigning in southeast China for the next 40 years. Upon the death of Hu in 1039, the monks of Dabei Temple, whom had been his students, set up a wooden tablet in the previous study hall to memorialize their teacher. As the beneficiary of one of the Confucian ideas which states “be one’s teacher for a day, be one’s father for a lifetime,” Hu started receiving offerings from the monks inside the Buddhist temple. After the great fire of 1065, Dabei Temple was renamed Guangci Temple. After the construction of the new temple, a little statue of Hu, along with his tablet, was placed in front of the statue of Gautama Buddha. Since then, Hu started sharing the oblations with the Buddha.

In 1122, the Huizong emperor (1082–1135) bestowed a noble rank on a Fangyan god, who was believed to have assisted the emperor’s troops in suppressing a peasant-led uprising. In actuality, the legend of the Fangyan god was fabricated by a government official and the monks of Guangci Temple to support the emperor’s agenda to have all the winning battles be credited to the protection of legitimate local gods.⁶ Guangci Temple took this opportunity to interpret the Fangyan god as Hu, who had died 83 years earlier. By enshrining this Daoist deity, Guangci temple protected itself from the competing social and religious pressures existing between Daoism and Buddhism, and created a compromise with Confucianism at that time.⁷

Hu’s noble rank and his recognition by the emperor inevitably started to attract believers, which, in turn, helped Hu earn more prestige in the following years. In the meantime, the study hall in Guangci Temple became a dedicated shrine for Hu with his statue sitting inside. In the following 100 years, Hu’s noble rank was promoted seven times by four different emperors of the Song Dynasty.⁸ By the

⁵ Source: Abbot Yunming (the previous abbot) in discussion with the author in September 2007. The history of Dabei Temple, later known as Guangci Temple, is mainly based on the interviews with Abbot Yunming, in September, December 2007, and July 2008, unless otherwise noted.

⁶ See Lu 2003.

⁷ For more information on the Fangyan god and Hu’s legend, as well as the social and religious pressures between Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism at that time, see Zhao 2010.

⁸ See the emperors’ edicts collected in *Kuchuan Hushi Jiapu [Family Record of the Hu Family of Kuchuan]*, pp. 167–171.

middle of the fourteenth century, hundreds of temples were dedicated to Hu in Yongkang County, though most of them did not last long.⁹ Hu's shrine inside Guangci Temple, however, prospered. This was mainly because it was part of a renowned Buddhist temple; the monks took care of the shrine, and Buddhist pilgrims spread the fame of Hu along their journeys.

Sustaining this folk religion also relied on the support of three local families. Hu's descendents from a nearby village promoted their ancestor as a deity. In doing so, the Hu family not only glorified their family history, but also advanced their political careers and social standing. For 100 years after the middle of the seventeenth century, the Hu family participated in and tried to control the affairs of Guangci Temple to further advocate the worship of Hu.¹⁰

In the meantime, two Cheng families living in this area appropriated Hu as a means of doing business with the increasing number of pilgrims, which increased the family's wealth and advanced their social standing. The Cheng family of nearby Wenlou Village appropriated half of Fangyan Mountain by modifying deeds in the late sixteenth or the early seventeenth century. They soon set up small shops along the last segment of the pilgrim path in front of Guangci Temple where they sold food, candles, and goods for making offerings.¹¹ In the middle of the eighteenth century, one of the descendents of the Cheng family created the Hugong Fortune-Telling Poems and began to populate this religious site with their family members who worked as the interpreters of the Hugong Fortune-Telling Poems.

Another Cheng family, distantly related to the Cheng family discussed above, played the most critical role in sustaining this folk religion. They had been living along the foot of Fangyan Mountain when a devastating fire burned Guangci Temple in 1849. The fire destroyed the entire Guangci Temple except the last structure, where one of Hu's statues was located. The Cheng family immediately started hosting pilgrims, and the very first family hotel was established within a year of the fire.¹² Over the following 100 years, the Cheng family opened more than forty family hotels along the pilgrims' path and eventually generated a mile-long linear built environment (Fig. 5.2).¹³ During this time, the Cheng family

⁹ See Huang Jin's article "Hu Shilang Miaobei Yinji [The Epitaph of Hu's Temple]," in *Kuchuan Hushi Jiapu [Family Record of the Hu Family of Kuchuan]*, pp. 579–580.

¹⁰ See various kinds of family records collected in *Kuchuan Hushi Jiapu [Family Record of the Hu Family of Kuchuan]*, pp. 598–616.

¹¹ See the article "Fangyanshan shang Fangfeng Ci [The Fangfeng Ci on the Top of Fangyan Mountain]," in *Wenlou Chengshi Jiapu [Family Record of the Cheng Family of Wenlou Village]*, pp. 10, 11.

¹² For the history of the first hotel in Yanxia Village, see *Yongkang Mingdian Mingchang [Noted Shops and Factories in Yongkang]*, edited by Yongkang Shi Zhengxie Wenshi Committee, 1995, p. 90.

¹³ For the list of hotels, see *Yongkang Mingdian Mingchang [Noted Shops and Factories in Yongkang]*, edited by Yongkang Shi Zhengxie Wenshi Committee, 1995, pp. 101–103.

Fig. 5.2 The mile-long pilgrim path framed by local hotels. (Photo by author)



hotels attracted and accommodated increasingly more pilgrims, as well as tourists from the entirety of Southeast China.¹⁴

In summary, the creation and the preservation of the religion of Hu had, and to this day still have, various supporters. There were the students who wanted to commemorate their teacher, the officials who wanted to please the emperor, the ruling class who wanted to reveal their divine power through appointing gods,¹⁵ the monks who wanted to save their Buddhist temple and practice, and Hu's descendents who wanted to glorify their family history. Also, the Chengs have been trying to make a living from the devotional pilgrims. Therefore, behind Hu's legend, there were deeply rooted, yet changing, social, cultural, and religious reasons that not only created this man-made god, but also helped to maintain his religious status till the present day.¹⁶

¹⁴ Tourism in China started in the Eastern Zhou Dynasty 770—221 B.C.E. and became popularized and accessible by the general public since the Ming Dynasty (1368—1644 C.E.). For the history of tourism in China, see Zhang 1992 and Zheng 2000. For tourism culture in the Ming Dynasty, see Wu and Di Biase 2010.

¹⁵ For the relationship between the imperial power and folk religions, see Hou and Fan 2001.

¹⁶ There were many emperor appointed gods in Chinese history, especially during the Song Dynasty, but only a few remain in modern China, such as Mazu and Zhangfei. See Zhao 2010.

The Cultural Heritage

There are a series of ritual and cultural activities that have been developed to further materialize the religion of Hu. The cultural heritage directly related to the worship of Hu includes the Hugong Fortune-Telling Poems, the family hotel business and its culture, and the month-long Temple Fair of Hu.

The Hugong Fortune-Telling Poems

According to the *Family Record of the Cheng Family of Wenlou Village*, the Hugong Fortune-Telling Poems were written by Cheng Zhaoxuan (1724–1786), a scholar from the Cheng family of Wenlou Village.¹⁷ After the completion of these one hundred poems, the Cheng family not only populated Fangyan Mountain with people selling food, candles, and goods for offerings, but also with interpreters of the Hugong Fortune-Telling Poems. A believer first draws a bamboo stick and then exchanges it with one poem to which it refers. Each poem cites famous stories and literature in history to imply a foreseen future. According to the interpreters of the Hugong Fortune-Telling Poems, one-third of the poems imply good fortune, one-third suggest bad fortune, and one-third fall in between. Since most people cannot fully understand the underlying meaning of the poems, they seek out the interpreters (Fig. 5.3).

According to Abbot Yunming, who was the first abbot of Guangci Temple after the end of the Cultural Revolution, Guangci Temple did not like this secular practice. However, the monks no longer had the power to control what was happening in front of the temple, since they lost the ownership of the land to the Cheng family of Wenlou Village. On the other hand, the *Fangyan Guide* printed in 1925 listed about twenty interpreters inside the temple by that time. The exact cause for inviting the interpreters inside the temple is unknown. It could be because the Hugong Fortune-Telling Poems became so popular that Guangci Temple eventually wanted to share the income of the interpreters due to its own financial crises around the turn of the twentieth century.¹⁸ It could also be one of the agreements reached between the monks and the Cheng family upon receiving a large donation from the family for renovating the temple. The Cheng family most likely favored this change, since it made the Hugong Fortune-Telling Poems and the interpreters more legitimately and closely associated with the religious practice of Hu.

¹⁷ For details of the Hugong Fortune-Telling Poems, see Hu 1996.

¹⁸ According to Abbot Yunming, Guangci Temple was under financial difficulties during the final years of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911). Due to poverty, the local people often stole things from the temple, or even took down parts of the building and sold the material for living. Meanwhile, more than half of the monks left during that period.

Fig. 5.3 Pilgrims seeking explanations from the interpreters of Hugong Fortune-Telling Poem. (Photo by author)



Family Hotel Business

The Cheng family, living along the foot of Fangyan Mountain, started the family hotel business in the middle of the nineteenth century. There were heated competitions among the family hotel owners, which helped to form its unique culture. Although the size of the family hotel ranged from a small hotel with a few rooms to a grand hotel with many courtyards, every family hotel provided a one-night and two-meal package to the pilgrims. Yet the standards and the prices of that package varied dramatically (Fig. 5.4). Most medium and large family hotels also had other variously priced packages for the pilgrims to choose from.¹⁹ The standard of accommodation varied from straw-bedding inside the courtyard to private suites designed to answer the needs of rich and modern customers from large cities such as Shanghai.²⁰

¹⁹ See *Yongkang Mingdian Mingchang [Noted Shops and Factories in Yongkang]*, edited by Yongkang Shi Zhengxie Wenshi Committee, 1995, p. 91.

²⁰ The history and culture of the hotel business is mainly based on interviews with previous hotel owners in September, December 2007 and May, July 2008, unless otherwise noted.



Fig. 5.4 The courtyard of a large hotel, Hotel Chengchengchang. (Photo by author)

The family hotel owners tried to set up a guild to regulate the service and prevent inappropriate competition; however, agreements were breached repeatedly due to the temptation for higher profits. In order to attract more customers, most family hotels added different kinds of extended services in order to compete with each other. These extended services included providing guidebooks and guided tours of Fangyan Mountain, offering local products as gifts to their guests, hosting entertainments at night, and sending carriers to the nearby city where the long distance bus or train ended for a free pick-up service. The owners of the large family hotels, which ranged in size from dozens of rooms to more than one hundred rooms, also sent many of their employees to visit their prestigious guests in large cities, such as Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Ningbo, one month before the pilgrim season every year for advanced booking and to ensure their return that season. For the most important guests, they would personally bring them back to Fangyan. These thoughtful and circumspect services provided by the family hotels transformed this once-tough journey into a more pleasant experience. Ultimately, service improvements helped not only to retain the existing pilgrims, but also to attract an even larger population.²¹

²¹ As part of their business strategy, the hotel owners even developed their own language. It is a language only spoken among the people working in the hotel business in order to protect the overall interests of the industry. It would be used under certain circumstances, such as when one

The Temple Fair

The busiest season for the family hotel owners has always been the period during the Temple Fair of Hu, which runs from the start of the 1st day of the 8th lunar month to the 14th day of the 9th lunar month. The fundamental ritual of the Temple Fair of Hu is *Daluohan*, which originally was a kind of recreational martial art for the monks of Dabei Temple and which can be traced back to the founding of the temple in the ninth century. During Hu's residency in Guangci Temple, he encouraged the local residents to practice this *Daluohan* ritual as a means of exercise. This daily exercise gradually turned into a month-long event when many local villages organized their own teams and paraded all the way to the top of Fangyan Mountain around Hu's birthday on the 13th day of the 8th lunar month.

For generations, a parade organized by the village where Hu was born usually announces the beginning of the Temple Fair of Hu on the 1st day of the 8th lunar month every year.²² For the following month and a half, there are villages assigned to perform *Daluohan* on each day. The temple fair hits its first peak on the 13th day of the 8th lunar month when it is said that up to seventy-two teams reach Hu's temple; the second peak is on the 9th day of the 9th lunar month, a traditional nationwide Chinese holiday with the custom of climbing mountains.

There are well-established rituals to follow on the assigned day of the parade. Each parade starts with dozens of people holding various ceremonial items such as flags, tablets, drums, gongs, candles, incense, and a small statue of Hu. Then there is a group of performers for *Daluohan*. Some villages will have another troupe of dancers and singers for other small plays, and the backup group members and other residents of the village are usually at the end of the line (Fig. 5.5). The total number of people involved in each parade team can be as many as a few hundred. The main ceremony is held in front of Hu's shrine, where a small amount of ash is transferred from the main incensory of Hu's shrine to the small incensory of that village during the performance of *Daluohan*. After the parade goes back to the village, Hu's statue is carefully put back to his local shrine until next year.

Although it is a religious ceremony, the Temple Fair of Hu can be better described as a social and recreational event for participants, as well as for the entire region. The preparation for the parade in the villages, most of which are kinship villages, can start months in advance. It is an opportunity to bring all the residents together; it is also a testimony of their kinship relationships. The singing and dancing performance during the temple fair is actually an opportunity for the villagers to enjoy themselves after one year of hard work in the fields, more so than entertaining Hu. That it is a social and recreational event is the essential reason

(Footnote 21 continued)

hotel owner needed to purchase foods or borrow bedding from another hotel, which could result in a loss of any potential customers if they overheard these kinds of conversations.

²² The cultural practice of *Daluohan* and other local traditions are mainly based on interviews with local residents in September, December 2007 and May, July 2008, unless otherwise noted.



Fig. 5.5 Performers of *Daluohan*. (Photo courtesy of the local government of Fangyan)

that the Temple Fair of Hu has attracted millions of performers, as well as pilgrims and visitors every year. As a result, the religion of Hu has carried on for over 900 years.

The Chinese New Year Celebration

The Chinese New Year celebration in Yanxia has been greatly influenced by the religion of Hu. Similar to the vernacular practice in this part of China, the New Year celebration in Yanxia Village starts from the 24th day of the 12th lunar month with the worshipping of the Kitchen God or the God of Fire and ends after the Dragon Dance in the middle of the 1st lunar month.²³ However, the influence of the religion of Hu is evident in two details. The first is the climbing of Fangyan Mountain after midnight of the 31st day of the 12th lunar month, the way most residents of Yanxia village start a new year. They do this so that, in the first morning of a new year, they can ask Hu to protect their family in the coming year and to make a drawing to the Hugong Fortune-Telling Poems so they can foresee their own fortune.

²³ For the common rituals of the Chinese New Year celebration in this region, see Wang 1986.

The second activity influenced by the religion of Hu is to hold the Dragon Dance on the 14th day instead of on the 15th day of the 1st lunar month as in other parts of China. The Dragon Dance is a parade consisting of a team of hundreds of people, including the dance performers who hold sections of the chapter-dragon lit up with candles, the music performers, and the backup performers. The team has to parade across the entire Fangyan Valley, reach the Ancestral Hall a few miles away, and climb the narrow and steep Fangyan Mountain path to worship Hu and receive the blessing from the Abbot of Guangci Temple. This entire process takes an entire day. Only by starting on the morning of 14th day of the 1st lunar month can the villagers finish the parade by the 15th day of that month. Then they dispatch the pearls decorating the dragon's head to newly wedded couples or families wishing for a newborn son in the coming year. The completion of the Dragon Dance parade officially marks the end of the New Year celebration.

A New Era of Constructed Heritage

The three decades after the early 1980s was a new era for the religion of Hu, during which the local government of Yongkang not only interfered, but also tried to reconstruct the cultural heritage of Hu to suit its underlying economic agenda. The end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 and China's economic reforms, starting in 1978, marked the milestone for this new era.

The first 30 years after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 were a period of political and social turbulence and confusion, greatly affecting the cultural heritage associated with the religion of Hu. By the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, Guangci Temple was demolished except for Pingfeng Ge, the shrine of Hu, which the residents of Yanxia Village risked their lives to protect (Fig. 5.6). The Temple Fair of Hu had been halted for more than a decade. The family hotels had either ceased operating or had been converted into factories. Pilgrims had stopped coming altogether.²⁴

China's economic reforms, starting in 1978, facilitated the return of ritual and cultural activities, as well as pilgrims and tourists. With generous donations from the pilgrims, Abbot Yunming was able to rebuild Guangci Temple little by little during the next several years. The local government soon realized the potential economic benefit from tourism and started to take control of the management of cultural heritage. The Fangyan Scenic Area Committee was founded in 1980 as part of Yongkang People's Government. Currently, it includes the Planning Office, the Administrative Office of Fangyan Scenic Area, Fangyan Scenic Spot Management Company, and two other general offices. The management company is a profit-oriented company with six departments, including a security department, a

²⁴ The history of the village is mainly based on interviews with local residents in September, December 2007 and May, July 2008, unless otherwise noted.



Fig. 5.6 The local people built a wall to seal up Pingfeng Ge as a way to protect it from being demolished during the Cultural Revolution. (Photo courtesy of Yueyang Wang)

ticketing office, a management office for the Temple of Hu, a marketing office, an operating office, and a general office. There are 65 employees under the administrative office and probably more working for the management company.²⁵ However, no dedicated offices or individuals are directly in charge of historical research, preservation, or education. In contrast, four out of the six offices of the management company are set up to help generate revenue.

The administrative office started to promote tourism in 1982, and a fee to enter Fangyan Mountain was imposed in the same year. As of 2008, the cost was 50 *yuan*—about seven US dollars, which could pay for a dinner for 4–5 people in a local restaurant. Residents who live within Fangyan Valley were exempt from the entrance fee. There were 670,000 visitors in 2007,²⁶ which created over 5 million US dollars revenue simply from collecting entrance fee alone. According to the

²⁵ The organization of the Fangyan Scenic Area Committee can be seen on this website: <http://www.yktour.com/tourism_department/index.php>.

²⁶ See the article on the website of People of Yongkang: <<http://www.ykr.cc/new/ShowNews2335.aspx>>.

heritage law in China, this income is categorized as operational income.²⁷ The use and distribution of operational income is not subject to heritage law or regulation. Therefore, the amount of money visitors pay is not necessarily used to protect the heritage. When the operational income of a heritage site is directly associated with the staff members' salaries and benefits in such a commercial enterprise, then the status of the heritage itself might be threatened due to neglect.

In the middle of the 1980s, the Fangyan Scenic Spot Management Company demolished the part of Guangci Temple rebuilt by Abbot Yunming a few years earlier. Meanwhile, the management company constructed a new Temple of Hu in front of the surviving Pingfeng Ge, which had marked the central axis of Guangci Temple for over a millennium. Guangci Temple was physically relocated to the side. The Temple of Hu, constructed in reinforced concrete to mimic traditional wood construction, became an independent religious site managed by the management company. As a result, Guangci Temple—the place where Hu was apotheosized and had been enshrined for over 900 years—was excluded from this modern reconstruction of the heritage of Hu. Today the newly built Temple of Hu instead appears to be the one that has a long history and receives the donation from pilgrims. By doing this, the management company can achieve the maximum income from pilgrims and tourists. In contrast, Guangci Temple, which had guarded this folk religion over the centuries, now receives just half of one percentage of the income from the entrance fee.²⁸

In order to further develop the heritage site and attract more tourists, the administrative office decided to allow outside local and regional investments. Thus, in 1999, Hongda Shiye Inc. of Yongkong built a “City of Hu” on top of the mountain to the south of Fangyan Mountain.²⁹ It is an entertainment park with a series of buildings, a tower, an oversized statue of Hu, and a large plaza for performances. The theme of the park is highly commercialized and has a focus on fortune-telling. This emphasis is clearly revealed in the names of the place, such as Make-a-Wish Tree, Realize-Your-Dream Tower, and Be-Safe Hall. The 1,500 m² plaza became the place where the local governor officially announces the beginning of the Temple Fair of Hu and is the stage for the fair's performances. Instead of being a local ritual activity for worshipping a folk deity and a social and recreational event for all the participants and local people, the Temple Fair of Hu has become a show to entertain visitors. Meanwhile, the Temple Fair has become detached from its historic context.

Besides reconstructing the pilgrimage sites, the vernacular built environment within Fangyan Valley experienced great changes as well. A wide concrete road was built to replace an existing gravel road along the western side of Fangyan

²⁷ The law can be read at the official website of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage: <<http://www.sach.gov.cn/tabid/311/InfoID/383/Default.aspx>>.

²⁸ Source: Abbot Mingxiu (the present abbot of Guangci Temple) in discussion with the author in September 2007.

²⁹ See the article on the Zhejiang Business Networks website: <<http://biz.zjol.com.cn/06yk/system/2008/08/13/009835852.shtml>>.



Fig. 5.7 Tall buildings along the new road. (Photo by author)

Valley, and a parking lot was constructed at the entrance of Fangyan Mountain in 1985 to accommodate the increasing numbers of tourists who arrived in automobiles.³⁰ Before the construction of the new road, the historical pilgrim path was still the main route that most pilgrims and tourists took to reach Fangyan Mountain, because that was where the family hotels and stores were located. In the early 1980s, there were only a few food stands set up by the local people along the gravel road. However, the completion of the new road attracted new family hotels and stores. Eventually, the business owners of the family hotels and stores along the historic path either relocated their businesses to the new road or closed them. Meanwhile, a large number of tall buildings with few historic references were uniformly constructed along the new road (Fig. 5.7). Many of them were empty by 2008. More importantly, the mile-long historic pilgrim route and the family hotels along the path have been left unattended and, therefore, have deteriorated. In particular, for the three hotels that became state-owned property in the 1950 were used for various purposes after the closing down of the hotel business during the Cultural Revolution. Some of the areas are currently used as factories or storage

³⁰ For the history of the new road, see *Yongkang Xianzhi [Record of Yongkang]* edited by Yongkang Xianzhi Committee, 1991, p. 670.



Fig. 5.8 The once-largest hotel, Hotel Chengzhenxing, is currently used as a factory and a storage facility. (Photo by author)

facilities, and the physical condition of the buildings is worrisome (Fig. 5.8). In the meantime, the new road with modern hotels and empty storefronts is lifeless and placeless.

The Holistic Relocation

In the last decade, both the state government and the local governments have been placing great emphasis on promoting cultural heritages, and they seem to believe that one of the highest recognitions for a heritage site would be to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site. After Fangyan became a National Park of China in 2005, the local government of Yongkang and the provincial government of Zhejiang started to promote Fangyan as a World Heritage Natural Site. However, their proposal was based on demolishing the built environment so as to *recreate* the beauty of the natural environment. This idea can be traced back to a master plan in the early twenty-first century. In 2003, the Fangyan Scenic Area Committee hired a planning and design company to create the design of the central service area and the restoration plan for the villages. Their goal was to relocate all the residents to a new settlement area and move all the businesses to a central service area.



Fig. 5.9 The landscape of Fangyan. (Photo by author)

However, this ambitious plan was not realized, nor were many subsequent master plans implemented.³¹

In 2006, Fangyan was selected as one of the nine potential sites for a nomination of a new World Heritage Natural Site. The nomination was designated as China *Danxia* and was initially intended to bundle multiple sites from the southern part of China (Fig. 5.9). After the initial assessment, experts advised the local government that the man-made elements and scenes within the proposed preservation zone for the World Heritage Natural Site destroyed the natural beauty of the landscape.³² The plan developed in 2003, to relocate all residents and move all businesses, was brought to the table again. The difference was that besides relocating all the residents to a new settlement area, most of the historic buildings would be demolished. By the summer of 2008, a pavilion that had existed for generations, the food stands on the top of Fangyan Mountain, and a few small structures within the proposed preservation zone were removed. In December 2008, the 100 m tall statue of Hu, a 9-year-old sculpture inside the “City of Hu,” was demolished.³³ Meanwhile, the new settlement area was under construction. However, the process of relocating the residents was greatly delayed.

During the internal Chinese heritage office meeting held in Beijing in early 2009, Fangyan was not selected as one of the final six sites bundled together for China *Danxia* mainly because of what the selection committee saw as its “chaotic

³¹ See the article on the Jinhua News website: <http://www.jhnews.com.cn/jhwb/2008-07/01/content_180085.htm>.

³² See the article on the Jinhua News website: <http://www.jhnews.com.cn/jhrb/2010-08/04/content_1157569.htm>.

³³ See the articles on the Jinhua News website: <http://www.jhnews.com.cn/site1/jhwb/html/2008-12/31/content_724988.htm> and the Zhejiang News website: <<http://zjnews.zjol.com.cn/06yk/system/2008/11/10/014954283.shtml>>.

built environment” along the foot of Fangyan Mountain.³⁴ What the committee referred to was the villages that the Cheng family has been living in since the early fourteenth century. In response to this comment, the local government of Yongkang planned to carry out a “holistic relocation (*zhengti banqian* 整体搬迁),” which was also considered by the local officials as the only way to improve the economic status of Fangyan by attracting businesses and tourists. This idea is clearly stated in the official slogan of this movement: “Promote the Holistic Relocation, Elevate the Status of Fangyan, and Create a Large City that Attracts Business and Tourists.”³⁵ Meanwhile, the impact on local residents and cultural heritage is not of concern.

The Relocation Guidelines

The local government of Yongkang issued *The Detailed Guidelines for the Demolition, Compensation, and Settlement Plan for the Central Scenic Area of Fangyan, Yongkang* (hereafter *The Guidelines*), which sets up the relocation and compensation policies and procedures, in November 2009.³⁶ According to *The Guidelines*, the residents of Yanshang, Yanxia, and Chenglu villages will be relocated, which will involve a total of 3,500 people.³⁷ Fangyan Scenic Spot Management Company, the profit-oriented company mentioned above, will carry out the demolition and relocation work, while the local government will oversee the process. In general, the residents are to receive compensation for demolition, subsidies for relocation, and subsidies for interim housing up to 12 months. Some residents will also receive additional compensation for decorative components of their houses, such as aluminum doors or window frames. The owners of family hotels and retail shops will receive an additional one-time compensation for closing their businesses. The following paragraphs examine *The Guidelines* in detail, comparing each type of compensation to related state-issued regulations.

The framework of the compensation policy sounds reasonable; the compensation for demolition is to be calculated by multiplying the size of the house, the unit price, and the depreciation rate.³⁸ However, when examining it in detail against the

³⁴ See the article on the Jinhua News website: <http://www.jhnews.com.cn/jhrb/2010-08/04/content_1157569.htm>.

³⁵ See the article on the Zhejiang Online website: <<http://www.zjol.com.cn/06yk/system/2008/10/23/010059176.shtml>>.

³⁶ The local government-issued document, *The Detailed Guidelines for the Demolition, Compensation, and Settlement Plan for the Central Scenic Area of Fangyan of the City of Yongkang*, was approved by Yongkang People’s Government and printed on November 18, 2009.

³⁷ The population of each village can be seen on the official website of Fangyan County: <<http://www.fangyan.zj.com/village>>.

³⁸ The subsidy for relocation is 1,000 *yuan* (about \$160 with the current exchange rate of 6.3:1) per household when the existing house is less than 100 m², and 6 *yuan* per square meters for

related regulations for demolition enacted by the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China (hereafter the Central Government) in 2001 and 2003, many issues start to become exposed.³⁹ First of all, the state-issued regulations require that the party which carries out the relocation should provide either cash compensation or equivalent housing replacement for the residents. When choosing cash compensation, an independent professional company should be hired to value the existing houses according to the market value. In this case, two independent companies were invited; however, they only estimated the depreciation rate, while the unit price was pre-set by the local government. According to *The Guidelines*, the unit price ranges from 130 *yuan* per square meter for simple structures to 670 *yuan* per square meter for reinforced concrete structures. Most of the houses, including the historic houses, fall into the categories of wood and adobe or wood and brick construction types, which range from 250 to 350 *yuan* per square meters. Therefore, the value of the house is in some way predetermined by the local government when they set the unit price for each type of house in *The Guidelines*. This is against the state regulation which requires an independent professional company to value the existing houses according to the market value.

Second, the way the existing houses are measured does not follow the building code currently applied in China. The building code states that the covered corridor, or space, with supporting structures on both sides should be calculated according to the perimeter of the supporting structure.⁴⁰ This is the case for all the covered corridors and open Main Halls inside the traditional houses of these villages. However, these spaces, as well as the courtyards, are not included when calculating the size of the house. As a result, the surveyed size of a house is much smaller than the reality. For example, a family, who lived in a traditional courtyard house which has about 450 m² in the first level (including the courtyard) and another 370 m² on the second level, told me that they would only receive

(Footnote 38 continued)

every additional square meter. The subsidy for interim housing is 10 *yuan* per month per household for every square meter of an existing house that is less than 100 m², and 5 *yuan* per month for every additional square meter; in addition, this subsidy is valid for 1 year, and it may be extended. The business owners will receive a one-time compensation for closing their businesses, which will be 10% of their previous year's sales tax if it is less than 100,000 *yuan*, and 5% of the portion of sales tax that exceeds 100,000 *yuan*. In addition, they will receive compensation for the demolition of their hotels or stores; based on location, this compensation will be either 180 or 240 *yuan* per square meter for the overall size of the first floor only.

³⁹ See *Chengshi Fangwu Chaiqian Guanli Tiaoli [Regulation on the Dismantlement of Urban Houses]* enacted in June 2001. Available on the official website of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China: <http://www.gov.cn/zwgk/2005-06/06/content_4252.htm> Also See *Chengshi Fangwu Chaiqian Gujia Zhidao Yijian [Guiding Opinions on Appraisal of Urban House Dismantlement]* enacted in December 2003 (effective in January 2004). Available on the official website of the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural development of the People's Republic of China Library of Law: <http://www.mohurd.gov.cn/zcfg/jsbwj_0/jsbwjfdcy/201106/t20110607_203498.html>.

⁴⁰ See building code, *Jianzhu Gongcheng Jianzhu Mianji Jisuan Guifan [The Code for Calculating Construction Area in Architectural Project]*, GB/T50353—2005.

1,200 *yuan* per month as the subsidy for interim housing, which was calculated based on the survey performed by the professionals hired by the management company.⁴¹ According to the formula provided by *The Guidelines*, this amount is for a house of 140 m².⁴²

Last, to include the depreciation rate into the calculation of compensation for demolition not only has no reference according to the state-issued regulations, but also does not apply to the local situation. This means that historic houses, which have high architectural and cultural values, have the least cash value. Therefore, all three variables that are used to calculate the compensation for demolition, the largest portion of the overall cash compensation for most residents, are set up in a way that does not protect the residents' legal rights.

The subsidy for relocation and the subsidy for interim housing are required according to state-issued regulations. However, the subsidies alone will not be able to provide places for these people to live during the one-year interim period. The entire Fangyan Valley is going to become a construction site according to this relocation plan. The residents of these three villages cannot stay with their relatives, because all of their relatives will be facing the very same situation. The residents of these three villages belong to the same lineage of the Cheng family; except some exceptions in recent decades, every single male descendant of this Cheng family has stayed in these villages since the middle of the fifteenth century. Moreover, these residents cannot rent a place in the city, even if they receive enough subsidies to do so. They are farmers, who rely on the land to support themselves.

The additional forms of compensation have noticeable problems as well. The compensation for decorative components of the house comes with a table, yet none of its items could apply to a traditional house. According to *The Guidelines*, a less than 20-year-old aluminum window frame is worth an additional 180 *yuan*, while an almost 200-year-old highly decorative wooden carved window frame is worth nothing.

If the framework of compensation policy for average residents seems to follow the state-issued regulations, the additional compensation policies for the family hotel and retail owners have some fundamental problems. The families that run family hotels or stores live on site, which means that they do not have another house for which they could receive compensation. According to *The Guidelines*, the compensation for demolition of family hotels and stores is based on the area of the first level only and the unit price is either 180 or 240 *yuan* per square meter. These numbers are much lower than if the same building is calculated as a residence. Since all the floors would be included, the unit price would be at least doubled according to the construction type, and all the decorative components, such as tiles and aluminum windows, would be compensated. Furthermore, for

⁴¹ Source: A local family in discussion with the author in July 2011.

⁴² Based on the formula explained in note 37, the first 100 m² of the house receives a subsidy of 1,000 *yuan* and each additional square meter of the house receives 6 *yuan*. $1,000 + 40 \times 6 = 1,240$. Therefore, 1,200 *yuan* is the subsidy for a house smaller than 140 m².

such families, this demolition means that they will lose not only their homes, but also their lifestyle and their only source of income. However, the amount of money these families will receive for closing their business is 10% of the previous year's sales tax on the business if it is less than 100,000 *yuan*. The sales tax is 5% for hotels and stores according to Chinese law; this means that sales income needs to be 2,000,000 *yuan* in the previous year for the family to get a compensation of 100,000 *yuan*. If we consider an average-sized family hotel of 10 rooms, which are completely booked for 2 months during the pilgrim season at the rate of 80 *yuan* per night based on my experience, it would take that family hotel 42 years to make 2 million *yuan*. This means that the same family hotel will only get 2,380 *yuan* (100,000 divided by 42) for closing their business forever. This explains the family hotel owners' resistance toward relocation. A family hotel owner, who is married with two young children, has stated that he will never leave his hotel. He went on to say that if the government were to put him in prison because of that, he would take his entire family with him, since it would mean the same to his family if he abandoned his hotel: homeless and hopeless.⁴³

The Practical Challenges and Management Issues of the Guidelines

Besides the deviation from the state-issued related regulations for demolition and relocation, *The Guidelines* also has practical challenges for the local residents to carry out the relocation and other issues at the management level. The large images of the new settlement that are marking the entrance to Fangyan Valley are only architectural renderings (Fig. 5.10). The settlement area was a piece of agricultural land of 980,000 m², acquired by the local government of Yongkang from nearby villages in November 2010.⁴⁴ As of July 2012, the land remained a wasteland except for the new, yet empty, office building of the local government of Fangyan. According to *The Guidelines*, the Fangyan Scenic Spot Management Company, the company that will run the hotels and stores taken from the residents in the central business area of the new settlement, is only liable to provide water and electricity to the site, level the land, and build roads. The residents have to build their new homes on small pieces of land allocated to them in the style defined by the architectural renderings. An old couple wondered, how will they build a house by themselves? They further stated that they cannot afford to hire a construction worker for 120 *yuan* per day based on the compensation they will

⁴³ Source: A local hotel owner in discussion with the author in July 2011.

⁴⁴ See the article on the official website of Fangyan County: <<http://www.fangyan.zj.com/show/id/102680/db/0>>.



Fig. 5.10 The large billboard showing the architectural rendering of the settlement area as fenced up and marking the entrance to Fangyan Valley. (Photo by author)

receive.⁴⁵ This is not a problem only old couples have to face; it is a shared issue by all families who have to relocate.

The local government and the management company must have known that their policy does not follow the state-issued regulation. They might also be well aware that the local residents would not have the necessary financial resources and manpower to relocate, even if they wanted to in the name of improving local business or promoting a future World Heritage Natural Site. Probably with the expectation that they would receive great resistance during the relocation process, the local government added these two articles to the appendix section of *The Guidelines*:

Article 24: For anyone who refuses to relocate after the deadline for relocation, forced relocation will be carried out according to the appropriate law and regulation.

Article 25: For anyone who incites unreasonable provocation, destroys social order and relocation procedures, insults or assaults government officials, obstructs government officials from carrying out their responsibilities, the police department will implement a harsher punishment according to the *Law on Public Security Administration Punishments*. For anyone who commits a crime, the police department will proceed according to the *Criminal Law*.

⁴⁵ Source: Local residents in discussion with the author in July 2011.

First of all, there are no laws or regulations in China that authorize anyone to carry out forced relocation under any circumstances. The *Regulation on the Dismantlement of Urban Houses* issued by the Central Government in 2001, which is also applicable in non-urban contexts, clearly states that if a resident refuses to relocate even after reaching an agreement on cash compensation or settlement plan, the party carrying out the demolition should bring this case to the court.⁴⁶ Specifically, the Central Government issued a special notice in 2004 that further regulates the demolition and relocation procedure.⁴⁷ It clearly states that the demolition project should not harm residents' interests. In addition, it prescribes that violent or illegal demolition is strictly prohibited; forced relocation through the means of blocking traffic or cutting off water, electric and heating supplies is strictly prohibited. Second, Article 25 seems to be written with the assumption that only the local residents will destroy social order and break the laws during the relocation process. In addition, it emphasizes "a harsher punishment" for people who commit the kinds of crimes mentioned in Article 25. One must question who has the right to decide on a harsher punishment, and what exactly is a *harsher* punishment according to the Law? On the other hand, the residents' interests and legal rights are not equally protected from the hardship they might experience during the forced relocation.

In addition, *The Guidelines* also has critical issues at the management level, which not only impact local residents' legal right, but also create a false image of the relocation project. The *Regulation on the Dismantlement of Urban Houses* clearly states that the local government which oversees the demolition and relocation process *cannot* be the party that carries out the work (see Footnote 43). This is to ensure that local government can maintain justice during conflict and protect both parties' legal rights and interests. However, as mentioned earlier, the management company is one of six offices under the Fangyan Scenic Area Committee, which is part of Yongkang People's Government. This shared interest led the local government to intervene greatly in the demolition process. According to local residents, the families who signed the compensation agreement are the ones who have family members working for the government or who are members of the Communist Party; they were threatened that they would lose their jobs or memberships if they refused to sign the agreement. The interpreters working on the top of Fangyan Mountain are facing the same situation, since they are the employees

⁴⁶ See *Chengshi Fangwu Chaiqian Guanli Tiaoli [Regulation on the Dismantlement of Urban Houses]* enacted in June 2001. Available on the official website of The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China: <http://www.gov.cn/zw/gk/2005-06/06/content_4252.htm>.

⁴⁷ See *Guowuyuan Bangongting Guanyu Kongzhi Chengzhen Fangwu Chaiqian Guimo Yangde Chaiqian Guanli de Tongzhi [The Notification from the State Department Regarding Strictly Controlling the Scale of the Demolition Project and Tightening the Management of Demolition Process]*. Available on the official website of The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China: <http://www.gov.cn/ztl/2006-06/30/content_323724.htm>.

of the management company.⁴⁸ Obviously, when people have to choose between an immediate loss versus a crisis in the future, people choose to avoid the former. With those who signed the agreements, the local government created a false image through mass media: This project has gained the support from the local residents because of its promise to boost the local economy and protect the natural heritage. Moreover, in this image, this project was projected as a political achievement that was reported to the provincial government.⁴⁹

The Execution of the Relocation Plan

According to the demolition schedule mapped out at the meeting held on 18 March 2010, all the residents were to be relocated and all the buildings were to be demolished by December 2010.⁵⁰ However, not a single family moved out by then. In addition, upon receiving the title of a World Heritage Natural Site for the first 6 sites in 2010, Fangyan was listed as the extension project of China *Danxia*. By the end of 2010, the local government was facing pressure from above and resistance from below. In addition, they learned that the Central Government was going to issue a new regulation on managing demolition projects with the aim to better protect the interest of the people.⁵¹ As a result, the local government acted. A blog published on 6 January 2011 reported that the collectively owned properties in one of the three villages had been cut off from water and electric supplies. In addition, a SWAT team of one hundred men entered the village and arrested one villager.⁵² During my conversation with a local resident of another village in July 2011, the interviewee confirmed this information and added that the arrested man was released after a few days and received a warm welcome from his fellow villagers.⁵³

⁴⁸ Source: Local residents in discussion with the author in July 2011.

⁴⁹ See the articles on the Yongkang News website: <<http://yknews.zjol.com.cn/news/yongkangnews/2010-06-03/4287.html>> and <http://yknews.zjol.com.cn/paper/html/2010-06/29/content_26846.htm>.

⁵⁰ For the demolition and relocation schedule, see the article on the Zhejiang Online website: <http://yknews.zjol.com.cn/paper/html/2010-03/20/content_20101.htm>.

⁵¹ The draft of new regulation was published and distributed for comments from the general public since January 2010.

⁵² See the post on Fangyan Scenic Area Discussion Board: <[⁵³ Source: Local residents in discussion with the author in July 2011.](http://ykfangan.jimdo.com/%E6%96%B0%E9%97%BB%E4%B8%AD%E5%BF%83%E6%96%B9%E5%B2%A9%E6%8B%86%E8%BF%81%E8%BF%9B%E5%85%A5%E5%85%B3%E5%81%A5%E9%98%B6%E6%AE%B5-%E6%A9%99%E9%BA%93%E6%9D%91%E5%B7%B2%E6%96%AD%E6%B0%B4%E6%96%AD%E7%94%B5-100%E5%A4%9A%E5%90%8D%E9%98%B2%E6%9A%B4%E9%98%9F%E5%91%98%E8%BF%9B%E9%A9%BB%E6%9D%91%E9%87%8C/>.</p>
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On 21 January 2011, the Central Government enacted the *Regulation on the Expropriation of Buildings on State-Owned Land and Compensation*, which replaced the one enacted in 2001.⁵⁴ The new regulation places great emphasis on maintaining the interest of the general public and protecting the legal rights of homeowners. More importantly, it strictly prohibits forced relocation through any means, such as employing violence or threat and cutting off water or electric supplies. Probably as a result of this new regulation, the demolition project was put off again for almost another year until November 2011. On 15 November, three houses were demolished, two of which belonged to village-level officials. According to the local news, one of the residents stated that even though he was reluctant to leave, he longed for a beautiful future for Fangyan after the completion of the demolition and renovation project. In addition, there were another 15 families who signed the contracts and another 120 families waiting to sign the contracts.⁵⁵ However, no additional news can be found regarding this project since then. In the meantime, during my conversation with some villagers in January 2012 over the phone, none of them mentioned the demolition project or expressed any concerns. Is what was reported on 15 November another illusion created to demonstrate a beneficial project, a competent local government, and a peaceful demolition process? If the answer is yes, who is the audience, the Central Government who tries to prohibit projects like this or the provincial government which provides financial support for World Heritage projects like this?⁵⁶ One can be sure that the news is not meant for local residents to read, since they live in the reality of losing their homes, their culture, and their lifestyles; they cannot be lured by an architectural rendering of their future homes or promise of a better life after the relocation.

Conclusions

The parallels, yet the contradictions, among the man-made god of Hu in history, the man-made recreation of the heritage of Hu decades ago, and the man-made natural beauty as planned in the present time are intriguing and provocative. How do we define *heritage* in the case of Hu? In other words, what makes the historic

⁵⁴ The new regulation is available on the official website of The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China: <http://www.gov.cn/zwgk/2011-01/21/content_1790111.htm>.

⁵⁵ See the articles on the Jinhua News website: <http://www.jhnews.com.cn/jhwb/2011-11/23/content_1956538.htm> and the Zhejiang News website: <<http://zjnews.zjol.com.cn/05zjnews/system/2011/11/15/017996437.shtml>>.

⁵⁶ As early as 2009, the local government had received 15,000,000 *yuan* (about 2.4 millions dollars) from the provincial government as the special funding to support the application for a World Heritage Natural Site. According to the article on the Jinhua News website: <http://epaper.jhnews.com.cn/site1/jhrb/html/2009-02/23/content_968859.htm>.

man-made god of Hu a heritage, the recent man-made god of Hu a fabricated heritage, and the present man-made natural heritage a destruction of a heritage?

The differences among these three kinds of man-made heritages lie on many levels. The heritage of Hu is based on both historic facts and legends. Hu was a real person with rich life stories as a local resident, a teacher, and a high official of this region. The legend of Hu, though originated from a fabricated story, was situated within the social and cultural background. Therefore, the forms of the legend emanated from the emperors' edicts, scholars' articles, and oral tradition preserved by the locals. The heritage of Hu is rooted in the local built environments, including the Buddhist temple with over 1000 years of history and the mile-long village packed with seasonal family hotels and stores. It is also characterized by its intangible heritage. The worship of Hu is not only a religious activity for pilgrims but also a series of social, cultural, and recreational events for the local people, as well as the basis for the local economy and business culture. More importantly, the heritage of Hu was built, enriched, and guarded by the people over the span of 900 years. The local people, including the monks, the Cheng family of Yanxia Village and Wenlou Village, the Hu family, residents of Fangyan, and all the farmers participating in the Temple Fair of Hu, have been the creators as well as the guardians of this rich cultural heritage for hundreds of years.

The earlier interference from the local government since the 1980s was intended to reconstruct the heritage of Hu to suit its underlying economic agenda. Although attracting some tourists, it failed to attract religious pilgrims and the local population. Although the new family hotels can accommodate more guests with modern services, the number of pilgrims has decreased and the scale of the temple fair has diminished as well. In the meantime, the excessive exploitation challenges the authenticity of heritage, destroys the existing cultural landscape, and destroys the well-established sense of place. Therefore, without local people's support, the newly constructed heritage will not only fail in what it itself is trying to do, but it may also cause the deterioration of the existing cultural heritage and its built environment.

The recent proposal to demolish the built environment so as to *recreate* the beauty of the natural environment is an extraordinary case, yet not unique in China. Throughout Chinese history and across the Chinese landscape, natural beauty rarely stands alone; it often ties in with cultural heritage; scenic sites are often preferred choices for religious structures. The landscape of Fangyan is the basis for the construction of the temple and formation of the linear village; the cultural heritage, in turn, enriches the otherwise lifeless landscape. Although being inscribed as a World Heritage Natural Site is a great honor for the entire region and might attract more tourists as the local government believes, natural beauty without its cultural meaning or the support and care from the local people will not sustain itself. A holistic relocation that is built on layers of illusions will not only force thousands of people leave the home and the land they have been living and nurturing for hundreds of years, but will also greatly impair the local culture that grew out of this landscape. As a result, the stripped down Fangyan will lose the *natural* beauty that it has for the existing pilgrims, the potential tourists, and the

local residents. Therefore, I argue that even though heritage often has its regional or even national value, the local or state government should only assist the local people in managing and developing heritage sites, but not direct their activities, and certainly not against their wills.

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Chapter 6

Tourism, Migration and the Politics of Built Heritage in Lijiang, China

Xiaobo Su

Introduction

Built heritage has become a popular topic in the social sciences since the 1990s. Researchers have demonstrated that its production and consumption is a booming business and plays an increasingly important role in attracting investment and generating tourist dollars (Hewison 1987; Logan 2011; Teo and Yeoh 1997; Waitt and McGuirk 1996). For example, Brett (1996) argues that the history, tradition, and physical attributes of places have been romanticized and sanitized in order to make them attractive for tourism investment. Strange (1996: 435) describes this process concisely: “in the search for profit, a sanitized and easily consumable historical experience emerges. (In effect) heritage and history become major assets for continued growth and development.” For many, heritage production is “an important avenue of capitalist accumulation” (Britton 1991: 451) and in this sense, it can be understood as “a predominantly capitalistically organized activity driven by the inherent and defining social dynamics of that system” (Britton 1991: 475). Unsurprisingly, urban authorities in various countries have endeavored to package their historic landscapes or other legacies into heritage products in order to heighten a city’s competitiveness in the global era of travel and tourism, as shown in the cases of Singapore (Chang 1999), Penang in Malaysia (Teo 2003), London (Pratt 2009), and New Orleans (Gotham 2005). Among the context of urban cultural economy, this chapter focuses on the changing use of built heritage (i.e., historical residential buildings) in Lijiang Ancient Town, China, to illustrate the dynamics of power relations that underpin how heritage gets entangled in the complex social and economic relations of contemporary China.

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Due to its economic and social significance in Lijiang, the tourism industry fundamentally changes the town and demarginalizes Lijiang in China's economic geography. Between 1978 and the early 1980s, the town was relatively undisturbed and town residents enjoyed a peaceful period, as the marginalized Lijiang was far away from the agitated centers of economic reform in China's coastal regions. This peaceful state was interrupted when the provincial government decided to develop tourism in north Yunnan in 1994, and Lijiang Ancient Town was henceforth inscribed in the World Heritage List in 1997. Ever since Lijiang acquired world heritage status, annually attracting millions of tourists from big Chinese cities, it has become central in the minds of domestic tourists. Lijiang's demarginalization by the commercial forces in the tourism industry has redefined the core-periphery relations in China's geography. Furthermore, since 1997, the phenomenal growth of Lijiang's tourism industry has led to the arrival of many migrant businesspersons, who have plopped themselves down in residential houses in the town. Gradually, previous town residents have rented their houses to migrant businesspersons and left the town in the hands of people from elsewhere: migrants and tourists.

The politics of built heritage becomes more discernible when heritage is used not only for capital accumulation, but also for the social purpose of comfort and escape. For instance, some migrant businesspersons come to Lijiang to seek fortune while others treat it as a comfortable place where they can rest their soul in order to withstand the feelings of restlessness and placelessness in the course of China's rapid development since 1978. Regardless of their reasons, these migrants rent residential houses from town residents and transform the structures into a mixture of tourism facilities and places for personal use. In this chapter, my primary aim is to examine what constitutes the discursive and material articulation of built heritage. The articulation, as I see it, requires "culture" (the meaning of built heritage) and "economy" (the control and use of place for profit making) for its very constitution.

Lijiang offers a useful vantage point from which to explore frictions and reconciliations between mobility and mooring, between route and root, between capital accumulation and social network. In developing an argument through the struggles with demographic change, heritage ownership, and cultural recognition in Lijiang, however, I neither treat the case as an exception nor make an argument specific to peripheral China. Instead, I heed recent calls for the territorial and relational conception of place and understand Lijiang as "dense bundles of social relations and power-infused interactions that are always formed out of entanglements and connections with dynamics at work" (Hart 2002: 297). The sociospatial transformation in Lijiang that stretches into the geographies of everyday life and the politics of built heritage, I argue, illuminates some of the most significant trends of contemporary China, perhaps most strikingly vis-à-vis commodification and modernity experienced by Chinese individuals in the last three decades.

This chapter will focus on migrant businesspersons in Lijiang and how they relate to the politics of built heritage. Specifically, this chapter has two objectives. First, I will sketch out the condition of migration in Lijiang to examine why people

want to move to Lijiang, a historical city in peripheral China. For many migrants, Lijiang Ancient Town becomes a paradise where they can experience a sense of freedom as a counterbalance to modernity, and symbolizes a traditional, exotic existence to compliment the relentlessness of modernization and consumerism in big Chinese cities such as Beijing and Shenzhen. To this extent, the demarginalization of Lijiang triggered by the tourism industry can actually twist Lijiang into a hybrid place between tradition and modernity. Second, I will examine the politics of built heritage in relation to profit making and power struggle. I focus on the complex relationships between the local government, migrants, and locals, linking them to the agendas of heritage ownership and tourism revenue sharing. The chapter demonstrates how heritage landscapes in Lijiang play an active role in defining who is a local and who is an outsider, and how property ownership (for locals) and economic capital (for migrants) shape the use of heritage.

Before proceeding further, a brief note on methodology is in order. Fieldwork was conducted in Lijiang in August 2007 and July 2010. I recorded 40 interviews, ranging in length from 1.5 to 3 hours, and I held various conversations with migrants whom I encountered in their shops. Ten of them were interviewed twice to solicit more opinions or to further clarify the comments they made before. All interviewees were of Han ethnicity and ranged in age from mid-twenties to late sixties. Their length of stay in Lijiang spanned from 1 to 10 years, although generally, most had been in Lijiang for about 3 years, and some had even left Lijiang for a while and then came back. Here I defined migrant businesspersons as those who actually controlled or operated businesses, migrated from elsewhere in China to Lijiang, and were not identified as a member of the Naxi ethnicity. These respondents were either self-employed or had hired some workers. In this sense, I excluded migrant employees from my research. With this focus on the use of heritage and the power struggle with other groups of people, the questions that I asked were multifold, covering the following topics: everyday activities, the reason for living in Lijiang, and the local-migrant relationship. In this chapter, I draw on a fraction of the interview material, choosing extracts not for their generalization but for the specific insights they offer to facilitate my analysis.

Migration and the Demarginalization of Lijiang

Lijiang Ancient Town lies in Yunnan province in southwest China. Han (the majority ethnicity in China) and Tibetan influences on the local indigenous people—the Naxi minority—have been present for centuries. The town's history can be traced back about 800 years when its construction started during the Song Dynasty (960–1279). In 1383, Lijiang became an autonomous prefecture during the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) (UNESCO 1999) as the Ming emperors granted a local elite clan (by the surname Mu) a hereditary status to govern Naxi groups living there. Within its territory, the Mu Clan adopted a serfdom economy to gather wealth and consolidate power (Guo and He 1999). The hereditary status did not break down

until the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) which made Lijiang a vassal prefecture rather than an autonomous state in 1722 (Guo and He 1999). After 1723, the administration led by Han officials endeavored to root Han culture in local society and discouraged the presence of Naxi culture. Since then, Han culture has systematically influenced Lijiang Ancient Town and Naxi society, an influence that has remained even after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

Despite impacts from other cultures, Naxi people managed to maintain part of their own culture and built environment. Lijiang Ancient Town signifies the existence of this culture to a great extent. The passage of more than 800 years has fashioned the town with a uniformly traditional cityscape and a well-organized fusion of domestic architectures and water canals (The World Bank 2000). Acknowledging these valuable cultural assets, UNESCO designated Lijiang Ancient Town as a World Heritage site in 1997. Evaluating Lijiang as a World Heritage Site, the World Heritage Center highlighted that Lijiang's residential houses represent "a crystallization of the creativity and progress of mankind in specific historical conditions" (http://whc.unesco.org/archive/advisory_body_evaluation/811.pdf, p. 121.)

Tourism has become the single most important industry in Lijiang. In 2010, tourist revenues totaled 11.2 billion Chinese yuan and tourist arrivals reached 9.09 million, while Lijiang's gross domestic product finished at 14.4 billion Chinese yuan (<http://www.tjcn.org/tjgb/201103/19025.html>). Accompanying this phenomenal growth of tourist arrivals was the inflow of migrant businesspersons from other provinces, mainly from coastal provinces such as Hebei, Shanghai, and Guangdong. The first wave of migrants descended on Lijiang in 1999. Thanks to the Kunming Horticultural Expo held from May to October 1999, millions of tourists visited Kunming and later arrived in Lijiang. Hence, a group of Fujianese jade merchants settled down in Lijiang and turned some streets into a jade mall. This business was soon terminated by Lijiang's local government when many well-known public figures purchased fake jade wares during their Lijiang visit. The exposé seriously threatened Lijiang's image. Since 1999, migrant businesspersons have continued to flood into Lijiang, though the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome in 2002 temporarily suspended Lijiang's tourism industry and thus discouraged migration.

The scale of migration in Lijiang can be tangentially measured by statistical data. In an analysis of demographic features in the Ancient Town District, which includes the ancient town and the new city, the Lijiang Bureau of Statistics pointed out that the District experienced a substantial population growth. As shown by the fifth nationwide census in 2000, the District was home to 163,991 permanent residents (*changzhu renkou* 常住人口), while the number jumped to 211,251 in 2010, averaging a 2.56% annual growth, far above the national average growth of 0.57% from 2000 to 2010. The Lijiang Bureau of Statistics explained that the population growth was caused by the fact that Lijiang was an attractive tourist city with a booming service sector, enticing many migrants to flow into Lijiang. Furthermore, the annual increase of Han residents between 2000 and 2010 in Lijiang was 5.33%, in contrast with 1.31% of annual growth of other ethnic

residents. As a result, Naxi residents accounted for 44.6% of the District's population in 2010, falling from 53.9% in 2000 (http://lj.xxgk.yn.gov.cn/canton_model58/newsview.aspx?id=17320).

The significance of migration in Lijiang is further corroborated by my respondents. When asked how many businesses were owned or operated by locals, respondents expressed a similar observation that town residents had moved out to the new city and the tourism businesses in the town were controlled by migrants. Typical comments include the following: "Very few shops in the town are operated by the locals. They actually prefer to rent their houses to migrants so that they can get very high rent, which is riskless and stable" (Chen, a dry beef shop owner from Guangdong); "Generally, it is migrants who are running businesses in Lijiang. Very few locals. They rent their houses out to migrants" (Wang, a restaurant owner from Beijing). Although these respondents addressed demographic transformation differently, the conviction is explicit. For many, the town is no longer a place for the locals, rather it is under the control of migrant businesspersons who provide goods and service for tourists.

The movement of migrant businesspersons into Lijiang, and the higher property values that follow the inflow of tourists have dramatically transformed Lijiang from a residential district into an expensive entertainment zone with historic charm. At the beginning of tourism development around 2000, these changes were limited to the town's center and the surrounding streets that tourists visited most often. In 2004, though, the local heritage authority decided to enlarge Lijiang's tourist capacity by encouraging tourists and guiding them to other streets. The authority actually pushed tour guides to lead their customers to some sites located away from the center. Accordingly, property values rose all over the town, and the new displacement gradually spread from the center to every corner of the town. Town residents rent their houses to the migrant businesspersons who can afford the highest rent, with little regard for how these houses are renovated and used. More often than not, the old houses are completely demolished for tradition-emulating brand new houses which can accommodate more modern facilities. What has happened in Lijiang is a broad process of what Gotham (2005) calls "tourism gentrification." As shown in the case of New Orleans' Vieux Carré, Gotham (2005) observes that the changing flows of capital into the real estate market, triggered by the booming tourism industry, promote the importance of consumption-oriented activities in residential spaces and encourage gentrification. Similarly, in Lijiang the town loosens its grip on historically valuable residential houses and the established community life and expands the space taken up by migrant businesspersons and tourists as the newcomers are preoccupied with money, shopping, entertainment, and pleasure.

Such developments reflect not only the importance of urban heritage in new urban economies premised on innovation, lifestyles, and consumption chic, but also how heritage has been reinterpreted and reused to include new meanings and functions to which it can meet the demands of social, economic, and political spheres. Fuelled by urban tourism development and the leisure industry, urban heritage is integrated into the growth machine of urban economy, with the key

theme being “the commodification of culture and the spread of cultural capitalism” (Miles and Paddison 2005: 834). Urban heritage is undergoing a fundamental transformation from the centers of industrial production (waterfront ports, loft buildings, and shop houses) or social reproduction (residential buildings) into the spaces of consumption. This transformation becomes particularly alarming in peripheral China, as the booming tourism industry has provoked a widespread wave of heritage production and consumption, as shown in the cases of Yunnan (Litzinger 2004; Su and Teo 2009; Swain 1990), Tibet (Shepherd 2006), and Guizhou (Oakes 1998). As Sofield and Li (1998) observed a decade ago, tourism development in peripheral China bolsters “a certain ‘museumization’ of the ethnic minorities in the idealized presentations of their culture for tourist consumption,” giving rise to an intensification of cultural commodification and political control. In Lijiang, the influx of domestic tourists, Western backpackers, migrant businesspersons, and hippies has turned this small town—which has been silent for decades with a low rate of development, an agriculture-driven economy, and poor infrastructure connecting to Kunming and other Chinese cities—into a hotspot of consumption and investment. It has been highly regarded as a model for future development as well as for social transformation within the places inhabited by ethnic minority groups. In this experiment, consumption, rather than production, is the driving force to promote economy and urbanization. The simple question is: Why do people want to migrate to Lijiang? I will turn to this question next.

Moving to Lijiang: Fortune or Escape?

For many migrants, Lijiang has been regarded as a good destination, partly because of business opportunities brought by the gigantic flows of tourists and partly because of Lijiang’s comfortable natural setting in comparison to other big Chinese cities. For instance, in 2009 Chen quit his fruit business in Guangdong to sell dry beef in Lijiang. As he explained, “I heard Lijiang is a tourist city and there are many people. Then I visited it once and found the weather is very comfortable and many tourists visit it.” This assertion of business opportunities translated into Chen’s movement from the coast to Lijiang, though Guangdong has long been regarded as “one of the most attractive destinations of interprovincial migrants” to seek jobs and fortunes (Fan 1999: 973). Utterances such as “Lijiang is a good place to enhance my career” (Sunny, a hotel manager from Shanghai) and “To tell you the truth, I come here for money. I just want to lift myself out of poverty, and have no interest in Lijiang’s culture or history” (Jianguo, a painter from Jiangsu) reveal a common trend in migration, culminating in a larger inflow of businesspersons into Lijiang. For both Sunny and Jianguo, the tourism-driven economic factors motivated their migration to Lijiang. These factors are largely embedded in Lijiang’s unique built heritage which initially gained recognition with a World Heritage title and subsequently became highly popular in the tourism market.

While economic factors remain a strong incentive, many migrants go beyond these factors and pursue the satisfaction of their social and cultural needs. During my fieldwork, migrants often conveyed a sense of comfort whenever they spoke about Lijiang—a relaxed, traditional, unhurried place where they are free to express their character, unlike the hectic pace of life they had to undergo in their previous settlements. Indeed, culture and tradition are constantly mentioned by many migrants to explain why they moved from coastal cities to Lijiang. For instance, Wendi, a female café owner in her forties, explained why she migrated from Shenzhen to Lijiang: “The reason is that I love local culture. Ancient (Chinese) culture has almost disappeared in China. Here in Lijiang some cultural legacies are maintained. It seems that some of Han culture has been preserved in Lijiang. Hence, to me and my husband, dwelling in Lijiang is our ideal choice, or, represents a most Chinese lifestyle.” Here Wendi emphasizes the fact that she loves the local Naxi culture and regards it as the remnant of traditional Chinese culture. In her opinion, this remnant is largely embodied in Lijiang’s built heritage. Commenting on the courtyard house she rents, she says: “I feel very peaceful here. ... I don’t want it [the house] to be too commercial or to change it very much. I don’t pursue high economic return. After all, I am a migrant [*waidiren* 外地人].”

Besides the desire for tradition, the other factor that explains migrant businesspersons’ respective moves to Lijiang is the different type of lifestyle that they can enjoy in the town. For instance, when I talked to Yuan, a guesthouse manager from Shenzhen, she noted that “Shenzhen is a very modern city with high industrialization and modernization. But I prefer a lifestyle close to nature. That is why I like Lijiang very much. The air is clean and the sky is blue. Life here is more relaxed and freer.” As a result, she quit her job in Shenzhen and migrated to Lijiang in 2009. As she said, “I just felt tired and wanted to find a place to relax.” Wang also expressed his fondness of lifestyle in Lijiang, as he talked about the difference between Beijing and Lijiang:

When I was in Beijing, I got up at five or six in the morning. Here in Lijiang, I wake up naturally at 10 a.m. What a difference! They are two different lifestyles. I felt very tired after spending seven years in Beijing. Yes, in Beijing, there are many opportunities, and too many people live there. The weather is extremely hot, which makes me feel very uncomfortable. Here in Lijiang, material supply is not [as] good [as in Beijing], but its living condition is excellent and the air is very good. In addition, you feel very relaxed and free to do something you want to do, without much pressure.

This sense of relaxation and freedom has been shared by Yuan, Wang, and other migrants who sought to escape the restless lifestyle they had to endure in their previous settlements.

This escape is akin to Clifford’s (1997) notion of “dwelling-in-travelling,” whereby people leave home to visit or stay in another place for the purpose of gain, a process involving obtaining knowledge or having an experience different from before. The consciousness and emotion attached to migrants’ new lifestyle in Lijiang is fostered through a comparison with their previous experience where they were burdened by a restless pace of life. Particularly interesting in the cases of Wendi and Wang is that Lijiang provides a vocabulary for them to experience and

understand tradition in peripheral China. Different from rural migrants who endeavor to survive in the coastal region and become an object of modernization (Pun 2006), migrant businesspersons in Lijiang try to evade the process of modernization in coastal cities and search for a new lifestyle in peripheral China. Albeit not a mainstream melody in China, this search can become an emerging theme among many people who are tired of the hustle and bustle of city life. This sort of migration inevitably triggers social and economic contentions, particularly in relation to the use of economic resources and the distribution of benefit.

Local-Migrant Tension and the Politics of Heritage

Terkenli (2002) reveals an emerging trend in which heritage landscapes become incorporated into a new global cultural economy of space. This incorporation has profound impacts on the (re)presentation of built heritage. As Terkenli (2002: 242–243) further argues, culture and built heritage

... are thus staged, sacralized and commodified for purposes of satisfying contemporary mass tourists' unequivocal or homogenized tastes and omnivorous desire for culture and landscape consumption. The spatial products of these forces at play may resemble skewed or surreal landscapes, such as Foucault's 'heterotopias' and Baudrillard's 'hyperspace', or simply contrived spatial entities where the artificial, the virtual and the staged imitate the 'real' or the natural, and even seek to surpass them in terms of originality.

This argument merits scrutiny. First, the commodification of built heritage can change the meaning of heritage and alter its originality. Nevertheless, this change does not happen in a top-down manner where governing elites have full authority in controlling heritage representation; rather, the change is comprised of endless negotiations involving many groups of people with their respective inputs about heritage. Second, the spatial outcomes, described by Terkenli, can be used to build a new sociospatial order to advance tourism development, a process that many groups rely on for either consumption experience or profit-making.

Yet this process-based viewpoint occludes the fact that Lijiang's urban transformation over the past decade has been linked to the capital accumulated in Beijing, Shanghai, or Guangzhou. To treat Lijiang as a World Heritage site with permanent (and even static) cultural installation is to both simplify and dehistoricize its radical transformation. The town—surrounded by aesthetically bereft steel and concrete buildings in the new city—now with commodification and touristification, resembles a shopping mall decorated with heritage symbols (Su and Teo 2009). Such developments reflect not only the importance of urban heritage in a new urban economy premised on innovation, lifestyles, and consumption chic, but reflect as well how heritage has been reinterpreted and reused to include new meanings and functions by which it can meet the demands of social, economic, and political spheres. What happens in Lijiang verifies Harvey's (2006: 153) argument that the commodification of cultural forms and built heritage through

tourism entails “wholesale dispossessions.” What are the relationships between such new uses of urban heritage and its previous social functions, particularly with regard to its role in defining community ties and ways of life in Lijiang? Can we simply assume that the locals become the victims of such a dispossession? Who are the dispossessed?

The local government estimated that migrant businesspersons operated more than 70% of the shops along the main streets of Lijiang Ancient Town in 2002. This portion may have risen to 90% in 2010, as many migrants and locals estimated. The demographic changes lead one to ask, whose Lijiang is it? Considering the distribution of tourist revenues, the question immediately becomes: Who would benefit more from tourism? Unsurprisingly, some locals claim priority in running tourism businesses in the town. In their mind, this priority is not based on tourism revenue alone, but on the belief that the Naxi can do a better job of balancing profit against conservation since they have a stake in the town (Su and Teo 2009). Hence, the Naxi in Lijiang use many tactics to gain locals’ interest in the tourism market. For instance, Lijiang’s heritage authority stipulated that only locals could apply for business licenses to operate tourism services or sell souvenirs in the town after 2003. Furthermore, no residential houses can be sold in the private market; owners must sell their houses only to the heritage authority, at a price far below market estimation. Nevertheless, residential houses can be rented to anyone. The goal is to encourage locals to engage in Lijiang’s lucrative tourism market and prohibit the purchase of residential houses by migrants. Indeed, house owners prefer to rent their property to migrant businesspersons thus securing a very stable economic return for themselves.

The strategy of prioritizing locals can boost “localism.” According to Dirlik (1996: 36), localism highlights the local as a site of resistance to “the intrusion of global capitalism” and initiates “an open-ended process of multiple social negotiations” in the age of globalization. To many migrant businesspersons, however, the rise of localism in Lijiang is not a resistance against global capitalism, but a measure of discrimination against them and a source of local-migrant tension. A story told by Xinyu illustrates the local-migrant tension: intrigued by Lijiang’s beauty during their first trip in 2001, Xinyu and her husband sold off their businesses in Hebei province and settled down in Lijiang in 2004. They leased a house from a town resident and turned it into a guesthouse. The business license was registered in the house owner’s name. She tried to get her own license but after numerous rejections from the heritage authority, she gave up: “Restriction! They always restrict us! We try to obtain our business license. But they don’t let migrants operate. All are for locals.” Since she is paying to use the owner’s business license and paying rent for the house, she pointed out that she might as well be working for the house owner.

Many migrant merchants regard localism in Lijiang as protectionism against migrants, and they express their anger at it. A Shanghai respondent, Hong, pointed out that “they [local officials] must protect locals’ interests at the sacrifice of the migrant merchants. That’s why house rent is rising steadily.” A guesthouse manager from Shenzhen emphasized the local-migrant divide:

Migrants in Lijiang cannot be too blunt. Local ruling elites constantly rule out migrants. These elites have blood ties with the locals and forgive some wrongdoings conducted by these locals. After all, they are like a family. In contrast, migrants will be violently treated if they do something wrong or disobey orders. (Bing, a female in her 30s)

This sentiment was shared by another guesthouse owner who expressed her disappointment in local house owners:

Locals are changing very fast, but you cannot attribute this change to migrants. We are doing business. For example, one migrant approached a local resident to rent the house for 50,000 yuan [per year]. Then another migrant would like to offer 100,000. So the signed contract can be easily annulled. There is nothing said against backtracking due to the lure of interest. Locals are spoiled by the market.

(Xue, a female in her 30s)

Old Landlord (a male from Beijing, in his 50s) also mentioned the grievance when encountering some local officials: “They are your grandpa. They scold you as a grandson. You cannot refute even though you think their words do not make sense. You ought to keep saying ‘yes.’” And Zhao, a guesthouse operator from Hebei province emphasized the importance of compliance: “You cannot confront the government if you want to do business, or behave aggressively. We have to accept unfair terms. We are watched in every street. Lijiang has put too much emphasis on money in the last two years.”

This unfairness is best exemplified in the recent new policy on the use of built heritage. In July 2010, Lijiang’s heritage authority launched a new program which allowed businesspersons to bid for renting publically-owned residential houses. In the core of the town, the heritage authority owns more than 300 houses, most of which can be used for tourism facilities, such as guesthouses and souvenir shops. The bidder who proposes the highest annual rent will win the contest, regardless of whether he or she is a local or a migrant. In reality, however, the locals need to pay 70% of the bidding quote while the migrants cannot negotiate for a discount. While it is not my intention to unravel the numerous frauds and plots that have engulfed the process of bidding, I would like to highlight how migrant businesspersons view the unfair treatment they received. For instance, Chen complains that “it is unfair. Fair competition is an essential part of doing business. Why can the locals get a discount of 30%?” The public house that Xihua rented was listed for bidding in August 2010. Since the house has an ideal location and good layout, it attracted fierce competition and the deal was made for annual rent of over one million yuan, jumping from the fifty thousand yuan that Xihua paid before the bidding. Since the house’s size was only about 30 m², it could have been among the most expensive business properties in Lijiang. No matter how hard Xihua tried to bid on the house, he could not afford the gigantic amount and was deprived of the opportunity to do business in Lijiang. As Xihua commented, “it is a vengeance on migrants.”

In another case, the No. 34 public house (11.98 m²) along Xinhua Street was up for bidding in April 2010. After many rounds of fierce competition, the final annual rent jumped to 590,000 yuan, while the previous contracted rent before bidding

was a mere 58,000 yuan. Replying to the complaints about this case of surging rent, the heritage authority emphasized that “public bidding follows the market’s rule and the case is such an example. Regarding the rent amount, it is completely up to the market to decide. We cannot decide it; otherwise public bidding will lose its credibility. We the people do not want to see this nonmarket intervention happening” (<http://szxx.ljs.gov.cn/doc/showxx.aspx?id=380>). Nevertheless, the heritage authority never explained why the locals can get a 30% discount or how the rent is used, although the primary purpose, according the heritage authority, is to maintain and enhance the value of state-owned assets, without regard to how built heritage is used. Referring to the heritage authority’s reply, a migrant businessperson bitterly joked on his blog that “it is absolutely impossible to earn back the rent even though snow (heroin) is allowed to be sold in this shop” (http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_530968290100hu59.html). The spin effect of public bidding is the rise of house rent in Lijiang, which poses real challenges to many migrant businesspersons. Liu, a businessperson from Zhejiang, has this to say:

Regardless public or private houses, rent will be rising like a rocket. If you want to do honest business, you cannot have a sound sleep. The rent will drive you mad. What can you do? Sell stuff by fraud and cheat tourists. It is only through fake commodities that you can make substantial profit.

Here Liu expresses a widespread fear among migrant businesspersons about vicious competition in Lijiang’s tourism market. Unsurprisingly, many migrants “borrow” locals’ identification cards to bid for preferential rent or simply bribe officials in the heritage authority for inside transactions. Overall, the use of built heritage is not only about how migrants make a profit from tourists, but built heritage becomes an important means of money making for many locals and officials.

What is interesting about these accounts is that migrant businesspersons feel subordinated in Lijiang. Here they are thrust into a precarious position of reliance upon the collaboration of locals for their business operation. They lack the legal right to challenge the ownership of business and housing, though they are empowered with capital, management skills, and business ideas. What this power imbalance highlights is the politics of built heritage. As the ownership of heritage is firmly in the grip of the locals, and migrants have to trade off this ownership for the right to use it, built heritage is not only embedded in a series of symbols, as the previous section explained, but also is implicated in complex transactions between locals and migrants.

For sure, some migrants have contested this ownership arrangement, arguing that Lijiang belongs not only to Naxi locals but to the world. For instance, Zhao argued that “Lijiang Ancient Town is not only yours. But it is unfair that the government wanted to regulate only the businesses operated by migrants. Now we are living in a harmonious society. You cannot be too overbearing.” Interestingly, Zhao actually cited Chinese President Hu Jintao’s call for building a “Harmonious Society” to add weight to his contestation, indicating that Lijiang’s local officials did not implement President Hu’s call. This contestation, however, has hardly

altered Lijiang's heritage policies. Through the ownership of heritage, an explicit boundary is demarcated between insiders and outsiders, sending a clear message to migrants that they have to pay more to the insiders—either by renting residential houses and business licenses from local residents, by bribing the heritage authority to evade regulations, or both.

Furthermore, the politics of built heritage is not merely confined to ownership, but also extends to how different groups of people interpret Lijiang's residential houses. For many locals, these houses simply become a source of revenue in the tourism market. While this economic interpretation is shared by some migrant businesspersons who seek to make a profit and advance their career in Lijiang, some migrants highly appreciate the cultural values embedded in Lijiang's built heritage, interpreting it as emblematic of traditional Chinese culture (Wendi), an embodiment of a relaxed lifestyle (Wang), or a connection to nature (Yuan). Despite these interpretations, the town, surrounded by steel and concrete buildings in the new city, is inevitably steeped in commodification and touristification. Such developments demonstrate not only the importance of urban heritage in booming Lijiang's economic development, but also how heritage has been reinterpreted and reused to include new meanings and functions by which it can meet contemporary social, economic, and political needs.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how migrant businesspersons get involved in the politics of built heritage in Lijiang, even as local-migrant tensions become linked with broader agendas of heritage ownership, and China's ongoing socioeconomic transition. Beneath the politics of built heritage in Lijiang is the articulation of a politics of dominance, resistance, and compromise. From the perspective of individual migrants, migration allows them to pursue economic opportunities or new lifestyles, leading to the demarginalization of China's peripheral places and a wakening awareness of self-identity. All respondents noted how they live in and through a series of contacts and conflicts. By displacing town residents through house renting, they contribute to and are influenced by modernity to such an extent that they cannot fully control their everyday life in the town. The process attunes to gentrification, but the word is too narrow to describe the profound demographic and cultural transformation that has reshaped Lijiang Ancient Town. In-movement by Han migrant businesspersons and domestic tourists, coupled with town residents' out-movement, generates a process of cultural replacement. Small groceries catering to town residents have been forced to close; long-time residents have rented their residential houses to migrant businesspersons and moved out to the new city. By 2008, Lijiang was no longer a residential town; it morphed into a tourist town with numerous shops, cafes, and restaurants. Or, rather, Lijiang became an outdoor shopping mall decorated with heritage symbols and symbols of ethnic culture. Though Lijiang's heritage authority implements historic

preservation laws and regulations to prevent developers and businesspersons from destroying the physical fabric of traditional residential buildings, the local character that indigenous residents regarded to be “authentic” has been overwhelmed by the homogenizing force of souvenir shops and entertainment cafes.

Lijiang is not alone in this process. Today, urban built heritage has become an important resource for the cities across the world in an effort to enhance uniqueness in the global tourism market and to assert, at a symbolic level, economic and political control over space, as shown in the cases of Shanghai (Abbas 2000) and Beijing (Thornton 2010). It does not represent a cultural commitment in stone, wood, or steel, but is integrated into the process of capital accumulation. Rather, it operates as a selling point for urban authorities to squeeze economic and political return from the commodification of space or as a gazing object for tourists and gentrifiers to enhance their cultural capital. Therefore, the slogans such as “heritage preservation” and “urban conservation” do not function as brakes against development, but instead further an appealing agenda of development. Preserving urban heritage today still remains a problem of how to negotiate and reconfigure the logic of capital accumulation that shapes heritage landscapes. The inevitable trend, as Wilson (1995) and Hewison (1987) observed long ago, is that the heritage industry and the booming cultural tourism industry, together with gentrification, have turned many historical cities and heritage blocks into museums on a grand scale.

The story of Lijiang is a tale of China’s peripheral regions opened up to the global network of production and consumption, under the auspices of state subsidies that build infrastructure to ameliorate the distance between hinterland China and the heart of global capitalism. Moving to peripheral China might become trendy in the near future, since the Chinese central government reinforced the Great Western Development (*xibu dakaiifa* 西部大开发) program in 2010, and increasing numbers of people either seek fortune in new hotspots of development or become tired of the bustling city life in the coastal regions. While a complex matrix of political-economic power is structuring migration and the practice of everyday life, more attention must be paid to emerging types of mobility and how individuals resist against and compromise with the logic of capital accumulation that underpins the use of built heritage in peripheral China and elsewhere.

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Chapter 7

Dancing in the Market: Reconfiguring Commerce and Heritage in Lijiang

Heather A. Peters

Introduction

Decisions for World Heritage Selection are meant to be based upon the site's unique and universal value together with its cultural significance. Despite this ideal, the politics surrounding the selection and management of UNESCO World Heritage Sites are never far away. The World Heritage Site of Lijiang, an incredibly beautiful historic town nestled in the mountains of northwestern Yunnan, is an excellent case study of the many factors which affect the World Heritage application process; those that influence its management and development, and those that impact the lives of the people who reside there. The Naxi ethnic minority are a Tibeto-Burman speaking ethnic group linguistically and culturally distinct from the Han Chinese. They are concentrated in northwestern Yunnan, and traditionally constituted the majority population in the historic Old Town of Lijiang and surrounding area.

The author first visited Lijiang in February 1989 during the period when she was doing research in the Xishuangbanna, Yunnan. It was the time when Lijiang was just opening its doors to a wider public, including foreigners, and the author had always wanted to visit this fabled historic town. At that time, the historic town was physically remote—it took two days by bus to reach Lijiang—and nearly completely untouched by economic development, including tourism. Since 1997, the author has made regular visits to Lijiang as part of her work at UNESCO Bangkok, developing programs with local authorities and communities as part of Lijiang's status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In its role as a World Heritage site, the Old Town of Lijiang has faced a wide range of conflicting demands and pressures. UNESCO has expectations regarding

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preservation and authenticity—not only in terms of the physical built heritage, but also with regard to the intangible cultural heritage of the town’s inhabitants. Provincial and local authorities, on the other hand, see the site’s World Heritage status not only as a source of pride, but also as an important commercial opportunity. As such, they have sought to transform the town into a popular tourism destination in which an authentic past is merged with a flashy modernity highly attractive to China’s newly mobile, young, brash tourist market. In the midst of this, the local population, i.e., the Naxi, quietly seek to redefine and understand themselves as Naxi and as residents of the new Lijiang.

At the center of these demands and pressures lies one of the UNESCO World Heritage Center’s most urgent issues; namely, what does it mean when a living town is inscribed as a World Heritage Site? What happens when real people find themselves expected to preserve not only the physical architecture of their town, but also the authenticity of their traditional culture, and at the same time, strive to evolve and change within China’s ever expanding economy?

Lijiang, a Living World Heritage Site: The Inscription

At the time of submission of the World Heritage nomination dossier, the Chinese government (Ministry of Construction, now the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development 1996) recommended Lijiang only on the basis of criterion (v) saying it is “an exceptional ancient town set in a dramatic landscape which represents the harmonious fusion of different cultural traditions to produce an urban landscape of outstanding quality.” On the advice ICOMOS (the International Council on Monuments and Sites, which officially partners with UNESCO to evaluate and monitor World Heritage cultural sites) the World Heritage Committee recommended that the value of the property exceeded the sole criterion and that it be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of criteria (ii), (iv), and (v) [see Table 7.1] (Jing and Nishimura 2008: 6). The authors (Jing et al. 2008: 11) of the dossier for the Lijiang nomination further included six site-specific reasons for its inscription:

1. The position of the Lijiang Old Town among China’s famous cities
2. The achievements of urban construction
3. The distinctive style of Lijiang’s private dwellings
4. The fusion of natural and constructed beauty and artistic with practical
5. The rich traditional culture of the Naxi minority
6. The authenticity of Lijiang Old Town referred to as “Truthfulness.”

Table 7.1 Criteria for cultural and natural world heritage inscription (World Heritage Center 2011)

(i)	Represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
(ii)	Exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning or landscape design;
(iii)	Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or has disappeared;
(iv)	Be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
(v)	Be an outstanding example of a traditional settlement or land use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
(vi)	Be directly or tangibly associated with events of living traditional; with ideas or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance
(vii)	Contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and esthetic importance;
(viii)	Be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
(ix)	Be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems, and communities of plants and animals;
(x)	Contain the most important and significant natural habitats for the in situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universality value from the point of view of science or conservation.

Lijiang's Heritage: Background and Overview

“Lijiang Old Town” (often called Dayan in Chinese), is an extraordinary example of a traditional late nineteenth to early twentieth century historic town in Yunnan. It is also the center of Naxi culture, and the seat of Naxi traditional political authority. The roots of the Naxi as a political entity can be traced back to at least the late Tang—early Song Dynasties, (ninth to tenth centuries). However, the earliest political centers linked with the Naxi were not in Dayan, but were today's Baisha and Shuhe—two historic villages located just a few kilometers outside of Lijiang. The town of Dayan was not built until the late Song-early Yuan (twelfth to thirteenth centuries), giving it a history of more than 800 years (Duan 2000; Gao 2008: 1). Situated in a vast and fertile upland plain, the Naxi constructed an urban settlement which became the final seat of their fragile political kingdom ruled by the local Mu family. All three towns, Baisha, Shuhe, and Dayan, were included in the World Heritage inscription, although the core of the inscription was Dayan.

A distinctive feature of Naxi settlements is their dependency on and utilization of natural rivers. The town of Dayan is no exception, and it is traversed by three rivers. These rivers traditionally provided the water needed for life's daily

necessities, for example, drinking, washing food and clothes, and removing waste. Not surprisingly, Dayan and other Naxi towns and villages all had strict customary laws regulating water use in order to guarantee its purity. Town watchmen blew special horns at different times during the day to let local people know when they could wash their clothes, when they could wash their vegetables, etc. (personal communication, Li Xi, former Director of the Dongba Cultural Museum).

Another distinctive feature of Dayan is the traditional architecture which miraculously remained intact despite the years of political turmoil and change which marked China's history since 1949. The primary vernacular architectural feature of Dayan is the traditional courtyard house structure built from mud brick, stone, and wood. The design, influenced by traditional Han, Bai,¹ and Tibetan houses, over the centuries evolved into a unique Naxi style (Gao 2008: 6; Duan 2000). For a detailed description of Naxi architecture see Jiang [1996]).

The central square, in Chinese known as “*sifang jie*,” (四方街) is also an important traditional feature of Naxi towns. Again, the Old Town is no exception. The meandering streets of Lijiang Old Town radiate out from this primary central square, reaching every corner of the city. *Sifang jie* serves as both the center of the town and also as a trade and commercial hub (Ministry of Construction 1996: 21).

But more than these tangible elements, Dayan, at the time of its inscription, provided living breathing testimony to late nineteenth to early twentieth century Naxi culture. This included not only the distinctive costumes worn by Naxi women; but the Dongba tradition and writing²; hunting with falcons by the men; and distinctive social organizations such as the *tso*, a kind of saving and credit association which also provided an important social function for both Naxi men and women (Zhao 2007). Another part of Lijiang's intangible cultural heritage is its unique position in northwestern Yunnan as a major trading hub linking Lijiang with Tibet in the north and as far south and west as India. Although Lijiang was a remote outpost from the major centers of the Chinese Imperial empires, it was nonetheless linked with a complex international trade network.

The town of Lijiang, with its distinctive physical features and traditional lifestyle of the Naxi inhabitants, was recognized as unique and precious as early as 1965 when the Governments of Yunnan Province and Lijiang County placed several historical and cultural sites in Lijiang under state protection (Ministry of Construction 1996: 12). During the 1990s, increased regulations were passed by the Yunnan People's government to protect Lijiang even further. The most important of these are the regulations passed by the 7th Meeting of the 8th Plenary

¹ The Bai are another Tibeto-Burman speaking ethnic group living in Yunnan. Their political and cultural center is Dali, which is 76.12 km south of Lijiang.

² Dongba is the traditional pre-Buddhist Naxi religion. The term refers both to the religion itself and the traditional shamanistic priests who performed the traditional rituals and ceremonies. The religion is a complex mixture of gods, ancestor and nature worship. The Dongba priests created a “Dongba” pictographic script to record the rituals and ceremonies. The script can still be read today, mostly by senior Dongba, but is being taught to a younger generation as part of after-school activities in some schools.

Session of the Standing Committee of the Yunnan National People's Congress on June 2, 1994. In 1995, the Chinese government, together with technical assistance from UNESCO's World Heritage Center, began the process of filling out the nomination dossier for World Heritage status.

Despite a devastating earthquake in February 1996 that measured 7.0 on the Richter scale, authorities successfully completed and submitted their World Heritage application in July 1996. Eighteen months later, in December 1997, the Old Town of Lijiang was inscribed on UNESCO's prestigious World Heritage List. The general consensus among all parties was that this inscription would guarantee the preservation and protection of this important historic and cultural site.³

The Politics of the Conservation and Management Process in Lijiang: The Management Structure

Because Lijiang Old Town was a town with living people and not a specific cultural monument, its management and preservation raise issues more urgent than those in single source monument cultural sites. As such, understanding the management organization of the Old Town is essential.

Although Lijiang was inscribed as a cultural site, its nomination was managed and overseen by the Ministry of Construction (now the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development) together with the State Bureau of Cultural Relics. The Ministry of Construction was responsible for the nomination of UNESCO Natural World Heritage Sites and the management of China's national park system. However, it was also responsible for overseeing the management of historic towns, and it is for this reason that the primary managers of Lijiang were architects and city planners.

In 1999, greater Lijiang was administratively still a prefecture, and the Old Town was managed as a township (*Dayan Gucheng zhen* 大研古城镇). The management office created at the time of inscription was a low-level unit (*Gucheng Guanli Suo* 古城管理所) whose staff was primarily street sweepers and garbage collectors overseen by one of the Deputy Mayors of the Old Town. There was no local architectural or urban planning expertise. However, during the first

³ In 1996, the World Heritage application schedule was on a different cycle than today. Applications which were submitted by the Member State in June/July in 1996 would be inscribed 18 months later, in November 1997. Because of the earthquake, the UNESCO World Heritage Office offered China the option to delay the Lijiang submission until the following year. Lijiang officials, however, did not want to wait for the next cycle, and, consequently, submitted their nomination dossier as planned. At the time immediately following the earthquake, it is said that Lijiang authorities were prepared to raze much of the Old Town, preserving only a small group of structures. The UNESCO mission to the site two days after the earthquake persuaded authorities to save the entire Old Town, and to restore homes using traditional technologies (personal communication, Richard Engelhardt, March 2012).

couple of years following the inscription, two professional architects who had had been sent down from the Ministry of Construction to oversee the nomination dossier remained in Lijiang as Deputy Mayors (Peters 1999b, c).

In spring 2002 the authorities created a new office called the Protection and Management Office of the Lijiang Old Town World Heritage Site (*Shijie Wenhua Yichan Lijiang Gucheng Baohu Guanli Weiyuan Hui Bangong Shi* 世界文化遗产丽江古城保护管理委员会办公室). The significance of this new office is that it replaced one with little technical expertise run by a political appointee with a professional office run by a city planning expert brought in from the Lijiang prefecture level of the Bureau of Construction and Planning. The new office furthermore included three staff from the prefecture level Bureau of Construction (Peters 2002a).

On September 21, 2003, the government of Lijiang was totally reorganized and Lijiang Prefecture was changed to a municipality (*shi* 市). The new heritage management office set up the year before now fell under the municipal authorities, and with it came the authority to oversee not only Lijiang Old Town, but also the two other components of the World Heritage site, Shuhe and Baisha. Until this time, Shuhe and Baisha were managed by township authorities, and the Heritage Management Office for Dayan had little decision-making power. It was not until 2005 that the management office finally changed from an “office” (*shi* 室) to a “bureau” (*ju* 局), a change which now gave the office greater authority (Peters 2005a). The office is now usually referred to as the Heritage Conservation and Management Committee (HCMC).

As just noted, before the heritage management office was granted the authority to oversee all the components of the World Heritage site, decisions regarding the protection and development of Baisha and Shuhe were largely left to prefecture and local level authorities. As a result, in July 2003, the Ding Ye Company from Kunming signed an agreement with authorities to begin a large-scale development project in Shuhe without consultation with the Lijiang Heritage Management Office (personal communication with staff from the management office, 2003, and Peters, unofficial visit to Lijiang, report, July 24–27, 2003a). The company proposed constructing a tourism commercial district of shops, restaurants, bars, and hotels located just outside the boundary of, but connected to, the Shuhe World Heritage protected area. The company explained that the development zone would bring economic benefits to the local community living in Shuhe through increased tourism. In addition, as part of the contract, the company agreed to bring infrastructure improvements to the core community of Shuhe. For example, they upgraded the electrical wiring; installed a new drainage and sewage system; and improved the roads leading from Lijiang to Shuhe.

They also purchased land from the residents of Shuhe to carry out their project, and compensated the locals for their loss of land. This compensation led to serious conflicts, with many local people complaining that they had not been sufficiently compensated by the company (Zheng 2011). Others complained that the money

provided by the company was quickly spent, and the residents, especially those over the age of 40, were left with no ways to generate income (2004–2005, interviews with residents carried out during the UNESCO project to develop linguistically and culturally appropriate HIV and AIDS, unsafe migration and drug prevention radio dramas in the Naxi language; 247RAS400). However, even more significant for Shuhe in its status as a World Heritage Site is that the end result of the development all but destroyed the authenticity and integrity of Shuhe. When Dr. Richard Engelhardt, the former UNESCO Regional Advisor for Culture in Asia and the Pacific, visited Shuhe in May 2004, he was so dismayed at the results of the development project that he recommended Shuhe be taken off the World Heritage inscription because it no longer retained the values for which it had been inscribed (Peters 2004b, 2007c). Tragically, by the time the Lijiang management office had acquired authority over Baisha and Shuhe, it was too late for them to have any influence on the developments plans for Shuhe.

UNESCO's Vision for Heritage Management and Development in Lijiang

From the beginning of its World Heritage status, UNESCO paid considerable attention to the management and preservation of Lijiang. This attention was in part due to the serious damage caused by the earthquake in Lijiang in February 1996, and UNESCO's recognition that Lijiang authorities needed special assistance and support, but also in part because of the personal interest of Richard Engelhardt. Dr. Engelhardt was particularly concerned about the special needs of heritage towns, and he played a strong role by providing technical assistance to towns in the region applying for inscription during the 1990s (personal communication, Richard Engelhardt, March 2012). Recognizing the challenges of heritage towns and being aware of the importance of involving communities in the management and protection of their cultural heritage, he set up two special programs that reflected UNESCO's concerns about (1) building the capacity of heritage managers; (2) constructing a public-private sector partnership for the development of sustainable tourism; and (3) creating mechanisms to involve all stakeholders, especially the local communities.

The first program, the *"Integrated Community Development and Cultural Heritage Site Preservation through Local Efforts in Asia and the Pacific (LEAP),"* was an initiative that created mechanisms for providing local authorities and communities with the tools necessary to manage, protect, conserve, and develop their sites. The program not only built the capacity of the management units of the World Heritage towns in Asia, but also created networks that encouraged private sector/community and government linkages in order for heritage managers to have the funds needed to carry out their heritage work. At the core of this strategy was

developing links with the tourist industry in what was hopefully a “win/win” scenario where the tourism industry worked together with heritage managers in a mutually beneficial way. The original pilot sites for this project included the World Heritage towns of Luang Prabang (Lao PDR), Hoi An (Vietnam); Lijiang (China), and Vigan (Philippines). All of these towns were inscribed during the 1990s (<http://cms2.unescobkk.org/culture/resources/culture-asia-pacific-resources/unesco.bangkok>).

An important goal of LEAP was to address the role that communities played within heritage management responsibilities. Accordingly, Homeowners’ Manuals were drafted by local experts to provide guidelines for the conservation and preservation of the traditional architecture. The program also explored community-based and controlled tourism-related activities grounded in the “accurate interpretation of the unique culture, history and environment” (<http://cms2.unescobkk.org/culture/resources/culture-asia-pacific-resources/unesco.bangkok>).

Because tourism was identified as an important economic industry at all of the sites, the second part of the program was renamed *Cultural Heritage Management and Tourism: Models for Cooperation among Stakeholders* (CHMT). The goal of this program was to explore sustainable tourism development, and create models for managing heritage tourism. During this phase, the pilot sites were expanded to eight. In addition to Lijiang, Luang Prabang, Vigan, and Hoi An, they now included Bhaktapur (Nepal), Kandy (Sri Lanka), Levuka (Fiji), and Malaka (Malaysia) (<http://www.unescobkk.org/culture/world-heritage-and-immovable-heritage/culture-heritage-management-and-tourism>).

CHMT concluded in October 2001 with an international regional workshop held in Lijiang. Participants at the 10-day workshop included representatives from all eight pilot sites plus international heritage management and tourism experts from more than 22 countries, and a large delegation from all over China. Funded by Norway, the workshop was organized by UNESCO Bangkok, the Chinese National Commission to UNESCO, and the county government of Lijiang. The objective of the workshop was to evaluate the implementation of each pilot site’s *Tourism Action Plans* and construct models of cooperation among stakeholders. The models of cooperation were called the “the *Lijiang Models*” after the place where the workshop was held.

Although these projects were important for developing models for these heritage towns, they only had limited success—not only in Lijiang but in the other sites as well. The reason lay in part with the generally low-level of skills and expertise of the management offices participating in the project, and in part with the insufficient time available to establish more sustainable results (Richard Engelhardt, personal communication, March 2012). However, another reason lay in the differing attitudes regarding development—especially economic development—held by UNESCO and the heritage town authorities.

What are the Priorities for Heritage Management in Lijiang?

Prioritizing the objectives for heritage management is a potentially divisive issue in Lijiang. How much attention should be paid to the physical protection and conservation of the built heritage; how much consideration should be given to economic development; and how much emphasis should be given on maintaining the living traditional culture of the present day inhabitants?

The view of ICOMOS is that “The conservation of historic towns and urban areas is understood to mean (taking) those steps necessary for the protection, conservation, and restoration of such town areas, as well as their development and harmonious adaption to contemporary life” (ICOMOS 1987: 1).

The leaders of Lijiang, however, as with most leaders of heritage towns, were not only concerned with the preservation and conservation of the physical built heritage, but also concerned with economic development and sustainability. As such, they turned to the tourism office and private tourism developers seeking the answers to their financial problems. Subsequently, although the Lijiang authorities addressed the overall protection of the site, another objective for them was to create a place where visitors not only enjoyed the traditional history and culture of the Naxi, but where they could have an enjoyable visit and have “fun.”

Over the years since its inscription, much of the urban and social fabric of Lijiang has been reconfigured and redesigned in order to create an attractive and entertaining place to visit. Entire blocks of buildings which dated to post-1949, and which were deemed “eyesores” and unattractive, were demolished in order to make way for “attractive” modern hotels and shops built “in the style” of 19th century Lijiang. Urban planners modified the integrity of the entry streets into the Old Town, widening them and lining them with plants and flowers. The two main entrances into the Old Town in both the north and south were further earmarked for major construction projects. The projects razed the buildings in the two respective buffer zone districts and replaced them with hundreds of small shop houses made of concrete and metal, but designed to resemble the style of 19th Lijiang. Most recently, along the eastern edge of the Old Town, authorities are creating an attractive, “green” park area with parking facilities and visitor information in the space formerly occupied by the army [Peters (1998, 2006); and personal communication with Lijiang Heritage Managers, November 2011].

This kind of urban planning is gradually taking Lijiang through a transition from a traditional Naxi historic town to a Naxi theme park, and some more strongly have noted a “themed shopping mall” (Su and Teo 2009: 130). Although it is certainly a “fun” and attractive place to visit, the resulting new “Old Town” maintains less and less historical and cultural authenticity. The Old Town of Lijiang is, step by step, becoming a recreated, romantic and fictionalized image of nineteenth century Lijiang, fashioned to meet the expectations of the millions of tourists who visit each year. As Orbasli (2000: 83) points out, the danger in this scenario is that tourist towns become theme parks which are “responding directly

to the visitor expectation of a provided experience, and are, of course able to accommodate all the desired facilities.” In the process, “... heritage is being distorted and culture cheapened, while association and meaning are lost.”

The Lijiang World Heritage Protection and Management Office does try to take the conservation of its built heritage seriously, but one could argue that decisions are made regarding urban planning and development which place a higher emphasis on the needs of the tourism industry and the tourists than on the historical and cultural needs of the site itself. “Conservation in the interest of tourism is ignoring the depth and dynamism of the urban environment in favor of the recreation of sterile and ‘experience-able’ settings. Subsequently heritage is reduced to a chosen interpretation of history and its physical remains as a marketing tool, a specifically selected and packaged product” (Orbasli 2000: 2, citing Larkham 1996).

Successful Management Strategies: Three Key Issues that Challenge Lijiang

Three key issues appear again and again with regard to the management, protection, and development of heritage towns. They are issues found not only in Lijiang, but also in other parts of Asia and Europe as well, for example, Luang Prabang and Venice (see Russo 1999: 42–43 for a discussion of Venice).

1. The first issue is finding the best ways to protect, conserve, and restore historic buildings and the urban environment so that the town not only retains its authenticity, but is also modernized in ways which make it more comfortable and livable for today’s inhabitants.
2. The second issue revolves around the communities living inside heritage towns. What are the best ways to involve the local communities living inside heritage towns who are subjected to the town’s management and protection regulations? What are the best ways to guarantee that these communities benefit from tourism and other economic schemes which are developed? And, what are the best ways to enable them to continue to live a normal and productive life within their heritage towns?
3. The third issue is how to address the increasing commercialization that occurs in almost all heritage towns—a condition in which the needs of tourists begin to outweigh those of the local residents and eventually destroys the authenticity of the town.

The discussion of these three key issues is drawn from the author’s nearly 15 years of experience of working in and studying Lijiang on behalf of UNESCO. As I reread my more than 30 mission reports documenting these missions, I was amused, but also a bit startled, to see that nearly all of the issues and challenges

faced by Lijiang today began as early as 1997, the first year of its inscription on the World Heritage List.

With regard to protecting, conserving, and restoring historic buildings I point to the Lijiang Management Office which, with technical assistance from UNESCO, transformed slowly from a maintenance office to a professional management bureau, and consequently drafted stronger, clearer regulations, and guidelines to assist homeowners in the repair and protection of their homes. Immediately after the earthquake in 1996, a small brochure with guidelines for homeowners was drafted by the representative from the Ministry of Construction who was still based in Lijiang. By 2004, with assistance from the Global Heritage Fund (GHF), UNESCO and Tongji University in Shanghai, the heritage authorities completed a comprehensive 10-year *Master Conservation Plan (MCP)* which provided the heritage managers with the authority for effective planning, preservation, and enforcement of regulations in the Old Town. The Plan also supplied much needed regulations for zoning, land use, conservation, city planning, and tourism management (Global Heritage Fund 2002; Peters 2005d). The plan was approved by the Lijiang government in 2007 (Global Heritage Fund 2008: 11; Peters 2005b).

Although there was agreement on the overall master plan for conservation, the local authorities were financially unable to implement all of the work needed. In addition, not all homeowners living in Lijiang Old Town had the funds necessary to make repairs, especially appropriate repairs, to their houses. With further technical and financial assistance from GHF, the Preservation Incentive Fund program was initiated to assist the poorest homeowners in Lijiang make needed and architecturally appropriate repairs (Global Heritage Fund 2002).⁴ At this time the *Guidelines for Homeowners* was revised with experts from Tongji University.

In general, the heritage managers have worked hard to protect, preserve, and maintain the architectural heritage of the Old Town. However, they are not the only people in Lijiang tasked with the care and management of Lijiang's heritage. From the beginning of the nomination process, a wide range of government stakeholders constituted the Old Town Management Committee, for example, the Governor and Deputy Governor of Lijiang prefectural and consequently the municipal government; Party Secretary; head of the Office of Tourism; and the heads of both the Office of Construction and Culture. They all played roles in the management of Lijiang's heritage, each with different vested interests.

With such a wide variety of interests reflected in the Management Committee, it is no surprise that decisions have been made which sometimes conflict with the

⁴ In 2002, the Global Heritage Fund (GHF) set up the innovative Preservation Incentive Fund (PIF). Based on the Master Conservation Plan, GHF established a matching Preservation Incentive Fund to help multiply resources needed for the preservation of ancient and historic buildings. The PIF provided micro-loans and grants for low-income and poverty level residents to assist them in undertaking the costly preservation and authentic restoration work needed to help (them) remain in the Ancient Town (Global Heritage Fund 2002). The project was undertaken in partnership with the Lijiang Old Town Management Committee; UNESCO Bangkok and the Urban Planning and Design Institute, Shanghai Tongji University.

guidelines and regulations created by the heritage managers. We already noted above that in order to construct a more attractive environment for visitors, structures deemed unsightly were systematically demolished in order to make way for buildings designed “in the style” of nineteenth century Lijiang. Buildings along the periphery of the Old Town have methodically been torn down to make way for commercial development schemes and sometimes for “green” areas.

Some of these decisions were part of an overall plan and vision to turn the Old Town and its buffer zone into an attractive destination that would not only generate money for its investors, but would also remain true to the Old Town’s authenticity by constructing the new buildings using traditional materials and traditional style (personal communication, Richard Engelhardt, March 2012). Other decisions, however, were more worrying, and seemed to reflect the political ambitions among the stakeholders in the heritage office and Lijiang government. For example, the development rights to the large multicourtyard house formerly belonging to Li Dasan and his brother Li Liesan, members of one of Lijiang’s famous and wealthy merchant families, were sold to a development company from Tianjin. The original family courtyard house complex was large, and spread over an area that extended from the northern edge of the Old Town southward into the boundaries of the Old Town. As early as 1995, the house had been listed as a protected site with historical and cultural significance in Article 28, Chap. 4 of the *Regulations for the Protection and Management of the Historical and Cultural Town of Lijiang*, passed by the Standing Committee of the Yunnan Provincial National Congress during the 7th Meeting of the 8th Plenary Session on June 2, 1995 (Peters 2000). Yet, the company was permitted not only to build a large, sprawling modern hotel in the grounds of this historic courtyard house, but to tear down the original cluster of protected courtyards. New courtyards were constructed “in the style” of the original, and were subsequently advertised to hotel guests as a unique experience to stay in a traditional Naxi courtyard. The hotel opened in 2001, and, ironically, was one of the hotels identified by Lijiang authorities to host the guests to the UNESCO international workshop held in Lijiang in October 2001 mentioned above.

In the year 2000 another disturbing project began—plans for yet another large hotel complex, this time in the heart of the Old Town just south of *Sifang Jie*. When asked about the integrity of building a new hotel in the core protected area, authorities argued that because the neighborhood surrounding the planned hotel had burned down in a fire circa 1982, the current structures were modern buildings and subsequently had no historic value. In addition, many of the buildings were government offices over which the government had more authority. In reality, included in the demolition plan were 13–14 run-down traditional courtyard houses rented by local Naxi. Because the houses technically belonged to the government, and because the government did not have the funds to repair them, they maintained that they had no alternative but to sell the development rights of the entire area to a company from Sichuan. The final product is a large, modern hotel built in the center of the protected zone. This hotel was completed by October 2001 (Peters 2000, 2001b).

Both of these examples illustrate the prioritization of large-scale tourism projects implemented by outside commercial companies over ongoing preservation

and conservation of the original buildings. The examples strongly hint at political preferences for economic development. One Lijiang expert based in Kunming lamented at the time that the Lijiang government gave preferential welcome to outside investors with big projects and big money (Peters 2002b).

A key issue in the sustainable management and development of heritage towns is the involvement and buy-in of the local communities in all aspects of decision making, management and development of the town. Communities need to have choices about their participation, and trust that those in charge will do the right thing. Most important, local communities need to feel that they still have ownership, not only of their houses, but of their town and culture. As noted by Orbasli (2000: 2):

In the urban environment, culture and heritage present a question of ownership. The physical relics of history, including buildings are 'owned' whereas the historic town as an entity is not, but represents ownership to the local community through attachment and belonging. The designation of an urban place as a World Heritage Site introduces a new international ownership for heritage, also highlighting a growing inside–outside tension of use and decision making, particularly where the future of historic towns is concerned.

With regard, then, to the second issue of involving local communities and guaranteeing their ongoing residency in Lijiang, it is to be noted that as early as 1996, at the time of the World Heritage application process, the involvement of the local community as equal stakeholders who are consulted during and participate in the heritage management process was already lacking. At this early date, local residents were already worried that World Heritage inscription meant the government would turn Lijiang into a tourist destination, and would move them out of their homes in order to create room for the restaurants, guest houses, and souvenir shops that would follow the inscription (personal communication with a Kunming anthropologist in 1996 and personal communication with a Canadian expert working in Lijiang; source: Peters (1997).

At the time, it appeared that their fears were unfounded. There were no government plans to evict residents from their homes in order to develop the Old Town for tourism. Nonetheless, within two years after inscription, these fears turned into a reality not because of the government per se but because of the local residents themselves. As increased tourism development encroached more and more into the lives of ordinary people, residents "voted with their feet." Rather than the result of government forced relocation, the residents voluntarily rented their houses to outside businessmen and moved from the Old Town into the new. This pattern of outmigration by local residents to the New Town continues up to the present.

The population of the Old Town in 1996 was 25,379, 66.7% of which were Naxi (Ministry of Construction 1996: 17). By 2008, the total population was approximately 30,000 but the demographics had shifted, and it is estimated that only a maximum of 10,000 were Naxi. Some estimates placed the figure as low as 5,000 (Peters 2009).

So, why has this happened? First is that fact that the local communities have not been fully involved in the World Heritage process and management. However, at the very least, the authorities should try to meet the needs of the local residents to enable them to continue to live in their heritage town. Although local residents did not participate fully in the inscription process, or the formulation of the management plan, Lijiang authorities have paid attention to the very practical needs of local residents. For example, authorities recognized from the beginning that the interior conditions of the traditional houses needed change if they wanted to keep the younger generation living in the Old Town. People wanted basic improvements, such as toilets and showers in their homes, but the outdated water and sewage system did not allow for this. Although the sewage system had been renovated and repaired during the nomination period, at the time of the inscription, it still was not adequate to allow most of the traditional courtyard houses to have private toilets or showers.

Consequently, the work of the Management Office from 1998 to 2004 focused on improving the infrastructure of the Old Town. They upgraded the sewage and drainage system, provided safer electrical wiring by burying it underground, and repaved the streets. From 1999 to 2003, the Management Office also responded to the ongoing complaints about the condition of the still-needed public toilets. Nonetheless, despite the upgraded water system, many people living in the heart of the Old Town were still unable to install toilets in their houses. Accordingly, in 2003, the Management Office designed and constructed public toilets that were both clean and attractive. Local residents were charged a small fee, only 5 cents, and response was, in general, favorable (Peters 2001c, 2003b).

The Management Office also acknowledged the poverty level of the Old Town, and in 2005 made arrangements to pay each Old Town resident 10 yuan (about US \$1.60) per month to assist with electricity and water bills (Peters 2005a). Although the majority of Lijiang residents felt that given the high cost of electricity every month, 10 yuan was far too little, the gesture was appreciated. A more realistic supplement suggested by a local researcher was 150 yuan (about US \$24) per person per month, with an eventual rise to 300 yuan (about US \$47) (interview with teacher from the Lijiang Teachers Institute, May 2009).

Nonetheless, despite what seem to be sincere efforts on the part of the local officials to meet the needs of local residents, residents were still leaving the Old Town.

There is one community issue that has created substantial debate over the years—the issue of whether or not to have wet markets selling meat and vegetables inside the core area of the historic district. This pertains to the third issue indicated above: commercialization in heritage towns and the needs of tourists overtaking those of the local residents and ultimately destroying the authenticity of the town. The urban planners and architects brought down from Beijing to oversee the World Heritage nomination and who stayed on in Lijiang for the first few years after the inscription to help manage the Old Town made decisions about the markets which had long-lasting impact on the local residents. The decision was made at the time of the inscription to remove the “wet market” from the Old Town’s “*Sifang Jie*”

(Peters 1999c). Traditionally, this square served as the central market for Lijiang where local residents shopped daily for their vegetables, meats, and other supplies. Photos taken by Joseph Rock during the late 1930s show the square as a bustling daily market, filled with local Naxi, who were both the sellers and the consumers.

Condemned by these early heritage managers as too “unsanitary” for tourists, in 1998, the large central square market was removed. Initially, a smaller wet market was set up in a small public space in one of the lanes just off the square. At the same time the market located in the area just outside the north gate to the Old Town was expanded. Shortly thereafter, the smaller market inside the Old Town was also closed down leaving only the large market outside the north gate as the primary market for residents to purchase their meat and vegetables. By late 2001 to early 2002, the large market outside the Old Town was also earmarked for demolition in order to make way for the anticipated “Jade Dragon Corridor” (*Yulong Zoulang* 玉龙走廊), a development project designed by the Management Office, but implemented by a private company. Presented as a “green zone”, the company built a “no-car access” corridor linking the Old Town with the Black Dragon Pool Park to the north. The planners intended to beautify the north entrance to the Old Town by tearing down the post-1950 buildings in the area and by doing so create a public space which would serve as a buffer or transition zone between the Old and New Town. The reality was that the public space at the entrance to the Old Town was turned into a large shopping mall with rows of shop houses constructed from cement and metal, but designed in the style of nineteenth century Old Lijiang. After its completion, both private and government backers invested in shops and restaurants (Peters 2002b).

The construction of this corridor pushed the former wet market further and further up the hill, making the purchase of food even more inconvenient for local residents. During 2001, another wet market existed close to the south gate of the Old Town. However, with a similar commercial development planned for the south gate area, this market was also closed and the major markets are now only found in the New Town. One researcher lamented that local people still living in the Old Town now had to go farther and farther to purchase food and other daily items (teacher from Lijiang Teachers Institute, May 2009).

Not only was the major wet market removed from the Old Town, but beginning in 2000, the small food stalls selling such items as potatoes and *liangfen* (a typical Lijiang snack food made from chickpeas)—stalls which were usually run by older Naxi women—were also banned. If caught selling, the officials monitoring the situation would confiscate the stall and fine the seller (Peters 2000). In recent years, there have been attempts to permit some small shops and stalls to sell fruit, vegetables, and meat in the Old Town, but results are so far limited. For major shopping needs, residents still must travel to the New Town.

In 2001, *Sifang Jie* was transformed into a dry market, where hawkers sold some local products such as tea, traditional medicine, and local crafts such as brassware together with standard, non-locally produced tourist souvenirs. However, by today, the square has been emptied of all local life, and serves as a space where tourists can take their photos during the day, sometimes perched on top of a

local pony, or can join in “traditional” Naxi circle dancing. Older Naxi women from the Old Town share the responsibility of dancing with the tourists.

This issue of markets is a potent symbol for many of the day to day difficulties faced by local residents living in the Old Town. As shopping became more and more difficult, especially for older residents who had difficulty walking long distances and carrying home heavy bundles, local authorities realized that they needed a solution. On August 20, 2003 the Management Office set up a Samlor Service for Old Town residents. A samlor is a cart with lined with low bench-seats attached to a bicycle. It is frequently used by local people to haul goods, and sometimes people. This free service for Old Town residents picks people up at their homes, takes them to the edge of the Old Town where they can then take a taxi to the market. With a phone call, the samlor will pick up the resident, and take them home again with their purchases. When asked what prompted them to set up this service, the head of the office smiled and said that he was tired of his own parents continually asking him to come and pick them up at the market to help them carry the purchases home (Peters 2003b). Although this service is a wonderful and creative solution, we should still question whether or not all wet markets should have been removed from the Old Town in the first place.

Indeed, commercialization and tourism has resulted in “the case of the disappearing people,” i.e., outmigration from the Old Town. Over the 15 years of its inscription, outside businessmen from Kunming, Fujian and Guangdong have steadily moved into the Old Town, and the local residents have slowly drifted away. The first major influx of outsiders into Lijiang started as early as 1998. Identified as the upcoming “tourism hotspot,” a few jade dealers from Fujian arrived in Lijiang to take a look. By October 1999, 180 jade shop owners had made Lijiang Old Town their home. The local community was in an uproar over the newcomers. Accused of everything from stealing, cheating visitors, dumping garbage at night into the rivers, to being a fire hazard, the local residents and the newcomers did not get along (research carried out by the author in 1999–2000 with the support from The Nature Conservancy; see Su, this volume).

Although the government stepped in to resolve the jade sellers’ conflict by setting up an area in the New Town earmarked for them, a new trend was set into motion. Over the 15 years that I have been visiting Lijiang, the numbers of local residents living in the Old Town has steadily declined. As commercialization expanded more and more into residential neighborhoods, residents saw themselves as having limited options. Initially, some tried to participate and opened small shops or turned their homes into low-end guest houses. However, many of them felt that, in the end, they could not compete with outside businessmen arriving with larger amounts of capital to invest. A common belief expressed by several local Naxi interviewed by the author was that they, the Naxi, do not have the ability to do business like the Han.

Being deprived of their livelihoods, many local residents made a very rational choice. Banned by the local government from selling their houses, they rented them to outside businessmen for high rents with 5 to 10 years contracts. With the money

generated by this rent, the families moved into apartments they purchased in the New Town. It has been noted by many experts that the remaining population in the Old Town grew increasingly poorer and/or older. A Naxi scholar living in Kunming commented that only the elderly who were too attached to their homes or too poor to move remained in the Old Town (Peters 2007b, 2009, also see du Cros 2006).

So we must ask: how much are the communities involved with management decisions? Although the needs of the local residents have been noted and some activities implemented to address them, there is an ongoing lack of substantive participation on the part of the local residents. For example, petitions signed by local residents complaining to the authorities about the noise pollution of “Bar Street” (see below) were routinely ignored. Complaints by local residents who were relocated from their homes in the Old Town for the development of the hotel built in the center of the Old Town were not heeded (Peters 2000), and in Shuhe, the Naxi village which is part of the World Heritage inscription, local farmers were told to sell their land to the Ding Ye Company in order to make way for a large-scale development project. As noted earlier, it is true that the farmers were compensated, but UNESCO research revealed that the farmers were left with no occupation after they sold their land (Peters 2004c).

In conclusion, although the heritage management office has made some efforts to accommodate and meet the needs of the local communities, the overall assessment of their efforts is negative. Even the innovative plan to create a squadron of *samlor* to address the shopping needs of older, local residents would not have been needed if the concerns of the local communities had been considered primary in the first place. In sum, the real problem is that the communities have not been consulted or involved in the decision making processes, and are rarely listened to when they voice concerns or complaints.

Tourism Development

When the author met and spoke with local residents during the first few years after inscription, many of them said that they liked the idea of tourism because it would bring in additional income. They also expressed pride that Lijiang had been inscribed on the World Heritage List, and knew that this was an honor. During these early years, a number of local families opened Naxi food restaurants, small noodle and *baba* (local Naxi bread) shops, and eventually guesthouses or inns (*kezhan*) as they are called in Lijiang. This enthusiasm has been noted by other researchers (Li and Shao 2005; Su and Teo 2004; Zheng 2011).

Nonetheless, by 2000, a course was already set for rapid tourism development which became increasingly commercialized and from which local communities became increasingly isolated. Tourism figures have increased greatly over the years (Table 7.2), with numbers rising from 1.7 million in 1997 to 9.09 million in 2010. Recent figures published by Xinhua News Agency (2012) record a whopping 8.0934 million visitors for the first six months of 2012.

Table 7.2 Tourism statistics

 Tourism figures from 1995–2010

1995–841,000
1996–1,105,000 1.1 million
1997–1.73 million
1998–2.01 million
1999–2.60 million
2000–2.90 million
2001–3.22 million
2002–3.38 million (of which 0.15 million are overseas visitors)
2003–3.01 million
2004–3.60 million
2005–4.04 million (of which 0.18 million are overseas visitors)
2006–4.60 million (of which 0.31 million are overseas visitors)
2007–5.31 million (of which 0.04 million are overseas visitors)
2008–n.a.
2009–7.58 million tourists (of which 0.53 are overseas visitors)
2010–(a 19.92% increase)

Source Li and Shao (2005: 7) and Xing et al. (2012: 43)

The vast majority of these tourists are domestic. As tourism expanded into residential space, the local residents moved away. The functionality of the Old Town shifted, and shops, restaurants, and guesthouses replaced residences. As the business and services infrastructure for residents was gradually replaced by those catering to the tourism communities, the cost of living increased dramatically [Xing et al. (2012: 47) quoting Shao et al. (2004)]. Currently there are just 6,200 Naxi households living in the Old Town compared to 30,000 in 1996 (Xing et al. 2012: 46).

As noted above, because the local residents felt they lacked sufficient capital and experience, little by little, they allowed local shops to be taken over by outside businessmen. Local shop owners selling traditional Naxi products could no longer afford to pay the increasingly high rents accompanied by high taxes (Peters 2007a). Few or no incentives were given to local Naxi entrepreneurs providing local Naxi products in the market (local teacher, personal communication, 2009). Eventually, residents sold the rights to their houses to outside entrepreneurs who renovated them and turned them into tourism-dedicated businesses.

“Not only is the commercialization of Lijiang significant, but the shopkeepers are from the outside. In 2005, of the 1,647 entrepreneurs in the Old Town, only 390 shop owners were run by local people” (Li and Shao 2005: 2). Li and Shao further observed that the quality of the shops and souvenirs was very low and lacked variety. “Of the 60 interviews carried out in 2004, 27 interviewees mentioned commercialization as a problem” (Li and Shao 2005: 2).

Not only were there increasing number of hotels and guesthouses being run by outsiders, but by 2009, large international luxury hotel chains were investing in Lijiang, for example, the Crowne Plaza (Inter Continental), the Aman Group, the

Hyatt, the Accor Group, and Pullman (personal observation and personal communication with Lijiang informants May 2009). Two of these five hotels are constructed inside the boundaries of the World Heritage site: the Aman Hotel and Spa which is being built on Lion Mountain, and the Crowne Plaza which sits just inside the boundaries of the Old Town near the South Gate entrance. The other three are located in the vicinity of Shuhe.

There may only be five international hotel chains in Lijiang at the moment, but they represent a new kind of venture which changes the investment landscape of Lijiang. Although some local people will benefit from new jobs created by the hotels, it is common knowledge that these kinds of hotels are the primary causes of “leakage”, a concept used in the tourism industry to describe the amount of money generated by international tourists that “leaks” out of the destination country (UNEP n.d.; Keefe and Wheat n.d.). Because the international hotel has to maintain “international standards” the majority of the items used in the hotel, including most of the food, will be imported from the outside. Outsiders will be brought in for the higher paid staff positions. The majority of the profits generated by the investment itself will go to the local authorities in Lijiang. A quick perusal of the websites of these five hotels shows us that although they promote the local culture of Lijiang, they are not supporting local culture per se. Each hotel has two restaurants, for example, one Western plus one Chinese. None of the Chinese cuisines are Naxi. The Pullman Hotel promotes itself as having the “finest Chao Zhou cuisine in Lijiang” (www.pullmanhotels.com/lijiang)—one is tempted to add, probably the only Chao Zhou cuisine in Lijiang. The Crowne Plaza boasts of fine Cantonese dining and a special Brazilian Barbeque (www.crowneplaza.com/hotels/us/en/lijiang). As noted above, food for these restaurants will most likely be imported from other parts of China or from outside China. Thus, not even local farmers will benefit from these hotels.

Over the years, many of the author’s friends and colleagues have told her that they rarely go into the Old Town anymore. They complain that the food in the Old Town restaurants is no longer any good, *and* it is much more expensive. A middle-aged man who lives in a Naxi village outside the Old Town said that when he has to go to the Old Town he feels like a stranger. He only hears Chinese, not Naxi, being spoken, and none of his old friends are there to say hello to him when he visits. Ironically, another Naxi friend said that although SARS (Severe Acute Respirator Syndrome which broke out in China from late 2002 to mid 2003) created economic difficulties for Lijiang, he loved being able to reclaim the Old Town for himself, and walk around without having to compete for space with tourists!

Interestingly, research carried out by Su and Teo found that in 2004, when there were already 3.6 million visitors, the majority of the local residents they interviewed still had positive perceptions of tourism and believed that tourism was good for Lijiang (Su and Teo 2008: 158; Su and Teo 2009 Chapter 7). However, 2004 might have been the tipping point for Lijiang residents. There is a clear cycle regarding the relationship between local residents and tourist (Page 1995: 142). Local communities first embrace tourism. Even if the communities are not receiving the most economic benefits, they do profit from the sale of souvenirs, and

opening small restaurants and shops. Tourists also provide an entertainment factor. Life in a small town is relatively uneventful, and tourists can be amusing and fun to talk with. As tourism develops and the numbers of tourists increase, many members of the community shift from embracing tourism to tolerating it—as long as they feel that they are still benefiting.

Eventually, however, some community members become less enamored with tourism as tourists begin to compete with local residents for use of local space. “For local inhabitants, tourism may be the cause of depreciation in the *quality of life*” (Orbasli 2000: 67). Orbasli (2000: 59) further states that “urban spatial use and functions change as residents are deterred from using central areas at times when they are expected to be overcrowded” resulting in the frustration and irritation on the part of the local residents (Boissevain 1996). In the medieval town of York, local residents have been seen wearing anti-tourist badges [Stancliffe and Tyler 1990: 3 cited in Orbasli (2000: 59)]. In Lijiang, frustrated residents simply moved away and no longer used the Old Town which had been their home for centuries.

The development and expansion of so-called “Bar Street” in the Old Town is another potent symbol of the over-development of tourism coupled with lack of concern for the needs of the communities. What started as a few outsider-owned cafes along Xin Hua Street around 2000, mushroomed into a multitude of establishments which expanded to both sides of the river on Xin Hua Street and then continued to expand to the western side of the river on Dong Da Street. By 2006, it was estimated that 99% of the bars were owned by outsiders (Su and Teo 2008).

Bar Street gained fame among visitors as a fun and exciting place to spend their evenings. The cacophony began each evening by 9 pm and continued into the wee hours of the morning. Loud music, singing and drinking characterized the evening. It was fun for the revelers perhaps, but not so much for either the remaining local residents or visitors who wanted a quiet and peaceful stay at an inn in the Old Town. Petitions were signed by the town residents, and the elderly residents living in the Old Town complained that they were getting heart problems from the din (Personal Communication with a Naxi scholar). A crisis was reached in 2008 when the team on an official UNESCO monitoring mission (Jing and Nishimura 2008) made specific inquiries as to how the Heritage Management Office proposed to solve the problem. Interestingly, Bar Street was closed during the January 2008 UNESCO mission (Peters 2008). Reluctant to close down a lucrative business (Peters 2007b, 2009), the authorities were at an impasse as to what to do. By late 2011, a compromise of sorts has been reached, and the ban placed on loud music after 11 pm is relatively well enforced.

Some attempts have been made by the Heritage Conservation and Management Committee (HCMC) to address the commercialization by developing businesses which are linked with the intangible cultural heritage of the Naxi. For example, authorities have invited and sponsored local artists and craftsmen to open up shops in Lijiang (Peters 2004a, 2007b, 2010). This includes craftsmen who produce traditional paper, traditional leather products, and metal workers who craft copper bowls, pans and vessels. Some of these craftsmen were given small shops, but there were other projects to turn an entire courtyard into a heritage experience. One

such courtyard is the “Marriage Courtyard” where the visitor can view a small exhibition area with photographs of traditional Naxi weddings, and also experience a “mock” wedding performance. The courtyard can also be rented out for real weddings as the author discovered when she attended the wedding of a Naxi friend in November 2011. Although the Marriage Courtyard is mainly for performance [see Zhu (2012a) which provides an interesting analysis of the Marriage Courtyard and two other tourist performances held in Lijiang], it still reflects the traditional Naxi wedding ceremony, and according to the Dongba who performs it, it is abbreviated, but authentic (Zhu 2012b: 13).

Nonetheless, despite these efforts by the Heritage Management Office, by 2007, the over commercialization of the Old Town drew the attention of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. In July 2007, the authorities of Lijiang received a warning at the 31st Session of the World Heritage Meeting in Christchurch. Committee members noted “with concern the uncontrolled tourism and other development projects being carried out at the property, which might have a negative impact on heritage values” (World Heritage Committee 2007: 92). The State Party (China) was requested to review the current comprehensive Management Plan in order to strengthen it and make it more effective for protecting the heritage values of the properties. The World Heritage Committee also requested the State Party to provide on-going support to local homeowners in their efforts to maintain their houses in accordance with traditional building practices.

The Emergence of Social Ills

There are two other topics, rarely discussed openly, which are part of the over-commercialization of Lijiang, and which I will only mention here briefly.

The first is the problem with disenfranchised Naxi youth, especially young men. Young, pretty Naxi women can and do play a role in the tourism industry, and work as tour guides, waitresses, and shop assistants. As more and more of the shops were taken over by outside entrepreneurs, young Naxi men who had opened up small shops were pushed out. They perceived that they had fewer opportunities. UNESCO research undertaken in 2004 for the above mentioned Naxi language HIV and AIDS, unsafe migration and drug prevention radio drama project (247RAS4000) found that injecting drug use, a problem during the 1980s, was still a problem in Lijiang, especially among young men.⁵ One evening in May 2009, as the author was returning to her guest house on Lion Hill, the taxi driver driving her up the winding back road told her that she could find used needles among the bushes. Apparently, the rear of Lion Hill was a preferred area for drug users.

⁵ Injecting heroin use was mentioned by several officials as a serious social problem in Lijiang during the 1980s. A multipart documentary film series produced in the late 1980s (*Beyond the Clouds*) devoted one episode to this topic. The brother of one of the author’s close friends in Lijiang died of an overdose during this time.

Another topic rarely discussed with regard to tourism development at World Heritage Sites is the appearance of a thriving sex work industry. The entertainment establishments are found mostly, but not exclusively, in the New Town. The research carried out for same UNESCO project for the HIV and AIDS prevention radio drama underscored that not only were there sex tours that included Lijiang as part of tourism itineraries, but also some of the sex workers were young Naxi women from villages outside the Old Town (Peters 2005a).

It is almost unnecessary to add that both of these activities are key factors for the spread of HIV and AIDS.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the author would argue that an important part of the current problem of over-commercialization in Lijiang is the tension perceived by the local authorities between heritage protection and economic development, and between the rights of the local residents versus the concern for the needs of the tourists. This tension is played out in the kind of tourism that has evolved in Lijiang since its inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1997.

In part, the tension is perpetuated because Chinese government policy underscores the importance of economic development, urging provinces and local authorities to pursue the goals of economic development and profit. In an interview conducted by Su (2010: 166) with an official in the Lijiang Bureau of Tourism, the official explained the relation between development and conservation by saying: "Economic development is our major concern. Only after the economy is highly developed can we start talking about urban conservation." Thus, economic development is more important than the protection and preservation of traditional culture for its own sake. Culture is valued, but only as a commodity which is prized if it can generate income. This tension is likewise seen in the conflict between the rights of local residents versus the concern for the needs of the tourists. Tourists are the income generators and local residents are not. Chinese government policy, unfortunately, emphasizes top-down decision making, which, as we have seen above, leaves little room for the locals to express their grievances (this conclusion reached by the author is echoed in research by Su and Teo [2009] and Alexander [2006: 3-4]).

In recent years, UNESCO itself has drawn attention to the economic value of culture through its focus on "Culture and Development," a focus in which culture can be understood as a tool for development, especially through cultural activities such as high quality craft production and cultural tourism. However, UNESCO's approach emphasizes the authenticity of culture over the commoditization of culture, and herein lies an important difference.

As the result of the warning issued to Lijiang in July 2007 by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, the Lijiang authorities were requested to draft a statement assessing and clearly articulating the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of Lijiang Old Town. In order to complete this assignment, the authorities provided funds for a team of Lijiang researchers to survey six other Heritage Towns in China, including Ping Yao in Shanxi; Zhouzhuang near Suzhou in Jiangsu; and Dali, Shaxi, Weishan, and Heshun, all in Yunnan. The study gave them the opportunity to compare, contrast, and share the work and plans of heritage managers in these towns (Lijiang World Heritage Management Office 2011; Peters 2011).

The results of the more than one-year investigation are very telling. On the one hand, they do indicate that the HCMC is not totally deaf to the concerns of UNESCO, Lijiang and its residents, and the study concluded with the following recommendations:

1. Setting up a system whereby the community can be more involved in the monitoring of Lijiang;
2. Establishing better and stronger museums which illustrate the value of Lijiang, for example, create an Eco-Museum for Lijiang Old Town;
3. Creating a better and systematic policy for gathering the advice and knowledge of experts;
4. Setting up better coordinating mechanisms for the Old Town;
5. Strengthening the intangible heritage of the Old Town; and
6. Strengthening publicity and educational dynamics; expanding the community participation in Lijiang Old Town and improving the level of the tourist. (This latter point included sponsoring “conference tourism”, heritage management seminars and improving press coverage.)

Recommendations 1–5 are well taken. However, it is not the first time that the HCMC has made them. The problem, as always, lies in their implementation. Recommendation 6 is interesting in that it takes tourism development in Lijiang into a new direction, one which facilitates the steady drift away from Lijiang as a living heritage town into a theme park venue.

Acknowledgments Material in the section “Lijiang’s Heritage: Background and Overview” draws, in part, on an earlier version of a paper (Peters 1999a) that was subsequently published in 2001 (see Peters in Tan, Cheung and Yang [2001a: 313–332]). Information was gathered by the author during her more than 15 years of visits to Lijiang as part of UNESCO and also comes from other sources, for example the Nature Conservancy’s Great River Project, as indicated. The author would like to express her thanks first and foremost to all the people of Lijiang who have spent time over the years with her patiently answering her questions and providing her with information and knowledge about Lijiang. They have been good friends, and she is grateful to them all. The author would also like to thank Ms. Pernille Askud, Dr. David Feingold, and Dr. Tami Blumenfeld who have taken the time to read drafts of the chapter and make useful comments and recommendations. The views expressed are solely those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect those of UNESCO, The Nature Conservancy or colleagues who have read the draft.

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Part III
Cultural Heritage and Tourism in
Undesignated Sites

Chapter 8

Good Fences Make Good Neighbors: Claiming Heritage in the Longji Terraced Fields Scenic Area

Jenny Chio

*...Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offence.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down....*

Robert Frost, *Mending Wall* (1914)

At first glance, the villages located within the Longji Terraced Fields Scenic Area (龙脊梯田景区, shortened here to Longji Scenic Area) in northern Guangxi, are blessed with an ideal combination of visual, material, and cultural features: steeply terraced fields carefully built and rebuilt over the centuries, expansive vistas across mountain peaks and rushing rivers, and the continued presence of Zhuang and Yao ethnic minority communities whose villages of wooden houses punctuate the natural and agricultural landscape. And indeed, over the past 30–40 years, these combined elements have attracted the interest and attention of both domestic Chinese and international tourists. Some local accounts date the arrival of the first tourists, who were photographers mesmerized by the beauty of the terraced fields, to the early 1970s. By any measure, however, the Longji Scenic Area is an undeniably successful tourism destination nowadays, and it is nationally ranked as

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an “AAAA” scenic spot.¹ The economic well-being of many, if not most, households in the region’s two longest-running tourism villages, Ping’an and Dazhai, has increased in leaps and bounds since the 1980s.² Capitalizing on the visual beauty of the terraced fields landscape as well as the cultural distinctiveness of the resident ethnic Zhuang and Yao communities, tourism development has resulted in greater personal wealth and opportunities within the area while, of course, bringing renewed attention to cultural heritage as a desirable asset and marketing feature.³

But as tourist visits to the Longji Scenic Area increase, competition for profits intensifies, and new strategies and discourses have emerged for both developing the future potential of the scenic area as a whole and for improving upon individual and household earnings. Heritage, or more precisely claims to heritage, has become one way for village household businesses (which include guesthouses, restaurants, and souvenir shops), migrant entrepreneurs, as well as the scenic area’s management company to distinguish and promote their enterprises within the local tourism economy. The various social actors engaged in tourism thus negotiate their opportunities within a set of overlapping processes of identity construction and commercialization. In this chapter, I argue that the strategies for creating and asserting heritage claims rely upon and reconfigure actual spaces in the village and the Longji Scenic Area broadly, creating “fences,” real and symbolic, that serve to reinforce larger claims to cultural authority and identity. These fences may be constructed through naming strategies to distinguish one village from another within the entire scenic area, or more literally and physically be erected between hotels or businesses within a village.

It is in this regard that the chapter title draws upon an English proverb, “good fences make good neighbors,” to draw attention to how, in a highly competitive tourism market, the model of the fence allows us to envisage certain “fenced-in” areas, such as a hotel or even an entire village, within which heritage can be defined, crafted, possessed, and ultimately sold. Within these acknowledged, if only tacitly agreed upon, demarcations, economic competition can be regulated and managed; without them, the threat of spillover and leakage, the potential “dilution” of heritage in the Longji Scenic Area itself, could run rampant. To understand the ways in which heritage operates alongside tourism in the Longji

¹ For a history of “scenic spots” in Chinese tourism and the national ranking system, see Nyíri 2006, 2010.

² Studies in Ping’an village, for example, indicate that tourism development has significantly contributed to household incomes. Huang (2006) found that annual incomes rose from 4,000 RMB before tourism (no exact date is given) to between 10,000 and 30,000 RMB annually; Sha et al. (2007) found that 61.7 % of surveyed households reported an annual per capita income of 2,000 RMB, or approximately 10,000–12,000 RMB/year. My own data from Ping’an, collected in 2007, suggested that annual household incomes ranged between 10,000 and 20,000 RMB (Chio 2009b).

³ Folklorist Xu Ganli has comparatively analyzed ethnic tourism and cultural transformation in a number of the villages within the Longji Scenic Area (2005, 2006).

Scenic Area, therefore, is to examine closely not only what differences exist between villages and households, but also to question what purposes these differences may serve and in whose interests. Or, as Robert Frost wrote in his 1914 poem *Mending Wall*, in building a wall one should ask who (or what) would be walled in, walled out, and who might take offence. And, moreover, it is necessary to ask what interests might be more inclined to tear down a wall, rather than to accept, let alone embrace, the consequences of the differences that walls and fences may serve to perpetuate. In the Longji Scenic Area, heritage becomes a strategic tool for advancing one's own tourism investments, and while good fences may make for good neighborly relations in a competitive economic environment, the claims to heritage that are produced and enacted by various actors in this situation suggest future struggles over the control of the local tourism industry and local ethnic identities.

One Area, Many Spots

At the macro level, the Longji Scenic Area is now divided into three primary tourism village destinations, each marked and named differently in order to emphasize the different types of views and experiences to be had in each place. The reconfiguration and management of physical space is a common feature of Chinese tourism development as a part of the process of constructing recognizable, branded tourism sights/sites within (and out of) already existing villages and communities (see Chio 2009a, b; Nyíri 2006; Oakes 1998, 2006). An additional feature of these sites is the ticket booth, or gated entry, often built so that all traffic (foot and/or vehicular) must pass through an official, monitored entry point, allowing for both the management of tourist numbers and also, of course, the collection of entry fees.

The Longji Scenic Area, in its present form, follows this same model—there is one main road leading into the scenic area from the highway linking the region to the city of Guilin, and all vehicles entering the area (including private cars, tour buses, and the public bus from the county seat, Longsheng) must pull into a parking lot, where tourism management company employees approach the vehicles to sell entry tickets. Tourists must purchase scenic area entry tickets at the main gate, which in 2012 cost 80 RMB per person,⁴ and these tickets are then rechecked by management company staff at the entry gates to each of the developed tourism village areas. Up until 2011, there were two villages which served as the two primary sites within the scenic area: the Ping'an Zhuang Terraced Fields Scenic Spot (平安壮族梯田景观区) and the Jinkeng Red Yao Terraced Fields Scenic Spot (金坑红瑶梯田景观区). More recently, after the completion of a

⁴ This was the full price charged to individual tourists who were not traveling as a part of a tour group. The group price for tickets was 40 RMB/person.

direct access road and other infrastructure investments from an outside entrepreneur, a third village within the scenic area has been officially designated a tourism spot, namely the Longji Old Zhuang Village Cultural Terraced Fields Scenic Spot (龙脊古壮寨梯田文化景观区) (shortened here to Longji village to distinguish it from the wider Longji Scenic Area).

All together, the Longji Scenic Area encompasses more than just these three villages; on the official tourism management company map (available at <http://www.txljw.com/dt/dtlj>, accessed December 8, 2012), there are at least 13 villages marked, including the three scenic spots of Ping'an, Jinkeng, and Longji villages. These latter three spots are distinguished on the map with shaded circles, reinforcing each spot as a singular, self-contained place, different from the spot next door, and of greater significance than the other, smaller, dark dots on the map which indicate the village that are undeveloped, or less developed, for tourism in the scenic area. Photographs of the terraced fields from the three scenic spots promote the different views of terraced fields which can be seen in each village, as well as the poetic, picturesque names given to each of these different views (i.e., "Seven Stars with the Moon" in Ping'an, or "Music from Paradise" in Jinkeng).

The naming of these three scenic spots is important to the consideration of how ethnicity, culture, heritage, and place are intertwined and evoked in the Longji Scenic Area. Technically, "Jinkeng" refers to the administrative village of Dazhai, which itself encompasses a number of natural villages with different names, such as Tiantou, Damaojie, and Qiangbei. Ping'an itself is one administrative village, while Longji Old Village is divided and locally referred to in terms of four natural villages (Liaojia, Houjia, Pingzhai, and Pingduan). As mentioned above, before Longji Old Village officially opened to tourism in 2011, Ping'an and Dazhai villages were the two primary destinations in the scenic area and considered mutual competitors for tourists and profits. The most immediate and obvious difference between Ping'an and Dazhai villages is the ethnicity of each village's resident community—Ping'an is an ethnic Zhuang village, whereas Dazhai and its surrounding villages are ethnically Yao. To maintain and make obvious this difference to tourists, on tourism maps and brochures, each village *as destination* was renamed to include this difference—hence Ping'an *Zhuang* Terraced Fields Scenic Spot and Jinkeng *Red Yao* Terraced Fields Scenic Spot.

The intention in this renaming process was to make clear to tourists that the villages, and by extension the experience of each village, were categorically different, and thus to encourage tourists to visit both places. Moreover, as tourism took off in Ping'an especially, ethnic Yao women from neighboring villages began coming to Ping'an on a daily basis in order to sell souvenirs and pose for photographs with tourists (for a fee), and local Zhuang residents in Ping'an were pressed to develop new ways of uniquely identifying themselves and their ethnic community from their Yao competitors. Similarly, because Longji Old Village borders Ping'an and is also an ethnic Zhuang village, it required a way of maintaining its difference and distinctiveness. The name of the scenic spot, Longji Old Village, thus bears the adjectives "old" as well as "cultural" as a means of distinguishing it from both Ping'an and Jinkeng; a more literal English translation of

the Chinese name given to Longji Old Zhuang Village Cultural Terraced Fields Scenic Spot (龙脊古壮寨梯田文化景观区) would be: Longji Old Zhuang Village *Terraced Fields Culture* Scenic Spot.

Prior to 2011 and the village's development into a scenic spot, Longji Old Village was relatively isolated from tourists due to the lack of direct road access; it was only accessible by foot, either from Ping'an or from main scenic area road. As Ping'an village's tourism industry grew and living conditions became more modernized, Longji came to represent, by default perhaps, the "past" and a "traditional" Zhuang village, and consequently was given the name Longji Old Village (龙脊古壮寨) sometime in the early 2000s.⁵ In 2009 and 2010, village residents in Ping'an said that there was, reportedly, some talk of turning the entire village of Longji into an "eco-museum" (as has been done in a few villages in neighboring Guizhou province through a development program funded by the Norwegian government, see http://english.people.com.cn/200201/22/eng20020122_89091.shtml, accessed December 7, 2012). By 2012, with its redevelopment into a scenic spot and the completion of a road, Longji Old Village boasted new signs along its paths which directed tourists to the viewpoints at the top of the village as well as to the newly built Longji Zhuang Ecological Museum and "cultural model homes," at least one of which featured an exhibition of Zhuang farming tools and other material objects such as woven baskets, cooking utensils, and clothing within an existing home. An older woman served as a guide and host in the latter building, preparing oil tea for tour groups and offering explanations of traditional Zhuang architecture, social relations, and livelihoods (Fig. 8.1).

While the naming of the scenic spots may primarily serve as a cartographic convenience for the sake of tourists, it also illuminates one of the ways in which claiming heritage intersects with the reconfiguration of space in the Longji Scenic Area. First, and most obviously, each village spot has staked a claim as a particular ethnic minority community—Zhuang or Yao. In the names of the scenic spots, therefore, the ethnic identity of the village residents becomes mapped onto the terraced fields, in the cases of Ping'an and Jinkeng, rather than on the villages (or villagers), while Longji village is called (in Chinese) Longji Old Zhuang Village, rather than Longji Zhuang Terraced Fields Scenic Spot. This is a slight, yet significant, difference in terms of the production and promotion of tourist experiences in each place; whereas in Ping'an and Jinkeng the emphasis is placed on the terraced fields themselves, in Longji the weight of ethnicity is now shifted (back) onto the village, and by extension, its residents. What is "cultural" about Ping'an and Jinkeng, in other words, seems to be the terraced fields, while in Longji, its named status as an "old Zhuang" village deliberately implies a stronger claim to heritage and a more authentic Zhuang way of life. Ironically, of course, it is only because Longji was not developed early on as a tourism destination that the village

⁵ Actually, prior to 2011, I always saw Longji Old Village referred to in English as Longji Ancient Village; the swapping out of "ancient" for "old" in the English translation is something I have only noticed in the new scenic area map online.

Fig. 8.1 In preparation for the arrival of a tour group at an “ancient house” in Longji Old Village, oil tea is set out inside the main room. (Photo by author)



has been “preserved” in such a way that can now be considered as distinct from Ping’an and, subsequently, highly attractive as a rural, ethnic tourism destination.

Many scholars working in critical tourism studies have examined the conflation of natural and cultural heritages embodied in agricultural landscapes such as terraced fields in a variety of regional contexts. In China, research by Wang Yu (2008) on the failed bid to achieve UNESCO World Heritage Status for the terraced fields near Yuanyang, in southern Yunnan Province, explored precisely how these terraced fields were envisioned as both ethnic and natural at the same time. As products of human intervention requiring specialized knowledge and constant maintenance in order to function properly as agricultural land, terraced fields straddle the distinction between natural and cultural, and their uniqueness has been recognized by UNESCO (such as the Rice Terraces of the Cordilleras in the Philippines, which were inscribed in 1995 as a cultural landscape). While there has not yet been a formal effort to pursue UNESCO World Heritage Status for the Longji Scenic Area, village residents of Ping’an and local officials alike recognize the potential economic and political benefits of framing the region, its landscape, and its villages within discourses of world heritage (Di Giovine 2008). Adding the ethnic name to the scenic spots of Ping’an, Jinkeng, and Longji was a preliminary step in claiming heritage based on ethnic differences; for these communities, it was

also a first move toward further solidifying the distinctions between the villages-as-destinations in order to attract tourists to each place.

In reality, tourists actually arrive at and purchase entry tickets only for one destination: the entire Longji Scenic Area. Once inside, however, they are faced with a selection of scenic spots to visit and so each village must craft its own way of claiming, or showcasing, its main attractions. This is achieved by highlighting the local ethnic communities in the names of each scenic spot, by using poetic phrases to describe particular views and shapes formed by the terraced fields landscape, and in Longji Old Village, by calling upon the village's state of arrested development within the contemporary discourse of heritage as equivalent to the past. The map created by the tourism management company for the Longji Scenic Area thus visualizes each of the scenic spots as a singular spot, separate from the others; unlike a Venn diagram, there is no space of convergence here. By isolating each place from the others through naming and mapping strategies, the fences built around Ping'an, Jinkeng, and Longji serve to divorce these communities from one another in order to boost potential profits but also to force the production of heritage in new ways within each village community itself.

Making Space for Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage in Ping'an

Ping'an village began engaging with tourists and tourism early on, and it was the first in the region to open local guesthouses for tourists in 1992 (Fig. 8.2). Until 1995, tourism to Ping'an was entirely self-regulated by the village, which sold its own entry tickets at the rain-and-wind bridge at the base of the village. At the time, the only way to access the village was by foot, and residents from Ping'an and Huangluo villages, located at the foot of the mountain below Ping'an, would guide tourists up to Ping'an using the farmers' paths through the fields. By the late 1990s, however, the local county government tourism bureau based in Longsheng developed its own plans to open the entire region to tourism. These plans included the construction of vehicular roads directly to Ping'an and Dazhai villages. Furthermore, to generate the capital needed for these projects and to increase marketing opportunities, in 2000 the county tourism bureau sold the development rights of the region to the current tourism management company, which is based in the municipal city (and well-known tourist destination) of Guilin, about 90 km south of the Longji Scenic Area.

As the first village in the Longji Scenic Area to develop a tourism industry, Ping'an is now home to a diverse range of entrepreneurs—from local households who have built guesthouses and restaurants on their traditional family lands to investors from all over China and even the United States who have leased land from local families in order to open businesses. In turn, there has been a relatively rapid influx of additional migrant workers coming to Ping'an from neighboring villages, counties, and cities, all of whom are in search of work in the Ping'an tourism economy as hotel staff, construction laborers, and ethnic minority models



Fig. 8.2 A view of Ping'an village taken from one of the viewpoints in July 2012; a number of large hotels are under construction. (Photo by author)

who pose at the photography booths along the walking paths to the two scenic viewpoints above the village. The greatest profits in Ping'an are nowadays made by restaurants and hotels with connections to regional tour agencies. One-day tours from Guilin comprise the bulk of daily visits and are scheduled to include a prearranged midday meal at one of the many restaurants in the village. Overnight tour groups, both domestic and international, also have regular contracts and agreements with certain hotels in the village, most of which are hotels opened and run by non-locals. Some local households, after leasing out their homes and/or businesses, have either retreated entirely from directly working in tourism or developed other opportunities, such as selling meat and vegetables wholesale to restaurants.

Even at the most superficial level, by examining only the ownership of hotels and other businesses, it is obvious that Ping'an village, as a community and as an economy, is hardly an isolated entity "fenced-off" from its neighbors or even the rest of the country and the world. Indeed, Jessica Anderson Turner's ethnographic study of cultural performances and performance groups in the Longji region demonstrates clearly that there have been a number of key interactions and engagements between Ping'an village residents, Longsheng county government agencies, and savvy entrepreneurs in the organization of cultural performance groups within the village (2010, 2011). The first tourism performance group in

Ping'an was started by a local woman who had studied with ethnic minority performers (both Dong and Zhuang) in Longsheng while working in a hotel there; she thus brought the idea for such a group and a potential repertoire to Ping'an (Turner 2010: 202–206). For the most part this group performed in the village schoolyard in the evenings whenever an organized group of tourists was willing to hire them, or at scheduled times during the very busy “Golden Week Holidays”⁶ when the village was typically at, or over, capacity. On other occasions, the group also performed outside, or even inside, local hotels, particularly when the performance was arranged by a tour group staying together at one establishment.

As Turner shows, however, even as the local Ping'an performance group adapted old songs and wrote new songs and lyrics as a means of aligning themselves with other performances and broader discourses of ethnicity, heritage, and tourism in the region, they also had to contend with the expanding influence of other regional groups, namely one led by a Dong minority performer and businessman, Wu Jinmin. Wu previously organized performances in the Dong village of Yinshui, also in Longsheng county and a part of the county tourism bureau's tourism development investments. In late 2007, one of the women who performed in the Ping'an group began building a large, open structure in the center of village, which was designed to serve as a dedicated performance venue, albeit one that was privately owned (as opposed to the schoolyard, which was considered a space for communal use). In 2009, according to Turner (2011), Wu Jinmin brought his performance group to Ping'an and set up his business in this newly constructed space; the new group included both Dong and Zhuang performers from Ping'an and surrounding villages and offered a newly revised repertoire. The songs and dances performed emphasized a collective “Longji” heritage, rather than one particular ethnic group or village, thus broadening the scope of these cultural productions to encompass the entire region (and even beyond, given that Yinshui village is not within the Longji Scenic Area and there are no Dong communities in the scenic area at all).

For Ping'an, the shift from performing in a public, shared village space (the schoolyard) to a privately funded, fenced-off space was, coincidentally, inversely accompanied by a shift from a more localized performance by village women (albeit trained and influenced by regional ethnic performance standards and productions) to a highly generalized, collective “Longji” representation. The privatization of space and the performance of *place*, in this instance, had effected an opposite outcome in terms of the content of this representation, which expanded its

⁶ The national “Golden Week” holidays in China were created in 1999 to promote domestic leisure spending; they encompassed the national holidays of Spring Festival in late winter, May 1, and October 1. Beginning in 2008, the “Golden Weeks” were revised to include only Spring Festival and October 1, and new national holidays were created for the Dragon's Boat Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival in order to make up for the days lost in eliminating the May 1 “Golden Week.” Regardless of the revisions, because these are national holidays, the pressures and strain on national transport infrastructure are immense, although it was also during these holidays when village businesses in Ping'an earned a major proportion of their annual income.

claims on heritage to embrace a pan-Longji, even pan-Longsheng version of “local” culture. The new performances did not last long, however, and by September 2010, this recently completed performance space was no longer offering shows; since it had not been constructed with other uses in mind, it instead became a storage area for construction materials and fire hoses (a large fire ripped through two hotels in the village that month). Wu Jinmin, the main organizer, took his troupe to the popular tourist destination of Yangshuo, south of Guilin city.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, over the years of its development as a tourism destination, Ping’an village has become more and more commercialized with ever-increasing numbers of retail shops, stalls, and other ways for tourists to spend money within the village itself. To an extent this has been a consequence of the improved transport links, allowing for day-tours to the village from Guilin city, which in turn lessened the number of overnight guests but dramatically increased the total number of visitors to the village. The pressures of commercialization, experienced mainly in the form of competition, have resulted in changes to the ways in which ethnicity and heritage are perceived and made meaningful. As Ping’an village residents sought to distinguish themselves from the neighboring attractions such as Jinkeng, Huangluo village (which offered ethnic Yao performances) and, most recently, Longji Old Village, this desire to create a more ethnic experience in Ping’an inspired both the establishment of a village performance group and its eventual broadening into a pan-ethnic, pan-regional show organized by a non-local. In this way, notions of heritage shifted from the search for explicit Zhuang distinctiveness to the embracing of a wider sense of being “ethnic” more generally, which in turn could be crafted and presented for sale as entertainment.

One further example of heritage-through-ethnic commercialization is the presence of young women who are almost always migrants from other villages and regions of Guangxi and who dress up in stylized ethnic minority costumes and pose for photographs for a fee. The models claim heritage through their costumes and their work; in interviews they readily acknowledged that while they may not be of the ethnic minority group whose costume they might wear on any given day, they were (or at least claimed to be) ethnic minorities nonetheless (see Chio 2009b). Their work, as minority models, provided a further visual element of ethnic “heritage” to the tourist’s experience of Ping’an, despite the models’ position as migrant workers in the village and as (mostly) non-Zhuang young women. Arguably, they increased the overall “ethnic-ness” of Ping’an, despite the commercial nature of their presence, and like the performances organized by Wu Jinmin which occurred in a privately owned space within the village, the models also worked at specific, separated photo booth spaces which were either leased and run by other entrepreneurs from outside the village or, in one case, by a local family (Fig. 8.3).

Here again, the making and selling of heritage (in the form of ethnic minority models to be photographed) involved the demarcation and isolation of specific physical spaces. The photo booths where models worked were built alongside the path to the “Seven Stars with the Moon” viewpoint, which is most heavily trafficked path in the village. These platforms were specially built structures,



Fig. 8.3 Platforms built along the walking path to a viewpoint in Ping'an; the minority models who pose in stylized ethnic costumes work at these photo booths. (Photo by author)

extending out from the side of the hill near the walking path. The models stayed largely within the space of the booths themselves, and some platforms were even built to include a small “doorway” or gate, indicating that the space therein was private and intended only for paying customers. Some of the photo booths included small sitting areas where tourists could purchase a cup of tea or coffee and snacks like ice cream and cookies. Conversely, there were a regular number of Yao women from neighboring villages (mostly Huangluo and Zhongliu, which lies in between Ping'an and Dazhai) who did move about the main paths of the village during the daytime, selling small souvenirs and also offering to pose for photographs and to perform traditional folk songs (*shan'ge*) for a small fee. These Yao women, who did not possess or own designated spaces for their economic efforts, effectively resisted the “fences” of the scenic area as a whole by deliberately and purposefully coming into Ping'an on a daily basis. They also refuted the confluence of spatial commercialization and privatization inside Ping'an itself, moving fluidly throughout the village in pursuit of tourists.

The presence of both the minority models and the Yao women created within Ping'an a greater awareness of the need by local households to stake a stronger claim on what kinds of heritage and cultural experiences they could provide to tourists that would be distinct from, or perhaps even more palatable and enjoyable than, what non-locals (whether migrants or nearby villagers) offered. Because

local families held the use-rights to the most valuable commodity within the village—the land itself—this heightened self-consciousness to the importance of being able to participate in the construction of consumable, saleable, and profitable forms of heritage and cultural identity was thus played out most visibly in the building and decorating of hotels and guesthouses.

Hotels and Heritage

Up until approximately 2002, the guesthouses in Ping'an were family run and built as extensions to existing houses. In some cases, such as due to a large fire in the village in 2000, families rebuilt their own homes in order to include a number of guestrooms and typically maintained their own residences within the same structures. Many of these family-run hotels have been decorated with photographs of the terraces taken by tourists who have stayed there and sent back pictures. The display of photos serves a double purpose—not only to evidence the satisfaction of previous tourists but also to promote and sell the services of the family as local guides, who take photographers along farmers' paths at various times of day in order to obtain the "best" pictures of the terraces.

With the entry of the private tourism management company to the area in 2000, however, more and more private investors from within China and abroad began contracting land from local families in order to build larger, more modern hotels. One of the first of these new, non-locally owned hotels was the Ping'an Hotel (平安酒店), which at five stories tall was an imposing structure ideally located at a sharp bend in the walking path to the second viewpoint in the village. This hotel was built by a former employee from the county tourism management company who had extensive contacts with tour agencies in Guilin and throughout the country, and thus from early on much of the tour group business in the village was directed expressly to this hotel (Wen 2002). It was also the first hotel to offer ensuite, Western-style toilets and showers, which made it even more attractive to a range of tourists.

In 2007, there were approximately 160 businesses in Ping'an, including hotels, restaurants, and shops, though many of these enterprises were a combination of all three types of services. This number in a village of about 170 households would suggest that nearly every household had, by that year, managed to open and run its own business, but with the influx of outside entrepreneurs investing in and operating businesses within the village, the numbers are misleading. The trend from 2007 onwards has been for increasing numbers of local families to lease out either land or already-built spaces (hotels/restaurants) to outsiders, who in turn take over the day-to-day running of the enterprises. For example, there were a handful of migrants from Henan Province who came to Ping'an to run two restaurants that were connected to the day-tours coming from Guilin and thus mostly concentrated on serving lunch to these groups, as well as a retired businessman from Beijing who opened a hotel and restaurant in the village in 2005. One of the earliest

outside enterprises to Ping'an was the "Countryside Inn and Hotel," operated by owners from Yangshuo, and in 2008, the "Meiyou Hotel" from Yangshuo also leased out the former village leader's house and opened up a branch of its company in Ping'an.

But the hotel villagers talked about most was Li-An Lodge, owned and operated by a Chinese American. Li-An Lodge opened in 2007 and noticeably differed from any previously existing hotels in the village not only because of the cost of its rooms and significantly more modern furnishings and amenities (including drinkable tap water, a business center with Internet access, and English-speaking staff), but also for its décor and presentation of "Chinese-ness." On its website, the lodge advertises uniquely designed hotel rooms and all inclusive meals at the cost on average of 2000 RMB/night or more (<http://www.lianlodge.cn>, accessed December 8, 2012). Comparatively, in 2012, more typical room prices in Ping'an ranged from 50 RMB for a basic double room with shared facilities to 150–300 RMB for private, ensuite, more modernized accommodations, though these prices did not include meals. The owner of the lodge, a successful photographer and tour agency owner whose photographs of the terraced fields in and around Ping'an are sold worldwide on postcards and calendars, hung many of his own photographs inside the hotel as part of the décor. More interestingly, however, was the way in which each room within the hotel was decorated according to a specific, traditional Chinese "theme" and featured objects from the owner's own collections—the themes included "celadon," "abacus," "calligraphy," and "wood block." The aesthetic and cultural emphasis, both in the online promotional materials as well as within the hotel, was placed on traditional Chinese crafts and material culture, without particular attention to Zhuang elements, or even the more pan-ethnic minority heritage features evident in the revised performance group repertoire or in the costumes of the minority models. More local senses of place and heritage, in the case of Li-An Lodge, were displaced in favor of a conceptualization of what was "traditionally Chinese" that could be located firmly in the material collections of the owner—pieces of porcelain, decorative wood block prints, custom-made furniture. In the Li-An Lodge, heritage comes in the form of conversation pieces.

Whereas Li-An Lodge thus takes the entire Chinese nation and its history as the baseline for its heritage, perhaps reflecting the interests of the owner more than the specificities of its location in Ping'an, other hotels run by non-Ping'an residents have also taken up a wider view of what heritage may be, or mean, in the context of the local rural, ethnic tourism industry. Since the opening of Li-An Lodge, other hotels have begun displaying historical, traditional Chinese elements as a part of their decorative strategies, moving beyond just Zhuang cultural features and even beyond a more generic "rural" feel (embodied in wooden furniture, the display of farming tools, and the use of simple woven textiles as tablecloths and such). In a conversation with a Ping'an resident about the effects of Li-An Lodge on the village's tourism industry and their profits, one older woman whose family continued to run a hotel and restaurant concluded, pragmatically, that Li-An Lodge was not actually a source of competition for her business because the people who stayed at Li-An Lodge would not otherwise come to Ping'an for an overnight visit.

Li-An Lodge, in her view, had effectively opened up Ping'an to an entirely new tourist market—high end, international tourists who desired and were willing to pay for an exclusive experience. These were not tourists who necessarily wanted to stay in an authentic Zhuang guesthouse, with shared bathrooms and all.

Hotels in Ping'an are the most dynamic, and most transparent, places for claiming heritage. In family-run guesthouses, these smaller spaces continue to serve as a semi-porous border zone between the public and the private, the home and the hotel. The demarcation of space vis-à-vis hotels, and the traversal of these borders, illuminates the contraction of heritage and commercialization, a process in which the more heritage is self-consciously presented, the more commercial, and the more private, these spaces become. In many family-run guesthouses, everyday objects—children's toys, DVDs, televisions—share space with the tourists' dining room, laundry is hung outside and family members relax in the same areas where tourists may also write postcards or play cards. In the larger hotels, the spaces for tourists are much more visibly marked as such through careful decoration (tablecloths, wall hangings, photographs, etc.), and staff tend not to spend quite as much time in the spaces designated for tourist use, although during off-periods between meal services, for instance, these spaces are still traversed by employees and other village residents delivering vegetables, meat, and other supplies. Li-An Lodge, at the far extreme, is built with an electronically operated front gate for tourists, and a smaller, side door as a general staff entrance and for deliveries. Unlike the other hotels in the village, no one is allowed to enter Li-An Lodge without express purpose or permission from the hotel staff, and most of the staff are not local to Ping'an. Heritage in Ping'an exists along a sliding scale; from the quotidian shared space of local, family-run hotels to exclusively designed and decorated Chinese themed rooms in the Li-An Lodge, these poles have come to define the extremes of what constitutes heritage in this twenty-first century Zhuang village.

What is Heritage in a (Tourism) Village of Migrants?

The title of this concluding section is a reworking of Susan Buck Sutton's essay on Greek intra-rural migration and the significance of villages in Greece's modern political economy, "What is a 'Village' in a Nation of Migrants?" (1988). Drawing on historical and ethnographic literature on villages, kinship ties, and migration in rural Greece, Sutton argues that while "villages are generally considered the fundamental social units of rural Greek life" (1988: 187), by taking into account the dual processes of migration and settlement in Greek life, the tensions contained therein reveal the "variable life span" of Greek villages and allows for a more nuanced understanding of village allegiance, and thus processes of identity construction (1988: 187–188). Similarly, although rural tourism models in China continue to rely upon the idea of the village that can be morphed into a "scenic

spot,” as the cases of Ping’an and the Longji Scenic Area clearly demonstrate, these social spaces are both fundamentally critical (to current tourism enterprises) and highly artificial constructions which, in many cases, arbitrarily create lines of separation between otherwise mobile, interdependent communities. The resulting spatial divisions between households and businesses in Ping’an and between villages in the scenic area, therefore, direct our attention and analysis to the issue of what kinds of socialities are most present, and most significant, in tourism destinations.

In Ping’an village at present, good fences may make for good neighbors because of the way in which different hotels and different businesses allow for the separation of tourist “types” (wealthy foreign tourists, backpackers, tour groups, etc.), and thus enable different stakeholders in the village to benefit from these various tourist markets. However, in the long term, the claims to heritage and, by extension, to ownership and belonging produced by these spaces suggest future struggles over the control of the village’s tourism industry and its identity. As the above descriptions of performances, photography, and hotel management/ownership in Ping’an illustrate, heritage in this village is a highly complex matter, shaped and determined not only by national and global discourses of preservation and protection, but also of local and regional efforts to make tourism profitable. The fact that Ping’an village is now home not only to a long-standing community of Zhuang households and lineages but also to migrant workers and entrepreneurs from all over China and the world has only complicated what can be, or should be, called heritage in this place.

By examining the overlapping circles of migrants and local families in Ping’an in the context of its contemporary tourism industry, the definition of heritage in this case thus raises important questions about how heritage is constructed in a place of high mobility (by both tourists and tourism workers). Moreover, by placing Ping’an village in the context of the Longji Scenic Area, we can see both how Ping’an’s status as a village is simultaneously reinforced through tourism management topographies of separation and distinction (the “scenic spots”) and challenged by the actual movement of people into Ping’an in search of business and money-making opportunities. Human mobility, in the latter instance, resists the “fencing” strategies at work in the physical separation of privatized, commercialized spaces within Ping’an and the division of scenic spots within the Longji Scenic Area, threatening the stability of the regional management structure and heightening self-awareness among all tourism stakeholders in understanding, and embracing, the discursive significance of being able to claim heritage in this socio-economic context.

The development of tourism in Ping’an has not been without its share of problems and discontent—Turner (2011) reports the disappointment and frustration of the original organizers of the village performance group with the entry of the new, pan-Longji group in 2009, while many villagers on multiple occasions complained privately to me that the Yao women who came to Ping’an were a nuisance because of the way in which they followed tourists around and

persistently offered souvenirs for sale or photography opportunities. Women in Ping'an who frequently worked as guides for photographers and also modeled for photos in their local ethnic clothing also expressed a longing for more local models in the village, a wish directed pointedly at the minority models who posed at the photo booths along the main walking paths. These various longings and criticisms reflected both a pragmatic desire by local Ping'an individuals to gain, or regain, economic control over the tourism profits in the village but also a symbolic grievance at the perceived transgression of "their" place, which in turn was manifest in the emphasis on their local belonging, their social and cultural place in this space.

Of course, many of the most successful local families in Ping'an had in fact developed their own businesses by drawing on knowledge gained from outside of the village, so the ways in which they crafted heritage for sale in Ping'an relied heavily upon their own experiences as migrants and tourists (Chio 2011). The same woman who started the Ping'an performance troupe, inspired by her encounter with other ethnic dance troupes in Longsheng, also runs one of the highly successful LiQing Guesthouses in the village. She and her sister each manage one of the LiQing businesses which frequently host international tour groups, and in 2006, they spent a few months in Yangshuo learning how to cook western, non-Chinese dishes and also gaining important contacts to food suppliers in order to purchase the needed ingredients. Thus, while Ping'an households have benefited and improved upon their own businesses by spending time outside of the village, the village itself has expanded and has been challenged by the increased presence of outsiders settling into the local community. To understand heritage in this instance, therefore, necessitates understanding the "dynamic tension between the two processes" of settlement and migration (Sutton 1988: 187).

Claiming heritage in the Longji Scenic Area, and in Ping'an village specifically, is shaped by the processes of both migration and settlement, resulting in production of spatially distinct, highly self-conscious borders and fences. These fences are productive, both in a positive and a negative sense, in that they allow for an inwardly directed, focused effort toward crafting and selling a version of heritage, but their reification and solidification in the social economy of Ping'an raise many potential difficulties about the future of tourism for the community and its migrants.

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Chapter 9

Re-constructing Cultural Heritage and Imagining Wa Primitiveness in the China/Myanmar Borderlands

Tzu-kai Liu

Introduction

Amid uneven socioeconomic flows between the urban and the rural in cosmopolitanized China, the emergence of heritage politics is often grounded in the context of marketization and local governance for the purpose of regional economic development, conjoining with nation-building. Within a similar context, in the impoverished minority areas of southwest China state-promoted ethnic heritage tourism is frequently viewed as a civilizing strategy for alleviating poverty, claiming cultural authenticity, and preserving ethnic heritage. Yet, whose interests are served in the tourism development process is a debated issue. Meanwhile, while ethnic tourist sites are constructed as consumable spaces of tourist attraction, the distinctions between tourist/touree and gazer/gazee are reinforced and reimagined in the context of interethnic crossing of urban–rural spatial/economic gaps and travels.

In response to translocal and global commodification of ethnicity, the development of ethnic tourism in China's impoverished minority regions has become a driving force in reshaping the relationships between culture/heritage and space/power. Once minority communities located on the global periphery and in cultural and geographic borderlands have been transformed into ethnic tourism sites, either by political forces or by neoliberal developments, their senses of space and heritage are frequently transformed in response to the influences of tourist activities.

Questions concerning whose interests are served by specific versions of ethnic tourism development at historic landscapes have spurred serious debates, transnationally and transculturally. The debates include: (1) claims of cultural heritage and human rights (Daniels 2010; Langfield et al. 2010; Logan 2007; Silverman and

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Ruggles 2007, 2011); (2) the pursuit of individual and social well-being and justice (Hodder 2010); and (3) the (un)sustainability of ecological and cultural resources on the site (Chambers 2010; Honey 2008; McLaren 2003; Studley 1999; Yuan et al. 2008).

Silverman and Ruggles (2007, 2011) argue that negotiations and contestations between universally claimed human rights and locally defined heritage rights are central to the politics of cultural heritage preservation. Also, Hodder (2010) suggests the term “cultural heritage rights” and argues that research attentions should be shifted from preserving what is of value to the interests of scholars and UNESCO agents to whether or not local residents are able to participate in managing cultural heritage resources in meaningful ways that allow them to fulfill their capabilities and to pursue their well-being and social justice. Furthermore, recent scholarly studies of ecotourism suggest taking necessary actions in heritage management for promoting sustainable development, building environmental awareness, and providing financial benefits and empowerment for the inhabited residents (Honey 2008).

The issues about heritage rights and heritage management mentioned above are essential to heritage politics in the ethnic Wa regions and other ethnic minority communities in rural China, especially when historic communities, ethnic territories, and ecological habitats are transformed into desirable tourist destinations by following the Chinese state’s dominated proposal of capitalist-oriented rural development. Yet, different from the heritage development patterns in the western countries and Han Chinese societies, the development of Wa cultural heritage reveals three unique features.

First of all, local ethnic residents’ collective memories of the past may coincide, and frequently collide, with externally introduced dominant narratives of “cultural heritage” (Ch. *wenhua yichan*) promoted by government institutions or intellectual elites, who are interested in integrating international discourses of world heritage into Chinese contexts. *Wenhua yichan* seldom turns out to be a native concept for local minority residents. For instance, ethnic Wa people often use two native terms, “*ga di*” ([things] from the past) or “*ah gix noh*” (our ancestors’ sayings) to express their views of conventional customs and vernacular-built spatial idioms. Amid persistent efforts by the PRC government and county government in the Wa regions to implement tourism development projects, many ethnic Wa residents view the Han Chinese discourse of *wenhua yichan* (cultural heritage) as a rhetoric of political language.

The second feature is the role of local government in the management of Wa cultural heritage in the present. This is grounded in the politics of postsocialist governmental transformations. In the postsocialist era of China (1980s-present), what new Chinese governmentality has brought to ethnic minorities’ regions is a partial substitution of the PRC central government’s power by granting the county government institutional flexibility and financial freedom to design the regional socioeconomic development projects and by asking local governments to take up their civic responsibilities in the success, corruption, and failure of these government projects. Thus, under such transformations of political governance, state authorities

at the county level—“Autonomous County of Cangyuan Wa Nationality” (ACCWN) in Cangyuan, Yunnan Province, China—have played a greater role in appropriating cultural heritage resources to develop regional ethnic tourism.

In the milieu of new governmentality in contemporary China, local Wa residents’ reactions to state-promoted ethnic tourism would greatly vary. Some would candidly acknowledge their economic hardships and social marginality, while others would sustain hope by fervently accepting the local government’s plan and their representations of Wa heritage and spatial practices in the ethnic tourism industry. Some Wa residents would feel conflicted about embracing the implementation of new tourism development projects proposed by the county government in their communities because they are afraid of the uneven distribution of financial incomes. Some of them would enjoy the opportunities and financial incomes from ethnic tourism activities. They would take advantage of ethnic tourism development as the potential to sustain their cultural heritage and conventional customs as well as to reinvent their ethnic culture for tourist attraction. Among these diverse opinions of local residents, this article, in particular, focuses on the responses from village officials, county officials, and Wa residents who live in a state-promoted, community-based tourism site to explore their views of development, cultural heritage, and land ownership.

The third feature is the lack of NGOs’ participation in the Wa heritage management. In southwest China the roles of NGOs are influential by calling for improvements on environmental conservation, health protection from the threats and problems of AIDS (Hyde 2007; Liu 2011), and gender equality in accessibility of public school education (Ross 2006). Frequently, the relationships between the PRC government and NGOs are fraught with tension, conflict, and ambivalence (Merry 2006). At the ACCWN the domestic and international NGOs have been excluded from participation in cultural heritage management. In such a situation, local ethnic residents living on the officially promoted community-based ethnic tourism sites have to constantly react to and negotiate with the externally introduced concepts of land development and marketable cultural features.

By emphasizing the features of interactions between political governance and heritage politics, in this article I look at local politics of ethnic tourism development and explore how the vernacular built thatched housing space in a Wa community has been transformed into a tourist site by following both tourists’ expectations of primitive ethnic experiences and state agents’ interests of economic development.

When Heritage Meets Tourism in the Ethnic Wa Lands

Commodification and political domination are indispensable parts of cultural heritage politics in the development of ethnic tourism in southwest China. Scholarly research has shown the political-economic vortex in the politics of heritage. For instance, in their study of commodified ethnicity, Comaroff and

Comaroff (2009) argue that in the globalizing era, many Western and non-Western nations transform themselves into corporations in the marketing of domestic heritage. In this way, cultural heritage becomes “national ethnoprise” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009: 126) by registering heritage as a corporation. Through such alliances between the nation-states and business, the meanings of heritage are intrinsically related to national identities and capitalist commodification. Like many other minority communities in less-developed regions of the global South (Bruner 2001; Gilbert and Lo 2007; Piot 1999; Robinson and Connell 2008), cultural heritage in the ethnic Wa regions at ACCWN has long been caught between the formidable influences of development-oriented commodification and the exercise of governmentality at the regional level of political governance (also see the discussions of other Chinese ethnic minority nationalities in Kolas 2008; Makley 2010; Oakes and Sutton 2010).

Within the political-economic vortex, the issue of state-promoted ethnic tourism in the Wa regions was brought to my attention beginning in 2003. Just a few years earlier, the PRC government had lifted certain security regulations on tourist travels to the ethnic Wa regions, where national borders were tightly guarded and drug-smuggling activities were frequently intercepted by PRC security forces. In my intermittent travels between cities and ethnic minority regions along China’s southwest borders from 1997 to 2010, I was often asked by government officials, Han Chinese and non-Wa urbanites, “Why are you going to the ethnic minority territory, which is backward and poor?” In a period dominated by translocal and national discourses of modernization, this question exemplifies the lingering public conception of ethnic territory as impoverished and uncivilized.

During my years of field study in the 2000s, many cities in southwest China had undergone rapid spatial restructuring, with central state power being ceded to local governance at the county and provincial levels. The rise of privatization in the postsocialist era of China was evident in the fervent involvement of local city governments in capitalist coalitions with real estate developers to modernize and restructure urban space (see Zhang 2006). Images of skyscrapers, gaudy shopping centers, and new roads throughout the country became iconic symbols of China’s urbanization and booming economy. I suggest that the oft-repeated question about my interest in the Wa regions reveals the idiosyncratic view of the central government and most urbanites who identify national modernization with civilized space (also see Duara 1995). The implication that rural ethnic region is uncivilized somehow does not intrinsically reflect the view of ethnic minorities who reside on a heritage site or inherit the rights of heritage preservation. It is in the context of ethnic boundary-making that the meanings of Wa cultural heritage are always contentious.

Since the early 1990s throughout southwest China, community-based ethnic tourism such as the tourist site of Dai villages in Xishuangbana Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province has been celebrated as both authentic cultural display and the source of economic income for turning local ethnic communities into a stock-sharing corporation, charging an entrance fee, and demonstrating residential spaces and ways of daily activities. Around a decade after the beginning of ethnic tourism development in southwest China, the ACCWN government

started emulating the tourism development of Dai communities in Yunnan and adopted the nationally circulated discourses of historic heritage to promote Wa tourism at the community level.

However, at the regional level, none of the historic heritage sites (e.g., a historic Buddhist monastery in the border town of Cangyuan) or the cultural landscape (e.g., an archeological site of old cave paintings) at the ACCWN have been able to successfully become part of a tentative UNESCO World Heritage List. The major reason is that the local government has always put the tourism development plan as its primary civic goal for poverty alleviation. In this way, the internationally proposed universal value of cultural heritage conservation has been ceded to economic development.

Moreover, at the national level, compared to the historic towns or old architecture of Han Chinese (Lee and Du Cros 2007; Li et al. 2008; Wang and Zan 2011), fewer ethnic minority regions receive the title of World Heritage in China. Currently in Yunnan Province of southwest China, only the historic town of Lijiang and the Three Parallel Rivers National Park have been promoted and recognized as World Heritage sites.¹ In 2008, the Chinese government had selected and submitted three ethnic minority areas and their nearby ethnic communities to UNESCO under the tentative World Heritage List, including the Miao communities in the Miao-Ling mountainous areas of Guizhou Province (UNESCO 2011), the Dong communities in southeast Guizhou Province, and the Tibetan and Qiang communities in western Sichuan Province. To master and appropriate the language of universal values is essential to the promotion of ethnic minority communities as a World Heritage Site. Among these three tentative world heritage sites in southwest China, a statement of authenticity and integrity about the communities is a key. For instance, in the submitted statement of the Miao communities, it says, “as the property of building clusters, the authenticity of the Miao villages in southeast Guizhou Province is reflected in their environment, layout, architectural form, the building materials and technologies and the traditional production mode and life styles... With a comparatively large area of nominated property and a buffer zone, these villages reflect the relationship of harmony and unity between human residences and natural environments and the integrity of an ancient village culture” (UNESCO). In its statement, it portrays an agent-less view of cultural heritage and the ethnic minority landscape and its architecture as the reminiscence of the Others’ past without mentioning the potential conflicts and tensions on the site.

Without the interests and the necessary professional trainings in the application for World Heritage list, the ACCWN government agents have been following a different route, that is to promote Wa cultural heritage through tourism development. At the ACCWN, however, Wa tourism development is often selective in its cultural representation. Only certain aspects of Wa heritage are categorized by local

¹ Lijiang was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1997 in recognition of its authentic architecture which blends the housing styles of Han Chinese, Naxi and other ethnic minority people over many centuries. The Three Parallel Rivers National Park has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 2003 in recognition of its natural waterway landscape and biodiversity.

government as “authentic” to represent and memorize the Wa past, while others are not. In promoting regional ethnic tourism, the ACCWN government set out to “regiment” certain cultural heritage, costumes, oral literatures, and folkloric practices—e.g., killing water buffalo and pulling the wooden drum—as the fetishistic signs of the Wa’s “ethnic characteristics” (Ch. *minzu tese*). Furthermore, some Wa communities, still keeping the so-called conventional thatched houses and animist beliefs, have been selected by local government offices as an attraction for the promotion of ethnic tourism. At the ACCWN, some local Wa residents, e.g., mixed Wa due to interethnic marriage or Buddhist Wa and Christian Wa due to religious conversion, are frequently excluded from the categorization of conventional Wa heritage in that they have moved far away from authentic ethnic criteria in their modernized clothing, mixed language use, and converted religious practices.

Meanwhile, in everyday practices of cultural heritage at the ACCWN, the ethnic Wa people I spoke to often do not group different ethnic Wa peoples, who speak different dialects and practice different traits of cultural heritage, as a monolithic ethnic group, even though since the 1960s the PRC government has categorized them as one official ethnonym of “*wazu*” (Wa nationality). Most native Wa people at the ACCWN would call themselves as *gon baraog* in Wa (offspring of *baraog* Wa). Such a usage of the local Wa term is distinguishable from other native term such as “*a va*” which is normally used by the Wa living in the Ximeng Wa Autonomous County and other smaller townships in southwest China. As such, both politically defined cultural heritage and culturally interpreted ethnic boundaries coexist.

Heritage and Tourist Gaze

Integral to the local government’s implementation of economic development projects, the ethnic tourist industry began to develop in the Wa regions in 2003. Among urban tourists, their ideas about the Wa lands and other poor ethnic minority regions in southwest China have also been infused with another view, which identifies ethnic territory both as the “utopia of difference” and as the “frozen memory of a primitive past” in the present (Notar 2006; Oakes 1997, 2006). Although the general public’s view of ethnic territory as primitive past persists in China, tourists’ interests in visiting ethnic lands frequently reveal their nostalgic view of ethnic lands as unpolluted and naturally built environments.

Besides local government’s influences on the regional development of ethnic tourism, PRC central government has played a significant role in promoting domestic tourism as an alternative path to stimulate consumption and economic growth in the past decade.² Since 1999, the PRC’s central government has set up

² Starting in 2008, in response to public concerns for overcrowded domestic travel, the PRC government modified the Golden Week on the 1st of May from a week-long holiday to a 3-day holiday. But the Golden Week of October 1 is still preserved for a 7-day holiday.

official week-long state holidays—normally called “golden weeks”—beginning on the 1st of May and October. For more than a decade now, ethnic tourism has experienced rapid development and become a strategy for local governments and stakeholders to generate income and alleviate poverty for ethnic minority communities in southwest China (Nyiri 2006). As evidenced in China and elsewhere, ethnic tourism and cultural heritage tourism have become worldwide phenomena designed to showcase ethnic/cultural differences and create nostalgic, romanticized representations of the past for contemporary tourist consumption. Forces of commodification and globalization (Mackerras 2003; Oakes 1999) have further transformed Chinese ethnic minority communities into “encountering zones,” where local residents meet tourists, largely from different—often unknown—places and cultures in the world.

There are two key theoretical discussions in the paradigm of encountering zone. The first concept is “tourist gaze.” The tourist gaze (a term initially proposed by Urry 2002) is superimposed upon the “Orientalized” imaginations of ethnic others (Said 1979; Schein 2000). In the course of their travels, the tourists anticipate experiences with socially and economically disadvantaged ethnic minority peoples, whose existence fuels the national ideology of China as a multiethnic nation-state. To meet tourist expectations about the joy of travel, some cultural heritage sites have further developed “enclavic tourist spaces” (Edensor 1998). For example, the ancient town of Lijiang (Su and Teo 2009) and the religious territory of Shangrila (Kolas 2008) in western Yunnan have built luxurious hotels, resorts, and other recreation facilities for the exclusive use of tourists. Unable to afford the entrance fees, many local ethnic minority residents lack access to these entrepreneur-invested recreation sites in their own communities.

Furthermore, globalization of China’s ethnic tourism induces cross-cultural flows and interethnic exchanges between tourist/touree, gazer/gazee, urban/rural, center/margin, and state/local. This globalizing process helps sustain Sinocentrism (Han Chinese point of view) and oclularcentrism (the power of the tourist’s eye or tourist gaze) by emphasizing the cultural, linguistic, and historical differences between the Self and Others (Mackerras 2003; Urry 2002; also see Xie 2011: 25). In this way, distinctions between the tourist and ethnic minority are often projected onto parallel dichotomies of urban and rural space as well as the civilized Self and the primitive Other. Such distinctions, I argue, work as a “sign of fractal recursion” (Irvine and Gal 2000) in which the same contrast (namely civilized urban space vs. impoverished rural space) is repeated and projected onto both tourists’ talks of primitiveness and authenticity as well as ethnic minorities’ imaginations of and aspirations for modernity and development. In this article, I use the data about the construction of a “primitive” Wa community to support such an argument.

The second theoretical concept is “museumified cultural heritage.” This is derived from the situation about how cultural heritage is represented and showcased. For instance, tourists who visit ethnic territory are positioned to play a dominant role in reinterpreting the experience of a timeless “museumified” space and cultural heritage of community tourism sites (Rugendyke and Connell 2008; Wong 2008). The encountering between tourists and host ethnic communities may fosters hybrid,

even ambiguous, representations of ethnicity, reshaping the meanings of local spatialized cultural heritage (Connell and Rugendyke 2008; Dombroski 2008; Linnenkin 1997; Schein 2000). Despite the persistence of hegemonic representations of the Self/Other divide in the ethnic tourist market, the museum-like heritage site is an illusion, whereas the mixing of cultural forms is a constant process (Bruner 2004; Xie 2011). Examples of ethnic theme parks in urban China (Oakes 2006) include the “Minority Nationality Village” in the city of Kunming and “China Folk Culture Villages” in the city of Shenzhen (Gordon 2005). Local residents living in the ethnic Wa heritage sites are fully aware of the staged quality of these cultural representations. Frequently, they are expected to engage in the reinvention of ethnic songs and dance performances, so that tourists can snap photos of their own smiling faces with feminized and masculinized Wa bodies.

Along the theoretical lines mentioned above, here I use a case of state-promoted ethnic tourism at a Wa community in Cangyuan. My goal is to unpack the coexistence of at least two contradictory histories about preserving and developing thatched housing by following vernacular values and norms of spatiality and environment. Rather than presenting a static Wa cultural heritage or emphasizing the politics of ethnic authenticity, I aim to explore the interests that are served in the tourism development process. By looking at co-constructed meanings of heritage, space, and conventional knowledge, my research reveals coalitions and contestations among the local government, ethnic minority leaders, and ethnic villagers. How does an ethnic Wa community transform its space into a tourist site? How do the villagers react to the vertical encompassment of themselves with the power of state proposal, whose interest lies in appropriating translocal value through heritage preservation?

My analysis is based on historical archives, media reports, and tourist brochures that I collected between 2003 and 2011 along with ethnographic data during several visits to the Wa regions in Yunnan province between 1997 and 2005 and in 2010. My focus is on the history of preserving a vernacular built, thatched Wa village over the past 8 years. My emphasis is on the divergent and colliding voices and tensions in the history of reconstructing cultural heritage in this ethnic minority’s community space. I first discuss the state’s promotion of civilizing poor, ethnic territory through regional tourism development in a Wa community—Wending—at the ACCWN.

Restructuring Housing in Wending

The construction of the Wending community into a tourist site was grounded in a socio-political context in which the ACCWN government decided to use the 40th anniversary as a turning point to promote tourism development and alleviate regional poverty. It was an anniversary to celebrate China’s establishment of ACCWN as the first Wa Autonomous County in 1964.

To support the political rhetoric of multiethnic nation-state, the Chinese state started to establish minority nationality autonomous counties and prefectures throughout ethnic minority populated areas in western and southwest China in the 1960s (Tapp 2002). However, such official recognition of the autonomous status does not actually improve ethnic minorities' civic rights such as land ownership and political participation. For instance, ordinary ethnic residents living at the ACCWN have been granted their rights in land use, but have not had the legal ownership of their agrarian lands. Instead, the Chinese government owns the land. Meanwhile, ordinary Wa citizens at the ACCWN do not have the rights to participate in elections in the township and county levels. This participation is controlled by Communist cadres and government officials. Although in the community level, since 1999, the PRC central government has implemented the rural political reform to let rural residents elect their own village officials, the elections have had relatively predictable outcomes. These elections often follow the will of County Government to select the candidates who have close ties with the Communist party and the local government. Thus, for Wa villagers, they often view the voting as obligatory and lacking direct political participation. Ethnic minorities' exclusion in the field of state-promoted cultural heritage and ethnic tourism is similar to their experiences of political participation.

The development of Wending tourism started in 2001. One year after the PRC central government initiated the "Open Up the West" (Ch. *xibu da kaifa*) campaign in 2000 (Goodman 2004), County officials at the ACCWN were aware of the region's sluggish economy as well as the efforts of their urban counterparts to modernize city spaces during the 1990s and early 2000s. A turning point was reached in 2001 when County officials in the Department of Culture and Sport decided to use the 40th anniversary celebration as propaganda in their efforts to alleviate the poverty of Wa people and transform their lands into "civilized" modern space. Before the anniversary celebration in April 2004, County government had initiated a development plan to reorganize the public space in the border town of Cangyuan and to transform it into a hub of modern/civilized Wa ethnic culture for tourism consumption. As part of the development plan, the County government officially selected Wending as a model village for ethnic Wa tourism (Wu 2010).

Within three years (2001–2004), Cangyuan had been transformed into a booming border town. Its reorganized city space attracted Han Chinese entrepreneurs—mainly Sichuanese and Yunnanese—from the inland regions of China who opened new hotels and commercial shops along Cangyuan's new main streets. Along with the anniversary celebration, in 2004 a series of Wa cultural performance activities were organized in the border town of Cangyuan and the model village of Wending. However, these development plans were commonly understood that County officials' fervent public demonstration of their achievement in modernizing Wa territory was aimed at gaining political capital for themselves, in terms of job mobility for their future career in government settings.

At the community level, state-initiated spatial restructuring in Wending included the preservation of traditional thatched houses and the natural



Fig. 9.1 From thatched-roof houses into modern asbestos-tiled houses. (Photo by author, 2010)

environment, renaming places, and constructing new performance spaces and buildings. Amid these construction plans, heated tensions arose between local residents and state agents over the modernization of thatched houses. Wending villagers were unable to afford such remodeling and, ironically, government agents had long criticized thatched-style housing as “backward,” due to its combustible materials and lack of indoor plumbing.

Furthermore, before the implementation of tourism development plan in Wending, between 1999 and 2001 the ACCWN government had offered anti-poverty aid with the support from the PRC central government to each Wa household for remodeling their thatched-roof houses into modern asbestos-tiled houses (Fig. 9.1). For some Wa communities, these poverty-alleviation funds were also used to build public toilets, new village committee buildings, and even a basketball court for Wa youth sporting activities. To support the reconstruction of Wa homes, the ACCWN government officially gave each household 4,500 yuan (US\$750). The government had supported the remodeling project in the interest of political rhetoric calling for rural modernization by constructing socialist rural communities with Chinese characteristics. Nevertheless, it had always ignored its responsibility to aid in the reconstruction of conventional sacred sites such as the house of the village’s symbolic center (*nyiex sila*), the sacred forest for the village’s guardian spirits (*mouig*), and other sacred spaces in local Wa communities.

By November 2003, around half of 122 Wa households in Wending had already demolished their old thatched houses and rebuilt them with asbestos tiles. At that time, local County government agents from the Department of Culture and Sport

began to negotiate the issue of historic preservation of Wending's thatched houses and their landscape as tourist attraction with local residents. With the assistance of China's Communist Party village cadres and leaders working at Wending Village Committee, the County government's plan to preserve thatched houses and the Wending landscape was forcibly implemented in November 2003 with limited compensation offered to local Wa residents. County government provided the annual money of 500 yuan to each Wa household only to compensate for the deprivation of their rights in remodeling their houses into modern houses. At that time, however, due to the state policy of forest conservation, the Wending community had a shortage of thatch. Wending villagers were prohibited from using their slash-and-burn dry fields to plant thatch. They had to buy thatch from other nearby communities. As requested by Wending villagers, in December 2003, the ACCWN government sent the money as a lump sum to the village committee to solve the problem of thatch shortage. The money was not directly given to individual Wa households. Working as mediators between the local county government and Wending villagers, a Party Secretary on the village committee took responsibility for allocating the money to buy roofing thatch from nearby non-Wa farmers in Mending, which was 20 km away. As told by that Party Secretary, the whole community had to spend around 190,000 yuan (US\$31,600) for the costs of thatch replacement. Since then, this government money officially named as cultural heritage funding has continued to flow to the Wending Village Committee to preserve thatched housing.

However, the transformation of the whole Wending community into thatched housing is a continued debated issue. For instance, in early 2004, in order to keep the whole community in a standardized thatched style, the County officials asked those Wending households that had already transformed their thatched roofs into asbestos tiles to return to thatch. Yet, according to Wa cultural beliefs, each house is a new cultural space, the construction of which should be followed through the calendric system with the celebration of auspicious ceremonies and life-cycle rituals. Normally, the process would take years, from the collection of wood and other construction materials from nearby forests, to the selection of a culturally defined appropriate period for construction, to the celebration of new house rituals.

Moreover, to resist the local government's hegemonic order, some Wending villagers developed an alternative strategy of adding thatch on top of the asbestos tiles. Taken as an agentive resistance, they transformed their houses back into the thatched style, in hopes of abiding by their locally defined cultural heritage and temporal practices about traditional Wa house construction. Troubled by their limited incomes, these families wanted to save money for construction and, more importantly, to avoid cultural violation. The main concern was that if they would follow the local government's order to demolish their asbestos-tiled houses right away, they would have to wait for the appropriate timeline to rebuild their new thatched houses in light of the Wa ideal of house building. In appreciation of the belief about the auspicious/inauspicious 12-year-circle, the Wa villager normally had to wait for at least 2–5 years to find the best year for thatched house construction. Due to local concerns over cultural violation, in 2011, there were only 7 Wa families

in Wending that still kept a full style of thatched house. The rest of the Wa households (95 houses) kept the style of adding the thatch on top of the asbestos tiles.

Attracted by thatched housing as “traditional” Wa cultural heritage in China’s state-sponsored media and ethnic tourism discourses, tourists seldom make comments on the “non-traditionalized,” asbestos-tile houses in Wending. They would continue to maintain their desires for visiting Wending, which is depicted as a last “primitive” Wa tribe in Chinese tourism reports.

Politicizing Primitiveness, Commodifying Wending

Since tourism has become a key income source in rural China in the 1990s, Chinese urbanites have developed enduring desires for finding the places that are preserved in the past and are imagined as unspoiled. In this trend, wending, like many other rural ethnic tourist sites, is explicitly represented as an exotic space and a harmonious ecological site for outside tourists in the state-promoted tourism development plans. Although the representations of Wending as primitive derive from economic interests, these representations have changed the way in which Wending is understood as a cultural heritage site.

To fabricate the “primitive” ethnic others in national discourses and commoditize them in a past tense has long been criticized by scholars as part of the state’s governing strategy of “internal colonization” (Said 1979), which means to reassert the dominance of the modern postsocialist state through representations of exotic ethnic others. In a similar political rhetoric, the externally introduced discourse of “cultural heritage” is introduced into the ethnic Wa regions by appropriating the language of commoditization and primitiveness. Such appropriations are mainly controlled by ethnic urbanites, state agents and Han Chinese elites, not local Wa residents in Wending.

In her study of the role of Miao urbanites in the business of ethnic display, Schein argues (2000: 239) that these elites would take up a dominant role to perform and narrate their cultures from an informed distance to replicate the hierarchical gaps between elites/subalterns. This is similar to the business of cultural production and representation in Wending. It becomes a live museum to showcase primitive “subalterns” where local minority residents remain in the past along with the architecture and the artifacts of their daily life.

In the tourism discourse at ACCWN, Wending is reinterpreted in three interconnected ways. Among them, the notions of primitiveness and heritage are the common themes. First of all, despite the resistance of local Wa residents to the preservation plan, the ACCWN government and state-sponsored media today propagandize the Wending community as the “last primitive tribe” (*zuihou yuanshi buluo*) (Cangyuan Washan TV 2008a, b). The Chinese words, “*yuanshi buluo*,” mean a tribe with the features of exoticness and primitiveness. These words are never applied to Han Chinese cultural heritage sites in China. The usage of these words is intended to meet tourists’ expectations for gazing upon ethnic Wa cultures.

Instead of using derogatory wording to introduce Wending, the government publications and the media reports emphasize the primitiveness of ethnic territories and artifacts, which are to be consumed by the Han Chinese and foreign tourists.

The second way of reworking the meanings of Wending has involved the reinterpretation of ecotourism. Since 2004, the public media at ACCWN have renamed and romanticized Wending as a primitive ethnic territory for tourists to experience an “unpolluted” environment—a “proto-eco-village” (Ch. *luan shen-tai*)—where ethnic Wa people use their knowledge system to develop harmonious relationships with nature. Frequently, the thatched house structure, the vernacular built ecological environment and the conventional ecological knowledge become the key sites of social imagination about Wa primitiveness. Furthermore, this ecological ethos echoes the elite-centered discourse of environmentalism in urban China as well as the circulated global concerns over global warming and climate change in public media reports around the world. Also, despite the fact that Wending and its neighboring areas are surrounded by a natural environment, the public discussions of the pro-ecological nature of Wending have seldom focused on heritage management and resource sustainability.

Unlike the global development of community-based ecotourism in a naturally built environment with initial emphases and ethical debates on sustainable development and resource management in the world (Leksakundilok and Hirsch 2008; Honey 2008; Studley 1999), the publicly circulated discourse of Wending as a proto-eco-tourism site was first adopted from a Chinese dance troupe’s popular pro-eco performances. Beginning in August 2003, the performance troupe known as Yang Liping’s Yunnan Impression (*yunnan yinxiang*) reinvented Chinese ethnic minority conventional dances and songs. They mainly adapted them from the Wa, Dai, Yi, and Miao cultures, performing them for audiences living in Kunming and other major Chinese metropolitan areas. Since 2003, the feminized dance with Wa women’s long hair and the masculinized wooden drum dance with Wa men’s shirtless bodies raising water buffalos’ skulls over their heads have become two popular programs in Yang’s pro-eco performances. Wa primitiveness is celebrated and staged as an objectified experience to be consumed by Han Chinese urbanites. The discourse of authentically-defined ecology (Ch. *luan shengtai*) has been widely circulated and become a new way of commodifying ethnic minorities without mentioning the existing social problems, such as economic impoverishment among many ethnic minority communities.

The third appropriating strategy is to grant the new title of “historic village” to Wending. Since 2004, the local government has taken further steps to transform the thatched Wending village into a nationally recognized historic heritage site. The government’s propaganda has succeeded in commodifying Wending by appropriating the universal tendency to value heritage. In April, 2004, local leaders first created a logo adding the Chinese character “Wa (𑖀)” into the center of the red image, “water buffalo skull.” At the bottom of the logo, the phrase “Homeland of the Wa of the World” was also included. Celebrated since 2004 as a marker of provincial Wa identity, this logo has been painted on buses and in public spaces,



Fig. 9.2 The Wending village as a preservation district for traditional Wa culture and a site of cultural heritage in Yunnan Province, China. (Photo by author, 2010)

and has been uploaded to the Cangyuan government’s tourism website as a feature of its virtual tour.

Furthermore, in 2006, Wending was listed as a site of “intangible cultural heritage,” followed by a proposal of a Department of Culture and Sport at ACCWN with the approval of China’s Ministry of Culture. In 2007, the ACCWN government took a further step to promote Wending as an official tourist site by listing it as one of the “famous historical rural villages” in China (Fig. 9.2).

Unlike other nationally- or globally-branded ethnic heritage tourism sites in China, Wending is not rated as a national tourist site by using the scale of AAA as shown in the list of China’s National Tourist Attraction and Scenery. According to a native tour guide at the ACCWN, one of the main reasons is the lack of everyday ethnic performance for tourists in Wending. When tourists visit Wending in the national “golden weeks” in May and October, the villagers perform some popular Wa dances such as wooden drum-pulling and water buffalo-killing. These performances are organized activities with financial support from the ACCWN and the provincial governments. In their everyday life, instead, the Wending villagers still practice the folkloric practices, e.g., “calling-vital-essence” rituals, which are never selected by the County government as staged tourist performances. (These rituals are performed in the context of death, family crisis, and illness under the families’ request for well-being. Yet, these local performances have been criticized

by schooled Wa and government officials at the ACCWN as anti-scientific and superstitious.)

Given these tourism development strategies, the differences between representing Wa culture for tourists and local residents were described by my informants in rather dichotomous, even antagonistic, ways: tourism representations are aimed at economic progress, whereas the daily cultural practices are meaningful in terms of sustaining vitality and sociality. Although many Wending villagers echo the discourse that state-promoted ethnic tourism in their community is a positive input to increase economic income, they all have concerns about tourists' potential violations of their family-centered cultural practices. This kind of concern surfaced when I joined two tourists to visit Wending in 2005.

At that time, I followed the introduction of a Wa travel guide to tour the community space in Wending. As part of the scheduled itinerary, the guide led us to visit the traditional public spaces located at the central area of the community. Three traditional cultural spaces, the Community's Symbolic Center (*Wa kong mu*), Public House (*Wa nyiex si lang*) and the Forest of the Village's Spirits (*Wa mouig*) (Fig. 9.3) were selected as key spots for tourist attractions. State bureaucrats also set up wooden plates on site. The scripts written on the plates were Chinese. A very few Wa words were added referring to the native names of these conventional spaces. (These Wa words were written using a standard Wa orthography, first created by the Chinese government around 1965. However, none of the Wending villagers have mastered this standard orthography, which was celebrated as a way to civilize ethnic subjects into literate citizens.)

To walk to the Forest of the Village's Spirits, one has to pass through the populous residential areas of Wending. Located on the highest ground in the eastern side of the community and at the end of the village road, the sacred forest has been preserved from the historic establishment of Wending community to the present, for around 300 years. The presence of Han Chinese or foreign tourists walking around their community is perturbing to the community and the Wa families. For instance, when we walked close to a Wa household, the tourist guide reminded us not to enter that family's housing boundary. That family had newborn pigs and was concerned with the vulnerability of their pigs' vital essences. According to Wa belief, outsider intrusion into individual residential space can potentially threaten the newborn beings. This belief was also commonly applied to the contexts of birth and death of family members. The words of the guide functioned not only as a reminder for cultural respect but also as an assertion of inviolability.

The tour guides with whom I talked in 2005 and 2010 explained that the majority of tourists were domestic Chinese who traveled from their urban homes in small groups (3–5 persons) by car or in larger groups (less than 15) by both air and car. This demographic composition of visitors reflected the local government's initial plan to attract domestic tourists living in urban China. Due to poor road conditions and limited access to an airport (the nearest regional airport was 250 km away), big tour groups rarely included visits to the ACCWN and Wending in their planned travel itinerary.

Fig. 9.3 The Community's Symbolic Center (*Wa kong mu*), the Public House (*Wa nyitex si la*), and the Sacred Forest of the Village's Spirits (*Wa mouig*). (Photo by author, 2010)



Normally, prescheduled live performances are not offered at Wending Village, except at the peak of tourist season during the golden weeks or at the request of tourists willing to pay extra for a performance. Income from tourism in Wending comes mainly from entrance fees (50 yuan/per person) and collective participation by ordinary Wa villagers in the performance of Wa dances and songs at tourist request. Such performances are typically categorized by state agents and the media as commodified cultural heritage and a showcase of staged Wa masculinity and femininity. Before the development of ethnic tourism in Wending, however, none of these performances had been part of everyday life for the past 50 years. Only a very few senior villagers still remembered these performances from the time before the Cultural Revolution.

The overtly development-centered ideologies behind the renaming and representations of Wending are quite similar to the state agents' strategies to rename Zhongdian—a sacred Tibetan area—as an exotic ethnic land of Shangri-la in Yunnan, China (Kolas 2008). Economic profit-benefit for local governments is taken as the primary goal in the change of these place names. The case of

Wending, however, presents a different pattern of tourism politics in that the state's claims for cultural heritage rely on public imaginations and expectations of Wa primitiveness in opposition to urban, non-ethnic space as civilized. Politicizing Wending for tourist consumption leaves a limited space for local Wa residents to directly engage in the externally introduced tourism discourse and resist the development plan. Yet, local Wa residents have developed heightened consciousness not only to this new discourse, attached to the place they live, but also to the dynamics of majority/minority, gazer/gazee, and civilized/primitive.

Fractal Recursion and Boundary (Re)Making

The development of Wending as a domestically recognized cultural heritage site further signifies a notion that only primitive Wa characterized by its simplicity and crudeness can be officially categorized and imagined as "authentic." Meanwhile, only the "primitive" Wa architecture and culture can be staged and commodified as officially defined historic or cultural heritage. Creating a new label for Wa cultural heritage in Wending is thus an act of appropriation, achieved by adopting the global language of heritage to add a new layer of meaning to the site.

However, among Wa people with whom I have been working in the Wending community and its nearby townships over the past decade, most senior and middle-aged men and women have felt conflicted about embracing state-promoted ethnic tourism under the flag of authentic and primitive Wa cultures and have made candid comments about the fakeness of commoditized ethnicity. "That is for the purpose of earning cash according to the state's proposal. It is not our real history," a Wa man in his early sixties explained to me in 2004. He further pointed out the fakeness of the Wa king's house, which was built on one of the inner corners next to the village museum in 2008 (Fig. 9.4). The community of Wending had no direct historic relationship to former native Wa kings, who governed part of the western regions of the ACCWN from 1850 to 1952. This native Wa polity was small-scale and semi-autonomous. It governed approximately 4,000–5,000 Wa people living on the borderlands between China and Burma by controlling the lands, the religious practices of Theravada Buddhism, and the natural resources. In the past, the Wa king's residence was viewed as a symbol of his power. The Wending community has never developed a political coalition or been affiliated with the Wa king's polity. Instead, the families of the kings had historically developed close religious ties with a Shan Buddhist community next to Wending Village. To appropriate the historic meaning of the Wa kingdom and bring it into the context of ethnic tourism, I suggest, creates an interdiscursive relationship by bridging the gaps between the former Wa king and Wending to create innovative meanings about spatialized Wa history in the present.

As I further argue, the distinction between primitive and civilized is replicated in the public discourses and imaginations of Wending. This distinction works as a sign of fractal recursion which is repeated and projected to be resurfaced in similar



Fig. 9.4 The fake Wa king's house, which was built on one of the inner corners next to the village museum. (Photo by author, 2010)

contrasts such as tourist/touree, gazer/gazee, and Wa/non-Wa. Here I apply the concept of fractal recursion, initially proposed by Irvine and Gal (2000), to explain the nature of mutual embedding of primitive/civilized. As explained by Gal, “fractal recursions involve the projection of an opposition, salient at one level of relationship, onto some other level. To be fractal, a distinction must be co-constitutive” (Gal 2005: 26). That is to say, the notion of Wa primitiveness is constitutive to the notion of civilized. Such contrast can be fabricated or nested inside in various levels, from an officially promoted heritage site, to the tourists’ imaginations of ethnic others, to ethnic residents’ self-reflections on cultural difference. Spatial settings in Wending provide a case in point.

The experience of traveling from urban regions to Wending Village is expressed by tourists as one of moving through the present to the “non-Han” past by experiencing a more primitive style of living. It is also described as an experience of entering a village theme park, since community-based ethnic tourism is comparable to visiting a theme park in urban China. Upon arrival, tourists have to pay an entrance fee at the ticket booth located on the outskirts of the village. After passing through an entrance gate and several newly built posts in homage to headhunting, complete with water buffalo skulls and small funnel-shaped bamboo baskets (Fig. 9.5), they enter an open field located on the west side of the community. A village school and a building that once housed a government commune were formerly located on the field. In keeping with the state-promoted image of Wending as the “last primitive tribe,” the school building was relocated in 2009 to

Fig. 9.5 Newly built wooden posts in homage to Wa headhunting, with water buffalo skulls and small funnel-shaped bamboo baskets. (Photo by author, 2010)



a field outside Wending. The villagers then built a Wa king’s house, a museum, and a new wooden drum house in the open field, which are celebrated as coherent with the state-promoted primitiveness. However, a newly built modern restroom, a symbol of civilized facility, is also located in the same space. While the tourists visit and witness the Wending as a primitive cultural landscape to replicate their imaginations of primitive/civilized, they also engage in modern amenities.

Furthermore, in opposition to the local government’s willful ignorance of cultural rights at the site, the villagers of Wending have developed some strategic ways to pursue those cultural rights. Similar to other ethnic minority communities in China, Thailand, and other countries, the villagers insist on designating the open field on the west side of the community as “front stage.” They call their thatched housing space on the east side “back stage,” where they continue to live and perform their social and religious practices away from the gaze of tourists. For local Wa villagers, such a spatial division marks the difference between Self/Other and staged/everyday cultures. While state-promoted ethnic tourism replicates a theme park representation of the past, the local villagers have developed their own

way to preserve their space at the tourist site. Local people's self-awareness about their cultural heritage rights can also be evidenced in the words of native tour guides, who set limits for visitors by saying, "Please feel free to visit the sacred village guard's forest, but do not take any photos when you are inside the sacred forest." While the state-promoted ethnic tourism in Wending is experienced by tourists as a space of ethnic primitiveness, the contrast between gazer/gazee has also been replicated in a way of reconfiguring the sharp boundaries between "us" and "others."

Conclusion

Let me conclude by explaining how the case of Wa tourism development in southwest China can contribute to the discussion on relational divides between space/power, gazer/gaze, and Self/Other in the domain of cultural heritage. First, the Wa case shows that neither the development of ethnic tourism nor the idea of cultural heritage is initially constructed by local minority residents who own the land use rights. Second, this case indicates that political interests in promoting a heritage site are not built on locally inherited cultural rights but are narrowly borrowed from translocally/officially circulated concepts of heritage with the aim of creating new meanings about heritage and space. Although local Wa residents seem to initially consent to the economic benefits to individuals and their households from community-based tourism, they do not directly control its development. That process has been controlled by local government and village officials, who characterize average Wending residents as both "uncivilized" and lacking in sufficient "scientific" knowledge to manage their own landscape, cultural heritage resources, and ethnic tourism activities.

Ethnic tourism development has resulted in local minority residents' heightened awareness of cultural boundaries, e.g., Self/Other, and the possibility they intentionally use their cultural resources to display their own view of "translocal modernity" (Oakes 2006). Oakes argues that ethnic minority peoples in China intentionally replicate the development model of ethnic theme parks in urban China to turn their community space into a translocal site where they can display their own view of modernity through performance. But I argue that amid the derogatory discourse about Wa primitiveness, Wa participation in preserving their thatched spatiality does not reflect their expectation of translocal modernity; neither are their efforts inspired by a need to overturn the state's proposal for capitalist development and modernization. I suggest that Wa participation in managing their cultural heritage rights is more or less driven by the pressure of being poor subjects behind the curve of rural/urban disparity.

I further argue, though, that differential access to these cultural resources and differences in individual claims, interests, and competence in strategic use of these recourses are significant factors in determining whether or not one can transform one's marginalized position and reconfigure the Self/Other divide. This is similar

to scholarly discussions on relatively powerless' people's and excluded cultural groups' (Buciek and Juul 2008; Galaty 2011) participations and negotiations with the external sectors of cultural heritage management. These situations remind us that giving local residents the right to decision-making will be important in addressing issues such as ignorance of individual cultural heritage rights.

Furthermore, the case of the Wa king's house shows that, under the state-promoted plan of development, Wa history is fabricated into a heritage tourism space where local residents do not own their history. The case further indicates that the representation of primitiveness is spatialized as a marker of the "Self/Other" divide, fulfilling tourist expectations. It serves to make "Wa" a locus of the past without necessarily paying attention to regional and intraethnic differences in Wa culture and history. Last, when the ideology of heritage is circulated nationally and globally and naturalized as a taken-for-granted concept, whether by state agents or scholars, that ideological reification may also run into a blind spot as it ignores or erases historical difference and cultural diversity associated with a heritage site. Thus, besides pursuing social justice and well-being, it is crucial to attend to cultural difference and diversity at heritage sites when the commodification of ethnicity goes hand-in-hand with cultural heritage preservation.

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Part IV
The Politics of Museums and Collections

Chapter 10

Beijing's Museums in the Context of the 2008 Beijing Olympics

Curtis Ashton

On a hot, June day I am sitting in a courtyard near the inner gate of the Beijing Folk Arts Museum (*Beijing Minsu Bowuguan* 北京民俗博物馆) with my laptop balanced on one knee. Just outside the gate, crews are planting flowers and installing spotlights. Above them are more men laying roof tiles. Behind me I hear the slow chant of a *zhengyi* Daoist prayer punctuated with drums and cymbals, and I catch a faint scent of burning incense. Maggie, a recently graduated English major and an employee at the museum, looks over my shoulder as she tells me about a tree standing directly in front of us. It is encircled with red wooden prayer tablets asking for healthy children, safe journey, and success in school (Fig. 10.1).

“This tree is called the ‘Longevity Scholar Tree’ because it is the oldest tree at the temple,” Maggie says. “The red sign there means it is Class One Protected Tree, 300 or more years old.” Actually this tree is as old as the temple itself, having lived more than 700 years. It has withstood six major fires and several acts of vandalism over its long life. People now leave their prayer tablets and walk clockwise around the tree three times to be granted the three blessings of *fu*, *lu*, *shou* (福祿壽), abundance, high status, and longevity.

A museum plaque nearby tells the tree's history in Chinese. Maggie and I are working on the English version of this museum label to meet the Beijing Tourism Administration's new regulations for English signs at tourist destinations. In fact, we have over 50 pages of translation work to do, covering every landmark and artifact currently on display, and we have just 3 weeks before the city's Olympic inspectors arrive.

After shorter research trips in 2006 and 2007, I returned to Beijing in April 2008 as a volunteer museum consultant. Over the next 14 months, I conducted

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Fig. 10.1 Longevity tree at the Beijing Folk Arts Museum. (Photo by author)

“interpretive policy analysis” (Yanow 2000) by trading my English language expertise for information about museum operations. As a Ph.D. student undertaking this ethnographic apprenticeship in museum anthropology, I attended dozens of museum exhibits around the city. I incorporated museum investigations into my university classes, and I participated with a local NGO advocating historic preservation. But I also wanted a chance to situate myself as a participant-observer on the inside of the city’s museums, describing and reflecting on my reactions to the messages I received—intentional or otherwise. Although institutional policies are often studied quantitatively, I hoped that a qualitative approach to policy would allow me to understand internal hierarchies and staff reactions; the roles and reactions of outside participants, and the larger networks of political, economic, and social agents implicated in policy maintenance. And so I offered my services to ethnographic museums throughout the capital city, choosing from those sponsored by government, universities, corporations, and even private citizens. Some museums were more welcoming of my help than others, but in the end I was able to realize my goal of sharing my interpretive skills in exchange for an increased understanding of the role museums played in implementing the city’s broader Olympic cultural program. For purposes of this chapter, I will focus on my experiences at the Beijing Folk Arts Museum after first briefly outlining two competing campaigns for imagining Beijing as Olympic host city.

New Beijing, Great Olympics

As part of its 2001 bid for the 2008 Olympic Summer Games, the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (BOCOG) included initiatives devoted to a cultural program meant “to demonstrate Beijing’s history and traditional culture as well as to provide an Eastern ambience to the 2008 Olympic Games” (BOCOG 2001: V.4.1). The cultural program included a “network of museums” cooperating with the municipal government and contributing to an Olympic legacy of sustainable economic development focused on heritage tourism. Over the next 7 years, the city’s Cultural Heritage Administration received enormous support from the national government, and funding for museum work in Beijing quadrupled as the city adopted the Olympic slogan, “New Beijing, Great Olympics” (*xin Beijing, xin aoyun* 新北京新奥运). Embedded in the slogan was an effort to present Beijing as both a modern (*jindai* 近代) and traditional (*chuantong* 传统) capital rapidly transforming itself not only to host the Summer Olympics, but to position itself as one of the premier destination cities of the next century (Broudehoux 2004).

Having read this initial plan, I began to wonder about the boundaries of China’s authoritarianism in dictating the institutionalized representation of traditional culture in Beijing, including ethnic minority traditions (*minzu wenhua* 民族文化), popular culture (*minjian wenhua* 民间文化) and folk arts (*minsu* 民俗). Just how controlling were official expectations of a unified image of “New Beijing” as a “traditional, modern capital” in terms of the city’s ability to celebrate a diversity of cultural traditions during the Olympics while suppressing critical readings of China’s modernizing project? In answering this question, I did not attempt to investigate all the outlets for representing traditional culture in the city, which would include the staging of Olympic performances, the presence of new billboards, a massive amount of print and electronic media reports, and analysis of carefully scripted museum exhibits in the city’s so-called “red” museums (*hong se zhanlanguan* 红色展览馆). Instead I focused on the efforts of government and non-government examples of just one type of museum in Beijing, the ethnographic museum.

Clifford (1988) uses “ethnographic museum” to refer to institutions committed to the preservation and display of “authentic” artifacts from “collective, traditional” cultures in contrast to art museums, which display individual creations of art. In Hilde Hein’s typology, ethnographic museums are a subtype of history museum in which the focus is on artifacts typical of everyday life rather than on artifacts of individuals from among the cultural elite (Hein 2000: 30–31). How did Beijing’s ethnographic museums adopt practices appropriate to individual institutional missions in the face of rapid development during the Olympic season? Were they able to draw from best practices outside of China, where anthropology’s “crisis of representation” (Ames 1992) has led museum professionals toward more participatory models of post-modernist interpretation? In Kirk Denton’s investigation of Chinese museums near the beginning of this Olympic network building, he stated, “Museums in China have not gone postmodern, in the sense of tackling

the past from multiple perspectives and highlighting the very notion of representation” (Denton 2005: 569). Although Denton acknowledges some trends away from older narratives of self-sacrifice toward newer messages of commerce, entrepreneurship, and market-reform, he emphasizes that because of their proximity to state bureaucracy, museums of modern history have been slow to respond to changes in nationalistic ideology (Denton 2005: 567). In other words, the nature of the relationship between government and museums disallows Chinese museums to transition from state-propaganda outlets to more inclusive, multi-vocal “communicative circles” (Perin 1992) because Chinese museums lack a “a bottom-up, community-based approach that combines local knowledge and resources with those of professional museum work” (Kreps 2008: 26).

Certainly Beijing’s museum landscape is closely tied to government. Some of the most prominent museums in Beijing today were national museums first built to memorialize the 10th anniversary of the People’s Republic in 1959.¹ Other national museums were established in the aftermath of the 1989 Tian’anmen Square Incident to reassert the ruling party’s legitimacy (Denton 2005). Since 1987, the national government has also overseen Beijing’s five UNESCO World Heritage sites of the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, the Temple of Heaven, and the Peking Man Archaeological Site.² In all, various departments of the national government are responsible for over 25 museums in the capital.

Overlaid onto this landscape of national museums are Beijing’s municipal museums, including the newly reopened Capital Museum (Fig. 10.2). Shortly after the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Cultural Heritage (*Beijing Shi Wenwu Shiye Guanli Ju* 北京市文物事业管理局) was established in 1979, the museum department was created as an autonomous office. Museums in Beijing have “enjoyed special administrative status ever since” (Dong 2006). In 2001 the city developed a system that has helped standardize the registration of new museums in the city. Although the city had registered over 140 museums as of 2007, the city government itself was only directly responsible for about 40 of those, and of that 40, many were actually managed at the district government level, with minimal

¹ I find it ironic that just five years later, museums were closed as the Cultural Revolutionary campaign of “destroying the Four Olds” (*posijiu* 破四旧) meant attacking old ideas, old habits, old customs, and old culture. By 1976, all museums besides the Forbidden City had closed as a result of the Cultural Revolution. The 1980s saw more than 60 museums open or reopen in Beijing (Dong 2006). As a time for museum construction and restoration, 1976–1993 rivals the 2001–2008 Olympic run.

² Though overseen by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH), their status as World Cultural Heritage symbolically removes them from the national and onto the global political-economic stage (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2006). In some ways this removal from national to international heritage may invite negligence in enforcing nationalistic messages and encourage individual co-optation of the space. Similar to what Kraus (2000) witnessed in Nanjing, for example, individuals gather in the Temple of Heaven’s park to perform and sell folk arts and crafts without permission from the Central government. I also found advertisements for a folk arts fair here, sponsored by Beijing City’s cultural bureau, even though technically the city government has no actual authority within a World Heritage Site.



Fig. 10.2 Beijing's newly designed Capital museum reopened in 2007. (Photo by author)

input from the city. The Beijing Folk Arts Museum is one such museum, with day-to-day operations in the hands of Chaoyang District officials.

Preserving “Old Beijing”

Parallel with the development of museums were growing efforts to define and protect cultural heritage. If history might be defined as “an interpretation of the past based on documentary evidence,” heritage, in contrast, is based on the creative imagination of a particular people who consider themselves owners of the past and therefore rightfully able to use it in the present to meet current needs or demands (Turnbridge and Ashworth 1996: 6–7). The concept of heritage grows out of eighteenth and nineteenth century anxieties over changing ways of life. In the face of a globalizing, mass-communicating modernity, scholars, public officials, and private citizens have felt a need to salvage not only artifacts of the past, but “authentic” traditions for future generations, often by writing them down for future performance. Thus heritage is often thought of as in distress and in need of protection from the corrupting influence of modern everyday life.

In China, the Ministry of Culture has called heritage protection “in a critical stage.” In 2006 it noted, “It is a significant challenge to guarantee the smooth

construction of the country's key large-scale infrastructure projects while putting cultural relics under good protection" (China Ministry of Culture 2006a).

At least since 1983, after the tumult of the Cultural Revolution had died down, Beijing's municipal planning has formally acknowledged the value in preserving historic and cultural sites, traditional cityscapes, and local architectural features as part of its development. In practice, however, developers have consistently been free to tear down dilapidated buildings without considering their historic value. In the 1990s as reforms forced the city's districts to find innovative ways of raising revenue, real-estate development in historic downtown areas became an even greater temptation, especially for the city's smaller, internal districts. Collusions between developers and city officials circumvented both historic preservation laws and the housing rights of individual citizens (Erie 2009).

Olympic construction projects only exacerbated the situation. As late as 2003, a set of regulations designated all of the Imperial City and 25 additional areas within the "Old City" of Beijing as historic neighborhoods protected from demolition, but public officials and private investors speculated on the value of brand-new hotels and shopping malls in downtown locations, often within designated historic areas. In the midst of this construction bonanza Zhao Xudong and Duran Bell wrote, "The symbol of *chai* (拆) painted in white on buildings planned for demolition was the key symbol of the city's transformation, the grapheme of modernity via destruction" (Zhao and Bell 2005). By 2006, some estimates show that the city had lost 75 percent of its traditional hutong alleys, and more than 300,000 people had lost their homes (du Plessis 2005).

Anxieties over the destruction of cultural property spread to other concerns for the future viability of other cultural forms less tangible than buildings but perhaps even more significant to community cohesion and well-being. In response to such concerns, the Ministry of Culture expanded its protection efforts to include not only tangible relics, but intangible cultural heritage—everything from stories and songs to puppetry, martial arts, foodways, even religious ceremonies. China's "National Treasures of Intangible Heritage" law was modeled on the requirements of UNESCO's "Masterpieces of Intangible Cultural Heritage" and passed in 2002. Since 2004, The Ministry of Culture has conducted intense field documentation that resulted in a published inventory of 518 separate entries in 2006 (China Ministry of Culture 2006b). A second list of 510 entries was published in June 2008.

Olympic Museum Policies

The Olympics as a catalyst for both museum building and Old City destruction is not unique to China, nor is the decision to interpolate museums into a broader political program for revamping a brand image of a place. Benedict Anderson's influential concept of "imagined community" casts museums as nationalistic "maps" through which powerful majorities help to locate and establish boundaries of self and other (Anderson 1983; see also Watson 1995; Gladney 2004). By

altering the urban landscape and increasing the number and diversity of museums in Beijing, China's leaders hoped to communicate a vision of the "New Beijing" as joining the world, implying a rejection of Chinese cultural essentialism by eliding what Denton (2005) calls "standard socialist narratives" and highlighting Beijing's progress as a modern, traditional capital from its glorious Imperial past to its equally glorious future in the global economy (Denton 2005: 574). Such an elision could create one more outlet for increasing China's "soft power" (Kurlantzick 2007) or its "reputational capital" (Ramo 2007: 27) as a global leader rather than simply exhibiting what some have called "reactionary modernity" (Broudehoux 2004) in response to criticisms from other world powers about China's record on such things as human rights and environmental degradation.

To demonstrate how these ambitions for reimagining Beijing are codified into policy, I will introduce two sets of policies that declare how heritage content was to be presented by the time the Olympics arrived. The first is a set of regulations from the Ministry of Culture adopted January 2006 defining museums and outlining management procedures (China Ministry of Culture 2005). Notes clarifying the definition were published in 2008. In their notes to the new regulations, the Ministry makes it clear that museums, like other cultural institutions in China, are expected not only to provide education and enrichment, but also to "spread the principles and policies of the [Chinese Communist Party] and maintain social stability and unity" (China Ministry of Culture 2008). Accomplishing this goal requires museums to present facts about the positive influence of the one-party state on the country's art, history, culture, and natural landscape. Further, the notes stress that these facts should be embedded in "activities loved by the people" so as to reach the broadest possible audience. Thus, museums were not simply to serve as outlets of state propaganda in the usual ways, but were invited through their educational activities to find more subtle means of expressing confidence in the status quo.

The second set of regulations came from the Beijing Tourism Administration late in 2007 requiring all major tourist destinations to provide wheelchair access, improved sanitation facilities, options to pay fees by credit card, standardized directional signs, and as mentioned earlier, improved English translations of cultural content. By requiring museums and other destinations to present themselves as high-tech, modern, and comfortable for foreign guests, the hope was also to generate changes in behavior among local citizens. As local people visited the newly renovated museums in their historic districts, they would also increase their appreciation for clean, comfortable, modern living, and fight less for the preservation of dilapidated neighborhoods.

Transforming Dongyue Temple

With these policies in mind, I will return to Beijing Folk Arts Museum, a space with competing loyalties that found itself at a crossroads during the Olympic season (Fig. 10.3). The museum is located within Dongyue Temple (东岳庙), the

“Temple to the Eastern Peak.” Founded in 1319, Dongyue Temple is located just East of Beijing’s Chaoyang Gate in the middle of today’s Central Business District. The temple’s location within Chaoyang, the same city district as the Olympic Green, makes it a cultural resource for one of the largest, richest, and most politically influential districts within Beijing City.

The temple is dedicated to the worship of Dongyue Dadi, the god who rules Mount Tai and controls the fate of mortal fortunes and of souls after death. His worship is not limited to any particular sect, but this temple was constructed when *zhengyi* (正一) or orthodox Daoism was in favor at court. At the height of its popularity in the early nineteenth century, the Dongyue temple complex included 376 rooms and covered over 10 acres (4.6 ha), making it the largest orthodox Daoist temple in Northern China. Throughout its long history, the temple has experienced periods of destruction and neglect followed by restoration (Beijing Folk Arts Museum 2008). Many of the restorations are recorded on the commemorative steles in the courtyard.

After the 1911 revolution, the Chinese republican government closed the temple and made it a school for boys. Later it was used as army barracks and government office space. After the Cultural Revolution (1964–1976), it was abandoned, and in 1991 the Chaoyang District government demolished the main



Fig. 10.3 The red banner over the main shrine at Dongyue temple pronounces a blessing on the 2008 Olympics. (Photo by author)

gate of the temple in order to widen the road as part of constructing the Central Business District.

The loss of the temple's main gate led to public outcry. In response to public pressure, the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Cultural Heritage assumed control of the temple in 1995, renamed it a museum, and delegated daily operations to Chaoyang District's Cultural Committee. The district government officials adopted a plan to "protect, restore, and use" the temple as it was originally designed (Beijing Folk Arts Museum 2008). The 3-year project to restore the buildings in three main courtyards began in May 1996 and was completed in November 1998 at a cost of ¥30 million RMB (\$3.7 million). The district government drew on the expertise of scholars and technicians at the China Academy of Fine Arts and the Research Institute of Stone Carving Technologies, and the first phase of the newly restored temple opened to the public for Chinese New Year, 1999. In August 1997, the Beijing Folk Arts Museum formally came into being as the Dongyue Temple-Beijing Folk Arts Museum Administrative Unit was created and director Han Xiuzhen was appointed to serve for 10 years. The museum's first exhibit showcased Chinese New Year Customs and was coupled with a reenactment of the Spring Festival temple fair. Since opening, the exhibit space has increased as restoration of the temple complex has continued. The museum in 2008 included a main gallery for Chinese folk arts, another gallery on Chinese Zodiac symbols, a third exhibit on Dongyue Temple history, and one final room which opened during festivals for temporary exhibits.

Although the initial restoration of this historic space predates the Olympic building period, the new museum director and his staff saw the upcoming Olympics as an opportunity to reach beyond conventional Chinese museum practices and experiment with incorporating best practices from around the world. These experiments included designing exhibits with input from community members; incorporating interactive, multi-sensory elements to engage multiple ages and learning styles; adding demonstrations to exhibits; providing multi-lingual interpretative services; highlighting and commenting on the act of representation itself; and networking with outside professionals and community groups for educational outreach.

One rationale for staging such participatory experiments was the documented evidence of community involvement at the temple throughout its history. The stone steles in the courtyard of the temple record the participation of local associations known as "incense societies" (*xiang hui* 香会), "goodwill societies" (*shan hui* 善会), or "pilgrim societies" (*sheng hui* 圣会) that took care of the temple and provided services to temple patrons. Either long-standing (*lao hui* 老会) or more spontaneous, these societies served as charitable organizations to care for the temple and provide services for pilgrims and other temple visitors (Beijing Folk Arts Museum 2006). For example, the Zhou Cha Lao Hui (粥茶老会) and Qing Cha Sheng Hui (清茶圣会) provided porridge and fresh tea to pilgrims and other visitors; Dan Chen Lao Hui (掸尘老会) swept and dusted the temple on the eve of festivals; the Feng Zhan Lao Hui (缝绽老会) sewed and mended ceremonial cloth used in the temple. Among the participants of the 2008 Folk Culture Festival were

members of the “free porridge and tea association” (*gong zhou xian cha hui* 供粥献茶会), a modern social group acting in homage to the older traditional societies. In addition to these “civilian” pilgrim societies, martial societies (*wu hui* 武会) also existed, whose main function was to perform at temple fairs and festivals. Their performances offered a unique blend of songs, dances, dramatics, martial arts, acrobatics, musical entertainments, and folk arts. The museum’s website reports, “crowds of ordinary people loved to watch this high-quality entertainment” (Beijing Folk Arts Museum 2006). Today’s performance troupes, such as the lion dancing society sponsored by Chaoyang Traditional Artists Association (*chaoyangqu minjian wenyijia xiehui yiyou tongle taishi shenghui* 朝阳区民间文艺家协会 义友同乐太狮圣会) present dances, songs, acrobatics, and magic shows in a revival of this tradition.

The service of the “goodwill societies” was invaluable to the temple in former times, for unlike many of China’s other religious institutions, Dongyue Temple was not a monastery; in fact, *zhengyi* Daoism has no monastic tradition at all. Besides the temple abbot and a few of his disciples, *zhengyi* Daoism depends on a lay clergy, people who were ordinary members of the society except during certain ritual occasions.³ But adopting these participatory museum experiments inside a museum was viewed with ambivalence by non-museum government and party officials. On the one hand, some officials could see that museum professionals might increase their credibility with a foreign audience by adopting foreign museum practices. On the other hand, such practices would invite critical thinking and multiple reactions to museum content, not all of which would be consistent with the intended positive messages about Chinese heritage. The Ministry’s injunction for museums to embed positive facts about current Chinese policies in “activities loved by the people” only added to the ambivalence.

At first, the museum staff enjoyed its ability to serve simultaneously as an academic research institution, a classroom for patriotic education, a center for community celebration, a site for cultural tourism, and a place of worship. The museum’s former director Han Xiuzhen explained the museum’s guiding philosophy this way:

Since its founding ... the museum collection has with great difficulty made a break with conventional wisdom to integrate the Dongyue Temple’s own unique characteristics and take in-depth research as a guiding management policy—continuous discovery, content-rich exhibition, and vigorous promotion of social interaction through incorporating activities that correspond with exhibits. ...The integrated theme of welcoming all those who come to the temple to pray for good fortune and to the museum to remember the past has been well received by people from all walks of life. (Han 2004)

³ The lack of monks has always made this branch of Daoism harder to control from a state regulatory standpoint. This may be part of the cause of its marginalization within the state-sponsored Daoist Association. The National Association has its headquarters at Baiyun Guan (白云馆), a monastery located on the other side of the city that houses adherents to *quanzhen* (全真) Daoism.

In Han Xiuzhen's view, the ultimate goal of the museum's research and social interaction was to advocate for protection of the tangible and intangible heritage of Old Beijing, including the temple fairs and worship practices that had not been performed in Dongyue Temple for over two generations. Now a wide variety of games, foodways, acrobatics, storytelling, crafts, even religious beliefs and rituals are juxtaposed with traditional museum displays of costume, photographs, zodiac symbols, and material artifacts as part of the museum collection of folk customs to be preserved. So successful were the museum's efforts that The Ministry of Culture added the temple fair to the national list of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2008. A special exhibition celebrating its inclusion to the list was mounted as part of the fair in 2009 (Fig. 10.4).

The same success that drew national attention from the Ministry of Culture also caught the attention of another group: representatives from the same orthodox daoist community who had once sponsored the temple and its temple fairs. These daoist leaders claimed a right to take care of the shrines, conduct worship services, and initiate religious celebrations at the temple. Upon the appointment of a new museum director in 2007, some intensive negotiations between city, district, and religious officials resulted in having a daoist abbot named Yuan Zhihong installed at the temple. By May 2008, the temple and museum were divided into separate



Fig. 10.4 Crowds mingle during the 2009 New year celebration honoring the temple fair's listing as National Intangible Cultural Heritage. (Photo by author)

work units, both with responsibility for the care and presentation of the same physical space.

On the eve of the Olympics, the change in management gave rise to a dilemma: should the space be treated first as a working temple that happens to have exhibit space? Or, is it a museum that happens also to have live, performing daoists? The question has practical as well as theoretical implications. Although Chaoyang District's Cultural Committee oversaw operations, the city could insert itself into the space in two ways. If the space was a museum, then the city's Cultural Heritage Administration still had primary control, with some overlap from the Beijing Tourism Administration. If it was primarily a site for worship, however, then the space could become the responsibility of Beijing's Bureau of Religious Affairs. At different points in the museum's transformation, all three government entities sought to exert some control over the space in order to implement policies of the city and central governments, with both the new museum director and the daoist abbot caught in the middle.

Beyond the internal politicking between levels of government, the division of the space into museum and temple highlights a fundamental tension in theorizing heritage: its own virtuality. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has described this as the "mass hallucination" whereby visitors, in collaboration with museum professionals, imagine the past into the present (1995: 377). In the case of the Dongyue Temple fairs, the museum professionals did the meta-cultural work to rebuild, reassemble, revalue, reintroduce a body of knowledge and preserve it as National heritage—representing through historic re-enactment in a museum context elements of Chinese national identity for public consumption. From the standpoint of the national government, this interpretation of temple fairs emerging within a museum completely satisfies the new expectation for museums to incorporate "activities loved by the people."

For their part, the Daoists see the practices and traditional knowledge surrounding temple fairs not as national heritage, but as a vital part of *zhengyi* Daoist identity. The space then becomes a living, working temple whose primary goal is to re-establish rites and practices that facilitate private worship, or as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett says, "the restoration of living links... that never died" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995: 378). During the summer of 2008, no major conflict between the museum and the temple developed. Some on the museum staff were anxious that they no longer had control over the presentation of the temple shrines, nor of the gift shops. Most were relieved that they could focus on other tasks. The Daoists seemed content to serve as custodians of the temple shrines, performing their identity for tourists as part of the city museum. When I discussed the transition with the abbot, he acknowledged that the temple was always designed to be a public building where common people could experience the yearly cycles of ritual and festival. Whether or not the city actually owns and operates the space, Abbott Yuan told me, "We have returned to our temple again."

I suspect the benefits of their position extend beyond the chance to take care of cultural artifacts and re-enact rituals. Since the establishment of the People's Republic, *zhengyi* daoism has often been marginalized by the National Daoist

Association, the government organization that reports to the Bureau of Religious Affairs on behalf of all Daoists. Now having a physical presence at Dongyue Temple increases the *zhengyi* Daoist claims to legitimacy, and by allowing their worship to be labeled as historic reenactment of national intangible heritage within a folk museum, they are able to circumvent internal politicking within their own national association. The city, for its part, receives actual daoists performing actual rituals in a public space. The fact that the space is a working temple gives the city government a chance to demonstrate to an international audience Beijing's tolerance for religion, despite what attitudes may have prevailed at the national level about this Daoist group in the past. This strategy of relabeling beliefs as heritage in order to enjoy greater religious freedom has occurred elsewhere in China, particularly in rural areas away from the capital city (Gao 2006). Dongyue Temple may be unique in its protection of religious experience as intangible cultural heritage within the urban environment of Beijing.

Museum Olympic Upgrades

I return to the second set of Olympic policies from the Beijing Tourism Administration mandating accessibility, sanitation, signage, credit cards, and of course, more and better translations of content into English. The museum received these instructions just weeks after appointing a new museum director. So, shortly after her appointment, the new director began installing new toilets and accessibility ramps (Fig. 10.5), despite some concerns from her staff about compromising the restoration work of nearly 10 years earlier. Standardized directional signs were also created by the exhibits department or ordered from city suppliers. A tour company who could manage credit card fees was hired to lead tours through the temple. All of these preparations went forward despite the interruptions of hosting the 2008 Spring Festival and preparing the documentation needed for the nomination to the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The new director also hired two English speakers to be in charge of English translations. When I arrived as a volunteer, I worked closely with these two employees during the months leading up to the Olympics. We completed our translations on time, added additional material for the English website, and even created bilingual exit forms and promotional materials. Unfortunately, almost none of our work was used.

In investigating why, I discovered that the museum had another layer of demands beyond those placed by the city and national officials. Foreign tourists are not in great abundance, nor were they expected to be before or after the Olympics. However, with new hotels and Olympic venues going up in the vicinity, the district government officials were certain that the museum would be a logical destination for foreign tourists during the Olympics. Because of the district's place in constructing major Olympic venues, and because of the expectation of Olympic tourists in and around the Central Business District, the Chaoyang District



Fig. 10.5 Making Dongyue temple more accessible in 2008 meant renovating the entrance and adding wheelchair ramps. (Photo by author)

government provided increased funds for renovating and opening the Western court of the temple grounds. Responding to the restoration request of the district government was more important to those in charge of the museum's physical appearance than the city's concerns with adding and replacing interpretive signs. Museum staff frequently asked if what I was doing was actually necessary. The few scattered English signs were probably enough, and if people needed more explanation, they could always ask an English-speaking staff member.

In late April 2008 another request came after Chaoyang District officials toured the museum's exhibits and declared that they were "not Olympic enough." The museum's vice-director of exhibits was asked to find a temporary exhibit specifically related to the Olympics. After some discussion, she learned that the request was actually to please a friend of someone in the district government who collected Olympic matchbox covers. The request was not entirely outside the scope of the museum's practices; representing individual private collectors is one way to champion ongoing collecting traditions among ordinary Beijing folk. Still, the entire exhibit had to be prepared and installed in just a few weeks in order to open by August 7, drawing attention away from other activities, including the vice-director's supervision of the city's translation requirements. The Olympic exhibit was not a favorite attraction among the staff or museum patrons, and closed as soon as the Paralympics was over. But the leadership of the museum gambled that

it was more important to appease the district government than completely satisfy the city inspectors.

And, in fact, the gamble paid off. When Mayor Liu Qi of Beijing (who was also head of BOCOG) toured the temple in September, no one mentioned that the few English translations on display were inaccurate and incomplete, and the mayor did not seem to notice. He was so pleased with the Olympic exhibit and the renovations in the West courtyard that he pledged added support from the city to renovate the East courtyard. He also transferred administrative responsibility of two more of Beijing's temples to the museum.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I return to my initial question of how far-reaching were national authoritarian efforts to dictate museum practices during the Olympics. While Kirk Denton's insights into the degree of separation between government and institution may have been generally valid across China at the time of his writing, my goal in this chapter has been to show that Beijing's cultural policies during the Olympic preparations were less coordinated than might be supposed and did not preclude individual interpretation in policy implementation. True, the national and municipal governments remained invested in Dongyue Temple's interpretation of the city's traditional culture. But my research at Dongyue Temple illustrates China's "fragmented authoritarianism" (Lieberthal and Oksenberg 1988) as national, municipal, and local government offices each made demands on the space. Like seeking blessings at the temple's Longevity Scholar Tree, with whose story I began, surviving the political flames of the Olympics required some circumambulation for both devout daoists and museum professionals. Knowing that not all policies were created equal and that official monitoring would be uneven, the museum staff was able to comply with the minimum requirements for "New Beijing" while also accommodating district government requests, thereby receiving national recognition for its research efforts, adding to its exhibit space, and securing funding for additional construction. These blessings of abundance and status contribute to the longevity of the institution. And although the museum work unit lost some of its control over the temple worship areas, the new daoist neighbors have so far agreed to reconfigure their beliefs as national heritage in order to exercise religious freedoms that were previously denied. In working to represent Old Beijing as national heritage for the Olympics and New Beijing as a world-class tourist destination, the museum proved itself a site for negotiating state power and authority rather than serving as an unproblematic icon of that authority. Such compromises over contested heritage resources will continue to be important in China and in other places throughout the world.

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Chapter 11

Community Empowerment at the Periphery? Participatory Approaches to Heritage Protection in Guizhou, China

William Nitzky

Introduction: Cultural Heritage and Social Inclusion

In recent years, heritage institutions have undergone a reevaluation of their mission and role in society through practices to engage local populations in their heritage. In an attempt to move away from the cultural orthodoxy of museums and traditional top-down heritage management practices, community heritage work has begun to invoke a new participatory inclusionist approach calling for community involvement in the creation, planning, and operation of new cultural institutions (see Hodges and Watson 2000; Russell 1997). New heritage institutional models have also called attention to the relationship between culture and development and the centrality of the community in safeguarding cultural heritage, which has impacted development work and cultural heritage management. They have worked to move community members from passive subjects of study to active actors, providing a platform for marginalized community groups' voices and the promotion of notions of "shared authority" over aspects of interpretation and decision making (Sandell 2003; Newman and McLean 1998; Smith et al. 2003). At the same time this post-modern turn has shown the importance of multivocality and dissonance, it has elucidated power relations inherent in the recognition, construction, and negotiation of heritage and processes of heritagization (Smith 2006; Pendlebury et al. 2004; Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996; Lowenthal 1985, 1998; Waterton 2005). Heritage institutions can thus no longer be understood as simply embedded in the "modernist paradigm as authorities that transmit absolute knowledge in a linear fashion to their different publics" (Corsane 2002: 14). Inasmuch as institution activities aim to form communal ownership and collective identity around cultural heritage (den Camp and du Cros n.d.), it cannot be assumed that a single community group lays claim to heritage or that the

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relationship is a stable one, sometimes leading to contestation and controversy (Svensson 2006; Perkin 2010). Furthermore, as Croke (2008: 415) states, “despite their appearance of being local and grassroots activities, [community heritage initiatives] will often reflect agendas that extend well beyond the community group”. Thus, it is important to critically reflect on community heritage initiatives as sites of dialogue and as cultural processes through which different cultural expressions and objectives are articulated and negotiated, new forms of agency emerge, and the frictions between interactions and collaborations form a new social and political dynamic (see Smith 2006; Clifford 1997; Waterton and Watson 2011; Clifford 1997; Corsane 2002; Croke 2010).

This chapter examines the recent implementation of community-based participatory approaches to heritage work in China. Since the emergence of a cultural heritage protection craze in China in the late 1980s, cultural heritage institutions and development projects have predominantly fallen under the authority of the Chinese government, often regarded as a custodian of culture, and have been used as a strategy for cultural governance and economic development (Oakes 2006; see Sigley 2010). Recently, however, international organizations, NGOs, Chinese academics, and local community groups have begun to develop new community heritage initiatives to enhance the power of heritage to benefit local populations and the protection of local cultural heritage. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork on three community heritage projects in Guizhou province conducted between 2008 and 2011, I interrogate the notion of community participation through heritage work in China. Although participatory projects have been promoted across China, it is important to be cautious of their intent and application, as many projects hide behind a “participatory” banner (Plummer and Taylor 2004). Within this chapter, each case represents a different approach to community-based heritage work, each with different outcomes, and demonstrates how cultural heritage has become as a powerful and contested site for community engagement. In considering the complex arrangements of multiple actors involved in each project, this chapter details how participation in heritage protection plays out, the nature of engagement itself, and the implications these projects have for the community groups involved. The implementation of participatory projects for heritage preservation, I argue, creates a political space where villagers are confronted with claims over cultural heritage, identity, and voice and negotiate their roles as agents and subjects of cultural heritage work.

The Participatory Approach in China

In China, the concept of community participation is not intrinsic to the protection of cultural heritage. Heritage conservation work has long been a top-down initiative led by the Chinese government. In recent years, however, participatory approaches to cultural heritage protection have emerged that involve government intervention, as well as the integration of non-government and local community

actors. To help understand how and why the participatory approach and community heritage projects emerged in China, it is useful to turn to the beginning of the post-Mao reform era and the development of participatory development projects themselves. The “opening up reforms”, market liberalization, and a change in local governance brought on by the decollectivization campaign, household responsibility system, village-elections, and growth in social organizations in the 1980s led to a shift in the role of people making decisions about matters that affected their livelihood (Plummer 2004: 2) and “an opportunity for new social groups to emerge and for existing groups to expand their influence” (Taylor 2004: 23). In addition to the reforms and policy changes occurring in China in the post-Mao reform era, Plummer and Taylor (2004: 36) explain that China’s opening up to international support enabled participatory projects to emerge:

In the early 1990s, the central government gave permission to the international donor community to work in agreed provinces and allowed the concept of ‘community participation’ to be tested in isolated rural development, agriculture/irrigation management, natural resource management, forestry, watershed management, rural water and sanitation, and rural health and education sector projects, as well as multisectoral poverty alleviation initiatives. By doing so, they allowed the concept of ‘participation’ to enter development rhetoric—within the centralized regime governing China.¹

Although at first “generic” and lacking localization, small-scale participatory projects introduced in the early 1990s in China were the foundation for future participatory models and practices.²

Early participatory initiatives introduced in China were informed by the participatory development discourse emerging in the West in the 1960s and 1970s.

¹ A detailed explanation of the context for the development of community participation in China since the 1980s is seen in Plummer and Taylor (2004).

² Plummer (2004: 3) claims that in China “while the [participatory] approach did not mushroom, it developed on a project-by-project, sector-by-sector basis... at the micro level”. From the early 1990s, according to Plummer (2004), the introduction of the participatory projects was based in Beijing under the Germany Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) which supported the Centre for Integrated Agricultural Development (CIAD) and in Kunming, Yunnan province under the Ford Foundation. Yunnan was the first region in southwest China to see the rise in participatory projects through The Yunnan Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) Network established in 1994 (see Wilkes 2011 and his references), and has received a growth in support by international agencies and NGOs for participatory projects, especially since the early 2000s. The Participant Rural Appraisal (PLA) network also extended into Guizhou, Guangxi, and Sichuan in the 1990s, seen through, for example, the Caohai National Natural Reserve project. Guizhou and Guangxi have recently experienced a growth in the implementation of several community-based heritage protection projects and participatory development initiatives, namely led by NGOs such as Chain Reaction and Partnerships in Community Development, and ecomuseum projects by the Sino-Norwegian Ecomuseum Partnership and the Guangxi Museum for Nationalities. Outside of southwest China, participatory projects to development have been seen in Jiangxi, Hunan, Gansu, Anhui, Sichuan, Shanxi, Qinghai, Heilongjiang, and Inner Mongolia, to name a few (see Li 2001; Plummer and Taylor 2004), sponsored and led mainly by several international agencies, such as the World Bank, and China’s national level government under the Leading Group Office for Poverty Alleviation and Economic Development in Backward Areas (LGOP).

Paulo Freire's influential work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) and other literature at that time opened the development discourse to issues of exploitation and marginality and called for a decentralization of power and the reversal of unequal power relations. A people-centered approach to development was put into practice through Robert Chambers' PRA campaign (Chambers 1983, 1997) to specifically stimulate active participation and social empowerment by informed participants. Although literature exploring and advocating participatory development practices have shown the difficulty in providing a universal definition for the concepts of community participation and participatory development, it has highlighted these concepts close association with community capacity building, local populations' direct involvement and decision making power, and their control of resources in development (Cornwall 2006; Oakley 1991; Mohan 2001). Chambers work (1983), in particular, has helped frame the participatory development discourse (see also Cohen and Uphoff 1980), summarized by Hickey and Mohan (2004: 8) as "the importance of placing local realities at the heart of development interventions, and of the need to transform agents of development from being directive 'experts' to 'facilitators' of local knowledge and capabilities". Thus, participatory development is based not only on local communities' involvement and voice in project interventions, but also their capability of managing "what they understand as development" through a collaborative framework (Botchway 2001: 2). Studies from Chambers and others, combined with the acknowledgment of the failure of top-down implemented projects and planning and the growing acceptance of the sustainable development discourse has helped fuel the expansion of participatory development initiatives worldwide (Warburton 1998; Küpçü 2005).

As much as participatory initiatives in China call for a people-centered approach, the multiple, sometimes conflicting objectives of actors often make it hard for this to be reached. Plummer and Taylor (2004: 37–41) generalize these various objectives in their introductory chapters to the volume *Community Participation in China*. The Chinese government at the national level aims to enhance investment in rural development and work towards poverty reduction, while local governments are generally interested in increasing their access to capital and political power through the obtainment of donor funding and the establishment of "new" nationally supported projects. Advocates' objectives often range from local population sustainable development to social empowerment to community capacity building. While donor agencies' objectives are indicative of the specific participatory project, they are mainly concerned with the efficacy of project funding and sustainability of benefits from the project. For local community groups, the improvement of livelihood is key, specifically related to socio-economic benefits such as productivity, food security, and welfare. A significant challenge to participatory initiatives at the onset for the government and local communities alike is a "lack of clarity" in the meaning of participation, and moreover their own interpretation of the concept itself is not necessarily in line with involved donors and advocates. Furthermore, community participation has increasingly become a catchphrase for development projects in China that in fact work to promote economic and political agendas of the government through the

manipulation and exploitation local communities (Plummer and Taylor 2004: 52). Cooke and Kothari (2001) argue that this misuse and abuse of participation in development projects is the ‘tyranny of participation’. Critics of the participatory approach to development point to underlining issues of power and politics—the transfer and struggle over power to control and decide people’s own affairs (Cooke and Kothari 2001; Hickey and Mohan 2004).³ For example, Mosse (2001: 22) outlines the manipulation of participation in homogenizing community interests and community members’ differences, structuring local knowledge, and “[serving] to represent external interests as local needs [and] dominant interests as community concerns”. Arguments on participatory project practitioners and advocates’ lack of focus on “wider structures of injustice and oppression” (Mohan 2001), insufficient understandings of processes of empowerment (Mosse 2001; Cooke and Kothari 2001), and the role of structure and agency in social change (Cleaver 1999) highlight problems of participatory projects in China, where they are seen not so much as antidotes to power imbalances but mechanisms of disenfranchisement (Cooke and Kothari 2001; Henkel and Stirrat 2001). In China, issues over shared authority, collaboration, and social inclusion are greatly exacerbated and called into question through the implementation of participatory development projects that impose their own in-built constraints (Plummer 2004: 13) and are embedded within a larger structure of power in China.

Community Engagement in Heritage and Tourism

While the participatory approach in China has only been applied in specific areas for purposes of development, it has become an international trend in cultural heritage work since the ‘cultural turn’ of the 1970s. Beyond the retention of cultural diversity, safeguarding the roots of a nation, and the building of stronger cross-cultural understanding, cultural heritage has been associated with human development (see Cernea 1985; Da Costa 2010). At the same time cultural heritage represents a vehicle for economic development, it has become a form of social and cultural capital and serves not only the ends of development but “[constitutes], in fact, the social basis of the ends themselves” (Arizpe 2004: 178). Although a critical analysis of the nuanced and contested understandings of *community* lies beyond the scope of this study (see Waterton and Smith 2010 for a recent exploration), it is important to highlight that ‘community’ has recently become understood as integral to missions of cultural heritage protection and sustainable development as the source for creativity and innovation, seen clearly through the global heritage discourse led by the work of UNESCO and specifically in the UN World Commission report *Our Creative Diversity* (Arizpe 2004). Provisions of the

³ See Hickey and Mohan (2004) for an in-depth examination of the politics of the participatory approach to development.

2003 *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (ICHC) symbolize in many ways the link between heritage work and the community in its call to place the community at the center of heritage work rather than the heritage itself (Blake 2009; Kurin 2007). Not only does the ICHC mark an important shift in understandings of the dimensions of heritage, but also presents community participation and engagement as a requirement to heritage protection and management, with a “recognition of importance of participation in all aspects of the process of documenting and safeguarding ICH by members of communities”. One important provision of the ICHC calls for “experts” as well as cultural practitioners, grounded in the experience of indigenous knowledge of a group, to be assigned the task of defining, identifying, and inventorying intangible cultural heritage (ICH) (N’Diaye n.d). This seemingly begins to approach the issue of integrating community members in what Smith (2006) has calls an Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD). As much as UNESCO aims to promote the natural affinity between community and heritage, the politics inherent in this relationship, as Croke (2010) explains, is called into question as community engagements in heritage are influenced by differences in social, cultural, and political contexts.

The ratification of *The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* by China in 1985 introduced the global discourse of heritage preservation and conservation at a national scale. In the wake of the destruction caused by the Cultural Revolution and facing development pressures from rapid urbanization and industrialization in the post-Mao reform era, a government-sponsored and expert-led campaign to identify, nominate, and protect cultural heritage, similar to the 1950s and 1960s folkloric study movement (see China Heritage Quarterly 2006), was launched creating national cultural heritage protection “fever” (Wang 2008). The effort to protect cultural heritage in China has become, like many countries, a political endeavor to foster national unity and cultural pride and a force of stability and continuity through the creation of symbols of the nation (Sigley 2010; Sofield and Li 1998; Gruber 2007). In China, cultural heritage preservation is also deeply linked to, and seems to be superseded by, a strategy for economic development (Mclaren 2010; Oakes 2006). Culture has recently become recognized as an “untapped” resource, and provincial and local governments have developed cultural industries that employ built and natural heritage, and most recently intangible heritage, as important economic assets. As a result, many “heritages” have been identified as key resources for building cultural destinations, which have experienced a “museumification of heritage and the colonization of lived space” (Su and Teo 2009: 151). In addition, as Cros et al. (2007: 89) state, “the economic benefits emanating from heritage attractions have changed people’s attitudes towards conservation”. Local populations have begun to work to negotiate these processes of modernity and have begun to actively participate in the exploitation of their culture through a new cultural economy (Oakes 1998, 2006; Walsh 2005; see also MacCannell 1973, 1992; Greenwood 1989). The deeply rooted approach of “destroy the old to make way for the new” (*pojiu lixin*) in China (Sigley 2010: 531), has thus taken on new meaning since the expansion of the heritage industry in the early 1990s.

In practice, the three areas of cultural tourism, local heritage management models, and internationally sponsored development projects have contributed to the evolution of heritage work in China and the integration of the participatory approach. The strong linkage between tourism and cultural heritage underscores the expanding discourse on cultural heritage in China (Sofield and Li 1998; Zeng et al. 2007). Recently, “stakeholder” and community involvement has become a growing topic of interest in tourism development in China (Li 2004). Chinese scholars researching the relationship between tourism and local communities have not only examined the local impact of tourism development, but also addressed the right to tourism operation and local community involvement in the planning and development process (Liu 1999, 2000; Tang 1998; Song and Haijuan 2007). Ying and Zhou (2007), for example, emphasize the emergence of a new “communal approach” that has been adopted by several cultural destinations in China, such as in Anhui. Different forms and dimensions of community involvement in tourism also exist in China, as explored by Chio (2009) in Guangxi and Guizhou, Walsh (2005) in Yunnan, and Li (2004) in Hainan. Oakes (2006), for example, documents villagers’ mobilization of a community-owned corporation or association to manage tourism and improve public welfare using accumulated tourism capital. A few representative program models found in southwest China that combine cooperative, participatory local heritage management and tourism development include the Lijiang project “Cultural Heritage Management and Tourism: Cooperation Among Stakeholders”, the Yunnan “Ethnic Cultural and Ecological Village” program, and the Sino-Norwegian Ecomuseum program in Guizhou and other ecomuseum projects in Guangxi (see Xu 2007).

One village under the “Ethnic Cultural and Ecological Village” project, where I conducted fieldwork in 2011, exemplifies villagers’ participatory efforts to manage ethnic cultural resources for tourism, revitalizing forms of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, such as ancient stone god (*shen*) statues, and recreating traditional ethnic dance performances. As noted by Xu (2007), these efforts are as much for purposes of tourism as they are for building a sense of community and a local Sani identity. The World Bank and UNESCO, including foreign government agencies and the Millennium Development Goal-Fund, have worked with the Chinese government since the 1990s to not only implement development initiatives that integrate cultural heritage in local economic development, but also promote the empowerment of local, often poor, marginalized community groups in the protection of cultural heritage resources and sustainable tourism through a community-based approach. While results of these projects for culture heritage management and tourism development are mixed, they have helped to engage local populations in cultural heritage management practices, raising cultural awareness and strengthening local community groups’ capacity to protect cultural heritage resources, and also to develop the local cultural economy.

In addition to the implementation of local cultural heritage protection practices, China has seen the enactment of new heritage protection laws and conservation principles by the Chinese Government that come in line with international standards of heritage conservation (Qian 2007) and illustrate China’s effort to

safeguard culture heritage on the global scene. The *Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China* (commonly called the China Principles) represents such an initiative that has attracted recent international attention as China's first guidelines for heritage work. At the same time the China Principles aim to "localize" international heritage protection standards, it heeds the call of UNESCO for greater community engagement in heritage. For this chapter, it is important to note the inclusion of notions of "participation" in the China Principles. Several articles, 1.3.4, 2.4.4, 10.1.1, and 14.3.2, address public support and participation in heritage sites, specifically using such terms as "cooperation and partnership" and "coordination of relations" with the local community. In addition, China's embrace of the recent ICHC and work to inventory intangible cultural heritage for international and national recognition has made community involvement a more important topic for heritage work. However, as Cros et al. argue, the China Principles, unlike other international codes and charters, have "avoided... stakeholder involvement in conservation planning" (2007: 140):

Undertaking conservation work in the national interest and for rational economic reasons appear foremost in the document. Gaining consensus from non-experts as part of the planning process is not, however. In fact, local communities are often relocated, en masse, as part of urban renewal or conservation projects without giving much thought to how this might have weakened and dissolved the connectivity of the communities and their living culture (Cros et al. 2007: 124).

In fact, calls for community participation in heritage management, as the China Principles provisions clearly shows, is suggested to take place later in the heritage management process, after the initial planning stages. Nevertheless, these provisions for "participation" in a national charter is an important step in the promotion of a participatory approach to heritage work in China.

Participatory Cultural Heritage Protection Projects in Guizhou

The robust growth of China's cultural industries of tourism and heritage has proven a lucrative development strategy in the rural sector. Tim Oakes (2006) calls this China's "cultural turn" for cultural development involving the mobilization (or reconstruction) of cultural heritage to develop a commercial economy, which has aided in integrating ethnic minority and rural communities into the modern state. As a result of China's cultural revitalization since the 1980s and cultural heritage industry boom, ethnic minorities' "exotic" cultural traditions have attracted much attention for practices of preservation as well as processes of commoditization. Oakes (1998) explains that Guizhou province, in particular, has exemplified this cultural turn through its promotion of cultural tourism as a "pillar industry", which has become a kind of savior to Guizhou's flailing economy, seeing stagnation as a result of fiscal decentralization and decline throughout the

1980s.⁴ Ethnic minority groups in Guizhou, comprising 38 % of the total population, are no longer perceived as an obstacle to modernization, but instead represent a cornerstone of rural tourism development. In 2003, the *Guizhou Ethnic and Folk Culture Protection Regulations* was enacted, and by 2006, 31 provincial cultural art forms were included on China's Intangible Cultural Heritage List (first issued in 2006) with Dong Nationality Villages in Southeast Guizhou Province on UNESCO's World Heritage tentative list (as of 2008). Over 1,300 schools and universities began to offer bilingual education in Chinese and ethnic minorities languages and many local schools, specifically in Qiandongnan, provided students culture classes on local ethnic minority cultural traditions, such as Dong *Dage*. In fact, preservation of cultural heritage has come hand in hand with the development of Guizhou's cultural industry, and heritage has even become a form of cultural and intellectual property (see Brown 2003, 2004; Prott and O'Keefe 1992; Harding 2003). For example, after identifying cultural resources of ethnic groups for cultural preservation, Wu Jun, director of the Guizhou Ethnic Affairs Commission stated in *China Daily* on September 14, 2011: "The selection is to promote and preserve the culture's of Guizhou's ethnic groups. We will apply for patents on 17 cultural symbols for the better development of the local ethnic culture industry" (Xu 2011).

Since the early 1990s, greater recognition of "unique" and "endangered" ethnic minority cultural traditions as the nation experiences rapid modernization has brought many international agencies and foreign and domestic NGOs to Guizhou to work with provincial and county governments in an effort to preserve and develop the region's cultural resources. Through small scale and regional projects, Guizhou has become a laboratory for experiments not only on rural development and heritage tourism but also participatory approaches to cultural heritage protection.

Drum Gate Ancient City: An Ecomuseum Approach

Drum Gate Ancient City, located in eastern Guizhou, is the fourth installment of the Sino-Norwegian Ecomuseum Project, launched in 1995.⁵ Drum Gate ecomuseum "opened its doors" (*kaiguan*) in 2004 as the first Han ecomuseum in China. Established as a military garrison in 1385, Drum Gate village was designated as a *gucheng* (ancient city) for its conservation of its original military fortress design and preservation of many 200-year-old stone Ming-dynasty style (*xingshi*) homes and ancestral halls. While the Han are the ethnic majority in China (approximately 92% of the total population), the Han community of Drum Gate represents a

⁴ See Oakes (1998) for a comprehensive history of Guizhou's development and tourism industry.

⁵ All names for places and people in the case studies are pseudonyms unless formal consent was given.

minority in a region with 85% of the surrounding population belonging to different ethnic groups. The Han of Drum Gate village are the descents of soldiers sent from the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River and the Central Plain to eastern Guizhou during the Ming dynasty to suppress ethnic (*tuzu*) uprisings and consolidate imperial power.⁶ In addition to its long history and tangible ancient cultural properties, Drum Gate village is known for its award winning Lantern Festival dragon dancing celebrations and dragon-making craftsmen.

The impetus for the adoption of the ecomuseum concept in China came from an interest in Western new museology and community museology schools of thought by Su Donghai and other Chinese museologists in the mid-1980s. The emergence of new museology, community museology, and the ecomuseum in the early 1970s, marked a radical shift to rethink the physical and ideological confines of the traditional museum and address museums' role and function in serving society (Davis 1999; Walsh 1992; dos Santos 2010; Hudson 1987). The ecomuseum concept aims to integrate the community and landscape into the museum space; as a "museum without walls" encompassing the entire village, its natural and built environment, the local inhabitants of the "territory" and their culture (Riviere 1985; Simpson 1996; Davis 1999). The ecomuseum philosophy emphasizes the in situ preservation of local cultural heritage, directly involving the local community in the interpretation, planning, and management of their cultural heritage (Davis 1999; de Varine 1995, 2006). Su Donghai, then director of the Chinese Society of Museums and editor-in-chief of the journal *Chinese Museum*, saw the ecomuseum as a potential instrument to address the growing predicament of industrialization and ecological destruction in China and to alleviate the endangerment of cultural and natural heritage. He acknowledged and later encouraged the democratization of heritage practices through the ecomuseum, and believed that adopting this innovative approach to the growing field of museology in China would shift museum work to be more relevant and responsive to ecological concerns, local heritage conservation, and rural communities' social and economic development (Su 2006). By the late 1980s, several Western articles on ecomuseums and Chinese scholars' work on the relationship between museums and ecology were published in *Chinese Museum*, such as from Georges-Henri Riviere and Hugues de Varine. The dissemination of this work to the public sphere and later collaboration and formal a partnership with Norwegian museologist John Aage Gjestrum and the Norwegian state led to the development of the first ecomuseums (*shentai bowuguan*) in China in 1997 and the growth of a Chinese ecomuseum movement. (The Yunnan Ethnic Cultural and Ecological Village project, developed in 1996 under the leadership of Yunnan University professor Yin Shaoting and sponsored by the Ford Foundation, was influenced by the Western ecomuseum concept.) Su Donghai has called the establishment of these

⁶ The military garrisons were also established in Anshun, western Guizhou, home to *tunpu* culture—descendants of Ming-dynasty soldiers sent to established fortress garrisons and conquer Yunnan (see Oakes 2006; Yan and Gao 2003).

ecomuseum initiatives in four village communities in Guizhou, and later ecomuseum development in Inner Mongolia and Guangxi, an important mechanism to preserve the rich local cultural heritage of China while providing a platform for local communities to become active agents of heritage preservation and development (personal conversation, June 4, 2008). As observed through many cases in China, and discussed below, it remains to be seen, however, just how “active” and involved local communities are in the management of their cultural heritage through the ecomuseum space.

Prior to the opening of the ecomuseum, Drum Gate village was recognized as a provincial level historic and cultural city (*lishi wenhua ming cheng*) and one of 13 important provincial ethnic “protection and development” villages (“*zhongyao baohua yu fazhan*” *cunzai*). A plan drafted in 2000 by the county People’s Government Office (*renmin zhengfu*) for village protection and revitalization had already begun heritage work in the village. The county and township government worked to improve infrastructure and sanitation, as well as the restoration of the four fortress gates and part of the wall, significantly destroyed through household expansion during the Mao regime. Although restoration was a main facet of the plan, the concept and parameters of protection (*baohu*) were detailed throughout, determining cultural and historical assets.

Similar to other ecomuseums under Guizhou’s Sino-Norwegian Ecomuseum program, ecomuseum development and management in Drum Gate village has been administered by the provincial and county government. However, in 2007, Drum Gate became the only ecomuseum in China to experience a shift in administrative control over ecomuseum development. Drum Gate township and village leaders (*xiang zhengfu* and the *cunweihui*) gained authority over ecomuseum and heritage development, exercising decision-making power over the preservation of their tangible and intangible cultural heritage and local economic development. A township Cultural Relics Management Office (*wenwu guanli suo*) was established to create a more effective local mechanism for heritage protection overseen by the township leader. Directed by a non-local Drum Gate village elementary school teacher well regarded in the community, the management office established a collaborative relationship with the village community over heritage and development work. Ancient home renovation and reconstruction, a sanitation program, development of guesthouses (*nongjiale*) and services, and collection and distribution of entrance ticket sales for the village’s infrastructure maintenance and improvement, and home protection stipends all represented specific initiatives developed through collaborative efforts and community involvement. During my fieldwork conducted in the summer 2008, the township government–village community cooperative seemed to mark a significant turn for villagers from passive subjects of government project intervention to active agents in the heritage protection project of their ancient village.

In 2008, the Cultural Relics Management Office director was keen to emphasize the importance of villager participation (*canyu*) in their heritage protection work and tourism development, specifically making villagers benefit and profit from the project (personal conversation, July 1, 2008). He specifically highlighted the

horizontal (*pingshi*) collaboration among villagers, village representatives, local leaders, and management office staff on village issues and concerns. While many villagers were involved in heritage work in Drum Gate, interviews conducted with villagers at that time revealed both their satisfaction with tourism development and their discontent with limited social inclusion in heritage protection decision making practices. On the one hand, villagers were happy to welcome tourists and express their cultural and historical pride and strong place-identity. Besides farming, heritage tourism was seen as another beneficial form of economic gain. On the other hand, elders expressed that government efforts for restoration of the ancient village, such as the main east gate destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, did not involve consultation with knowledgeable villagers of historic cultural properties, thus resulting in “partial preservation” (*baocun de yiban*) of the “original” gate. Located in the back of the ecomuseum information exhibition center a sign reads “[Drum Gate] residents speak of their stories: cultural memories recount” seems out of place. Originally, this sign was to mark a place where several village elders volunteered to share local folklore with visiting tourists. Although the sign remains, the inclusion of villagers has not, with the project terminated within the first year due to a lack of project oversight by the managing county government. As heritage work continues in Drum Gate, power relations are intensified through both the interaction and disconnection between the ecomuseum initiative and the local population.

In 2009, the World Bank “Guizhou Cultural and Natural Heritage Protection and Development Project” was launched, and selected Drum Gate village as one of 22 sites throughout Guizhou (not including provincial capital administrative centers), to “[increase] economic benefits to local communities through increased tourism and better protection of cultural and natural heritages” (World Bank n.d.).⁷ Initiatives of the Guizhou project include improving local infrastructure and tourism facilities, preservation of tangible and intangible heritage and restoration of historic towns and structures, conservation of natural heritage and cultural landscapes, and strengthening institutional capacity and framework for project implementation (World Bank n.d.). The World Bank program claims to employ a community-based development (CBD) approach to involve local communities in the planning, management, and implementation of the programs (World Bank n.d.).

Although the World Bank program is still in its infancy in Drum Gate Ancient City (closing date of the World Bank program is 2016), it has already incited

⁷ Under a request by the Chinese government, World Bank began assistance in cultural heritage conservation in development projects in the 1990s. The China-World Bank partnership for cultural and natural heritage conservation has resulted in 12 projects over the past 18 years. (Conserving the Past as a Foundation for the Future WB Report 2011). From 1980 to 2000, the World Bank has invested in cultural heritage to develop tourism and since 2000, it shifted its approach to the integration of cultural heritage in local economic development and the promotion of sustainable tourism (Supporting Sustainable Development in Historic Cities and Cultural Heritage Sites).

challenges to the CBD approach. According to the township leader, “because the township work was becoming so much we needed a specialized agency (*zhuanmen jigou*) for assistance” (personal conversation, August 1, 2011). The township government requested the county to come in and set up a heritage protection agency in Drum Gate Ancient City. In 2010, the county established a new [Drum Gate] Ancient City Protection Construction Development Management Committee Office (*gucheng baohu jianshe kaifa guanli weiyuanhui bangongshi*). The management office remained in the village, yet new government staff unfamiliar with Drum Gate Village (except for the director of the former township management office) were hired and heritage preservation and development was now administered by the county government. During my fieldwork in 2011 in Drum Gate village, a growing discontent among villagers toward the new government-led initiative became increasingly clear. In 2008, for example, a plan was devised by the county and provincial government to develop a new village adjacent to the Ancient City for purposes of historic town preservation. One hundred *mu* of land (16.5 acres) was purchased from Drum Gate residents for the future development of a “New Area” (*xinqu*). It was proposed that households living on or exterior to the once standing fortress wall would be resettled to the New Area. After 3 years there has been little to no development of the New Area. This, in the face of World Bank support, exacerbated villagers’ agitation over the lack of attention of the proposed development project. Interviewed villagers who had sold land for the project, those eager to rebuild new homes due to household expansion,⁸ and those to be resettled expressed their discontent towards the government project as it had come to represent a failed promise. Moreover, for many interviewed villagers, the heritage protection of Drum Gate village was now considered the responsibility of the government. The government office continued to collaborate with villagers on house renovation and guesthouse development, yet many villagers felt that they were no longer included in village heritage protection decisions. They were merely required to satisfy strict government issued heritage protection regulations. In addition, no longer was the village community consulted on heritage work initiatives, rather the government only called on the help of the village representative.

In China, the ecomuseum concept has brewed with potential in a country looking for a means to bridge community development and the protection of endangered cultural heritage in times of rapid modernization and urbanization. The shift in power from county to township over the ecomuseum heritage protection initiative in 2008, marked Drum Gate as a potential site for community involvement and management of local heritage protection. However, the active, motivated, and engaged village community witnessed in 2008 was, in fact, much different than the community brimming with dissatisfaction and discontent in 2011. Change in the way of greater development of heritage tourism and building

⁸ Household expansion has caused a serious problem to historic property preservation in terms of villagers desire to build bigger or higher homes that do not “fit” the Ming-style architecture the management office is trying to promote (Management Office Director, personal conversation, August 9, 2011).

the capacity to regenerate a historic village also came with a change in power and a disjuncture between the local village community and the government over issues of heritage management and ownership. Although Drum Gate remains in the early stage in the *process* of ecomuseum development (see Davis 1999; de Varine 2006), shifts in mechanisms of power out of the hands of the local population, an existing lack of voice by local villagers in heritage management, and feelings of disillusionment and missed expectations has demonstrated the failure to build a strong foundation for community development and inclusion as villagers have become caught within the web of state bureaucracy. Thus, the politics of heritage protection of Drum Gate Ancient City calls into question the implementation of the Western ecomuseum concept in China with theoretical objectives of providing a means for the democratization of heritage, the empowerment of local people, and the community, inclusionist role of the museum initiative.

River County ‘Cultural Mapping’ Project: Empowerment Through Documentation

“Cultural Mapping helps communities describe themselves in their own ‘voices’” (CDFP Report n.d: 14). This statement by the National Program Officer of Culture, UNESCO Beijing Office, elucidates the significance of the ‘Cultural Mapping’ Project (*wenhua huitu*) implemented in the ethnically diverse River County in southeast Guizhou. The project is a component of the larger “China Culture and Development Partnership Framework” (CDPF) which brings together the work of eight UN agencies, Chinese government organs, and the local population. These agencies, working together through the “Culture and Development Window” of the United National Development Program (UNDP)-Spain Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Achievement Fund aim “to improve the inclusion of ethnic minorities in cultural, socioeconomic and political life through improved public policies and services” (United Nations in China 2010a). The 3-year Joint Program launched in 2008, attempts to “empower ethnic minority groups to better manage their cultural resources and to benefit from culture-based economic development” in the regions of Guizhou, Yunnan, Qinghai, and Tibet (United Nations in China 2010b).

One of the projects in Guizhou’s River County employs a method of cultural mapping in an attempt to identify, document, and represent local ethnic minority cultural resources and histories. This is an approach of data collection on landmarks, events, households, social relations, values, skills, memories, etc., through a variety of formats—physical maps, diagrams, photographs, videos, and oral histories—providing the creator and the viewer a comprehensive view of cultural resources. Chapin et al. (2005) introduced the origins of cultural, or indigenous, mapping and several approaches taken worldwide, from participatory models to the utilization of “sophisticated technologies”, like GIS, or the combination of both. Cultural mapping has been recognized for its fulfillment of many objectives and providing different outcomes. Scott (2010) states that “it can bring together past, present and future in one space” as a body of data and, at the same time, as “a

community comes together and realizes itself, to value itself” through viewing its representation of itself a sense of community is created. Chiesi (2010) calls this the “identity effect” of cultural mapping, the “engagement of the community in the appropriation of its own cultural identity.” He also points to a “knowledge effect” of cultural mapping, in “the building of knowledge that in turn can be used for other purposes,” as an input for other activities (Chiesi 2010). Cultural mapping in Guizhou’s River County is informant-based and -driven and has become a means to engage different ethnic minority communities in processes of cultural awareness, cultural heritage protection, and cultural revitalization. The project exemplifies a case in which community members are called upon to define their own heritage according to their interests and perceptions of their culture and how they feel their culture should be represented through the active documentation of their culture themselves (La Frenierre 2008). It is a project where the process (how the engaged groups composes a cultural map and thus perceives its heritage) is as equally important as the outcome (the set of data that becomes a input for a process of heritage protection).

UNESCO has been a strong a proponent of cultural mapping with indigenous peoples since the 1990s. UNESCO recognized the work of a domestic, independent NGO in China that has engaged local ethnic minority communities in the protection, collection, and revitalization of their local cultural heritage through cultural mapping techniques, specifically among the Dai in Yunnan and Qiang in Sichuan, and requested their execution of the River County Cultural Mapping Project. The NGO’s collaboration with UNESCO, the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH), Guizhou Administration of Cultural Heritage, and the River County government led to the development of a cultural mapping project carried out by local community members in an effort to compose an archive of their local culture and history. By the time I began fieldwork in 2011 in River County, “mapped” data had already been sent to the NGO by “focal point recorders” (*zhongzi jiyi yuan*) to be compiled into a published bilingual (Chinese-English) book later that year.

Establishing relationships with local government agencies, consultation with local scholars, and conducting initial field investigations in mid-2009 led to the project organizational team’s selection of a local project coordinator and 11 cultural mapping sites (villages) representing the five ethnic minorities—Dong, Miao, Zhuang, Yao, and Shui- of River County. Village focal point recorders were recruited from each of the 11 villages (one per village) and participated in training sessions on ethnography and ethnicity, the methodology of cultural mapping, and utilization of visual documentation, i.e., cameras and camcorders. For almost 2 years, they conducting cultural accounts of their respective villages and local cultural heritage through mediums of written text, photography, film, recordings, and hand-drawn cultural maps. When asked about the design of cultural mapping village project, one village focal point recorder, who had conducted over 100 interviews, replied, “I thought about what was culturally important in our village and tried to document that” (personal conversation, July 21, 2011). Personal authority over cultural mapping was also adopted by other village focal point

recorders who developed projects on cultural attributes they felt were not only unique to their village community, but also required attention in terms of cultural awareness. From his personal passion of Dong minority songs, one village recorder had worked to compose an entire book of Dong *Dage* script and lyrics of his hometown. Another recorder, called the “farmer photographer” among villagers, continued his effort in photographic documentation of the local Dong daily life of his village, important social events, and social changes impacting his culture such as destructive fires, rapid modernization, and nearby highway construction. He said, “the purpose is to protect our culture... I interviewed our *guishi* and other elders because if we don’t have them, we don’t have our cultural heritage” (personal conversation, July 20, 2011). By conducting “insider ethnographies” (Hayano 1979), village focal point recorders engaged in processes of meaning, memory, and identity reconstruction, creating new entities of their fluid culture. Thus their ethnographic experience, as Clifford (1986: 2) suggests, was “always caught up in the invention, not representation, of cultures.” Thus, while attempting to conduct investigations of their own culture, recorders gradually became reflexive of and dealt with the discursive practices of reality construction (Holstein and Gubrium 2008). Meetings with village recorders were carried out every 3 months throughout the cultural mapping process to assess the progress of their work, to see the output of fellow recorders, address certain challenges, and to further develop a detailed recording framework.

Beyond participation by select village recorders, the cultural mapping project in River County has also seen wider community participation in several villages. One exemplary case is the revitalization of the bull-fighting tradition in one Miao village. A local village recorder states that when he and his village community understood the importance of recording their culture through the cultural mapping project as an avenue for greater cultural understanding among their children and outsiders, they immediately thought of the loss of their bull-fighting tradition and its potential revival (CDFP: 37). Since the 1970s, the bull-ring had been destroyed several times as a result of the Cultural Revolution and recent road construction. The persistence in rebuilding the bull-ring over the last four decades by the local Miao community demonstrates the intrinsic value of this cultural tradition. With community-led efforts of land donation and the creation of a villager cost-sharing initiative of construction funds and labor (each of household volunteering one person), the bull-ring revitalization came to fruition in 2011, followed by a bull-fighting festival celebrated by over 10,000 people, many from nearby villages. This case demonstrates that cultural mapping in River County has acted as the catalyst for community decision making practices over local cultural heritage protection. These projects have stimulated a sense of cultural consciousness and pride among community members as cultural heritage has begun to be understood as a communal value requiring protection for present and future generations.

Similar to many participatory projects throughout China and the world, cultural mapping in River County has not come without challenges. According to the NGO facilitating the project, the most important is the prevailing problem of maximizing villagers’ participation. Distrust by villagers over villager recorder’s efforts

in documentation and the inability to see immediate results from project work (only seen through a “Cultural Image Project” to produce and distribute village calendars) has dampened villagers’ interest in the project. This has led to certain villagers to deny access to document cultural practices even by their own community members. For example, in 2010 a village recorder received permission from the *cunzhang* and *zhailao* village leaders of his own village to document a special ritual to “draw out the rain” (*chou yu*) conducted in times of drought, while being accompanied by the cultural mapping Program Coordinator, a non-local. However, on his way into the village he was prohibited from attending the ritual by the entire village. The village recorder quickly discovered he had stepped outside the “pact” of the community, not only attempting to bring a “outsider” (*waidiren*) to the ritual, but also a video recorder that was seen as a symbol of cultural exploitation. This issue is also underscored by a larger societal problem mentioned by the NGO Program Manager facing the implementation of participatory approaches in China. Older generations still hold a fear of “organization” and “activity” implemented specifically by structures outside of the community (Xiaowang 2010).⁹ Villagers have a hard time accepting external (non-community-led) intervention even if intervention has an objective of promoting local autonomy. Another challenge is the interpretation of participatory decision making, which in China often takes the shape of a centralized approach at the grassroots level, in which people of authority, especially local elites, make the decisions without collaborating with the local population. This is similar to the politics of the participatory consensus discussed by Mosse (2001) and seen in the case of Drum Gate ecomuseum and the Horse Mountain community museum development project discussed below.

Although the main impact has been on the 11 village focal point recorders who have acted as “seeds” of the project, cultural mapping in River County represents an effective approach to community involvement in Chinese ethnic minority villages. It has already been seen how cultural mapping in River County villages has become an input for future heritage protection projects. By reaching local needs and objectives through informed community-driven initiatives, village communities can better address challenges to their cultural heritage protection within a modernizing China.

Horse Mountain Community Museum: Heritage Preservation as a Goal

In a recent effort to address the growing concern of traditional cultural loss in Miao ethnic minority regions, Deputy Director Wei of the Chinese National Ethnology Museum, Beijing, called upon her hometown community of Horse Mountain

⁹ Forms of political participation under Mao (Saich 2004) underscores why many local communities were and currently are hesitant or resistant to interventions of community participation (Plummer and Taylor 2004).

village to build a community museum to safeguard their local Miao cultural heritage. As a Miao woman from Guizhou and strong proponent of new museology, Director Wei has worked closely with local Miao and Dong communities in Qiandongnan to develop participatory approaches to heritage protection through the preservation of embroidery dress-making skills and the development of local ethnic museums.¹⁰ Under Director Wei's guidance, her cousin and former village leader, Mr. Wei, along with the 26 households of Horse Mountain village began a new community-led approach to construct a community museum.

Horse Mountain village is located in the isolated region south of the county seat in Qiandongnan. It rarely sees visitors or tourists, unlike the county's more reachable Miao cultural destinations of Langde and Xijiang. Yet, this all changed in 2009. When Director Wei met with village representatives and discussed the idea of the community museum she asked what they felt was culturally important to their village, what needed to be preserved and what had already been lost. Similar to many cases in China and other developing countries this was the first time local villagers were posed such questions, stimulating a discuss on the notion of heritage and enhancing a sense of ethnic consciousness among the villager participants. Villagers mentioned the significance of the local Frog Dragon (*Wa Long*) and Rhinoceros Dragon (*XiNiu Long*) legend that had been orally passed down from generation to generation. After further discussion, villagers and Director Wei concluded that this legend and two festivals, Beckoning the Dragon Festival (*Zhao Long jie*) and Miao New Years (*Miao Nian*), were cultural resources unique to the community and would be the foundation for the community museum project.

The entire village was consulted on the museum project and the Wei family offered their vacant adjacent house to be a temporary museum space until the new museum was completed. Within 3 months, with the help of the Chinese National Ethnology Museum, villagers created a small two room exhibition of their Miao culture in the temporary exhibition space. Hanging panels introduced Horse Mountain village—placing the village community in the larger context of Miao ethnic culture and distinguishing the village for its cultural uniqueness (*women shi miaozu, women shi bazhaizhi, women shi cong dongfang lai* (We are Miao, We are the eight villages, We have come from the east)). The exhibition also explained the dilemma of forgotten aspects of their cultural heritage, and depicted oral legends and festivals as well as pictures of the two clans inhabiting the village. A collage of photographs taken by Mr. Wei displayed the villagers of Horse Mountain participating in festival activities, museum construction, and conducting daily routines. For the first time the legend of Frog Dragon and Rhinoceros Dragon, commemorated during *Zhao Long* festival, was now able to be read and not only heard.

As an instrument to promote and sell Horse Mountain Miao culture and ultimately reach the goal of building the community museum, two village festivals

¹⁰ Director Wei is also a fashion designer and director of the "Colorful China" troupe that has introduced ethnic minorities and ethnic dress to countries worldwide.

were reconstructed as performative events. “Cultural revitalization” began when Director Wei explained to villagers that they should no longer celebrate *Zhao Long* festival and *Miao Nian* as individual households but as communal events involving the entire village. With a small donation by Director Wei and the township government, the 26 households pooled their labor to build new stone and cement walking paths (formerly mud) throughout the village. In addition to giving each household a small stipend to make ethnic dresses for the festivals,¹¹ Director Wei commissioned new ethnic clothing to be made in Beijing for their festival performances. Villagers I interviewed explained that when Director Wei distributed the black hemp jackets with a colorfully embroidered image of *WaGong* on the back, it was the first time they had seen the embroidered image. Even though it was previously not a cultural symbol of their Miao community (selected by Director Wei as it resembled a frog-dragon-like figure and was discovered in Miao dress in the county where the village was situated), the image now represented a brand for Horse Mountain village (see also Morgan and Pritchard 1998).¹² The formalities of the festival were coordinated by former village leader Mr. Wei who involved villagers in the preparation of food, wine, and accommodations for visitors, invited ritual practitioners (*jishi*) from the township, and, following Director Wei’s suggestion, set up a booth at the entrance of the village for visitor donations. Director Wei also encouraged cost-sharing among village households (donations of 100 yuan per household) so that “villagers made a tangible contribution to the project and their future” (personal conversation, September 15, 2010). In April 2009, Director Wei brought over 200 visitors, consisting of museum professionals, friends, and the media, to witness the *Zhaolong* Miao festival of Horse Mountain village. Donations from visitors covered the festival costs (10,000 yuan) and made the village a small profit of 4,500 yuan, thus establishing the Horse Mountain community museum construction fund. *Miao Nian* festival was held later that year, and two other festivals were held the following year. A total of over 100,000 yuan in donations were raised from 2009 to mid-2011, three-quarters of these funds were allocated for the construction of the community museum.

In July 2009, construction of Horse Mountain community museum began. Villagers from every household collaborated on deciding on a central land plot for the museum, created a joint labor team to build the foundation for the museum and surrounding landscaping, and contributed timber for the project. During my fieldwork in 2011, the framing and walls of the 300 m², two-story museum was completed and the reception hall and performance stage was still underway. Interviewed villagers (men and women over the age of 40) spoke enthusiastically about the museum, believing it was “good for the village”, “good for future

¹¹ Indigo dyed fabrics previously made at home were bought in the nearby market town and embroidered by local village women.

¹² Schein (2005), who also writes of Director Wei, claims she is a “translocal”, cultural broker who reinvents Miao cultural dress through a process of “re-ethnicization”.

generations”, would bring “beneficial change,” and explained their role in personally fostering its development (personal communication, August 15, 2011).

Director Wei is adamant about how most forms of government-led intervention have not seen fruitful results in China in terms of heritage protection, drawing specifically on her experience with Suoga ecomuseum and XiJiang (personal conversation, September 15, 2010). Thus, she has promoted a heritage preservation project in her hometown, a small community she knows and is respected by, that employs a community-driven approach financed solely on collected donations and her personal support. Director Wei has worked to develop joint cooperation and collaboration with every household, which has led to greater community awareness and involvement in the heritage preservation project. For example, former village leader and village project coordinator Mr. Wei has begun to structure the heritage preservation project around the inherent needs of the community, through his modification of museum design to make it more accessible to the community and coordination of a month-long summer culture course (now in its second year) on Miao songs, dress-making, and *dahao* playing for local elementary school students taught by village elder volunteers.

As the main proponent of the community museum construction project, Director Wei has made strong recommendations for the methods of protecting and revitalizing Horse Mountain’s Miao cultural heritage. While collaboration has been met between Director Wei and Horse Mountain villagers on the project initiative, villagers continue to be quick to adopt her suggestions. This demonstrates not so much that there is a lack of community capacity and voice (Waterton and Wateson 2011), but rather the perception among villagers that the expert “knows best” and the persistence of the historical Chinese practice of following “key players who command the right to control the decision making process.” While this has significantly curtailed many projects in China that attempt to promote a participatory approach, this has not been the case in Horse Mountain village. Most villagers actively participate in festival activities, community museum construction, and youth’s cultural education. As a “local” Miao of Horse Mountain village, Director Wei has become a representative of villagers’ collective voice to preserve cultural traditions for future generations and to enhance community development. Thus, we cannot assume that as Director Wei works to facilitate the project there has been a neglect of villager agency or that villagers are being silenced. Strong leadership by a “local” expert in this case has, in fact, stimulated active community participation.

Director Wei’s role in heritage work for Horse Mountain village has wavered between teacher and facilitator of cultural heritage protection and commercialization. Her role is, in fact, contradictory, as an agent of cultural heritage preservation and, at the same time, an arbiter of cultural change, i.e., the reconstruction of new cultural practices and meanings.¹³ In the process of “revitalizing” two

¹³ This represents a case, I argue, that is becoming more commonly seen in China, i.e. experts, scholars, and elites conducting “consultative indigenous philanthropy” in his/her hometown.

Miao festivals in Horse Mountain village, she has worked with villagers to reconstruct meanings of these cultural traditions to contribute to an “emergent authenticity” (Cohen 1988). On the one hand, the commoditization of the *Zhaolong* and *Miao Nian* festivals to attract tourist donations can be said to “destroy” the meaning of cultural tradition, yet on the other hand is seen as an effort to revive a “dying” tradition and recreate a sense of community and cultural pride in the process. The Horse Mountain community museum project thus proves a paradoxical case in which “authentic” cultural traditions have been reconstructed and performed for the intended purpose of building a museum to preserve local cultural heritage.

Conclusion

“Fundamental to the conservation of heritage sites is giving them meaning to the community.” (Grimwade and Carter 2000)

The above cases show the process through which villagers in China become engaged in the meaning of their cultural heritage as they are included in heritage protection projects that employ the participatory approach, or purport to do so. Like participatory projects everywhere, community participation in China is contingent on the local context and social structure within which it plays out. Community participation in heritage work in Guizhou has “give[n] the cultural and natural heritage a function in the life of the community”,¹⁴ creating opportunities along with challenges in fostering social empowerment and ownership of local cultural heritage. For Drum Gate village, and most ecomuseums throughout China, community participation has remained a part of the ecomuseum theory but not in practice. Foreign and domestic experts along with the provincial government put Drum Gate village on the cultural industry map, which later stimulated a change in exercises of power with the township government calling on the public to collaborate on the preservation of their heritage. Yet, community collaboration in heritage work was short lived when government agencies failed to allow the local population to engage in the decision making process. Thus, it transformed participation in heritage work and tourism development into what Cornwall (2006)

(Footnote 13 continued)

These individuals do not necessarily share the same bed with local government-led or local elite-led development projects interested in capitalizing on cultural heritage assets. Rather, they focus on providing practical guidance, and sometimes financial support, in the development of their hometowns. These actions can be associated with, on the one hand, charitable practices toward development of their hometown, and on the other hand not so much a matter of moral obligation but a yearning [seen also during the Ming dynasty (see Smith 2009)] for a feeling of fulfillment and assertion of influence.

¹⁴ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 1992, Article 5(a), *The International Convention for the Protection of the World Culture and Natural Heritage*.

calls “participation in colonial development.” Unlike the case of Drum Gate village, River County and Horse Mountain village represent cases in which villagers were able to define and engage in their priority needs as they were facilitated through outside intervention. While the processes and results of community participation and heritage preservation are different, these participatory heritage protection projects have acted as catalysts for building a sense of community, greater community cultural awareness and cultural pride, and social cohesion around a shared concern over the retention of cultural traditions. Conversely, heritage work in Drum Gate village project incited not so much community heritage preservation, but rather a malaise toward the divergence of the community and the local government collaboration on heritage management and the uncertain future development of the village.

The practice of community participation, termed *shequ canyu*, in China, however, is often seen as not living up to its rhetorical potential. Tsinghua University Professor Zhang Xiaojun states frankly, “In most cases in China, we see *canjia*, not *canyu*” (personal communication, March 12, 2011). Many projects that employ community participation expose this point that *canjia*, to take part in or attend, rather than *canyu*, to take part in with contribution, is the dominant practice of the participatory approach in China. In China community participation does not imply that the project development process has to begin with the community. Participation is thought to be required for the long-term success of the development project, but is not considered mandatory for the design and planning phase of the process. In many cases, community participation in the initial planning phase is actually discouraged. Li (2006) proposes that a successful participatory development project can materialize with weak local participation in the decision-making process, and satisfactory benefits for the local community can be reached. Because local community involvement at the planning stage “can be very costly, and thus decrease efficiency” by slowing down the development process (Li 2006), local government agencies do not often implement participatory development projects. Villagers are thus left to operate and maintain the local projects after they have been constructed or remain passive attendants to participatory project intervention.

In China, community participation is often understood not as an emancipatory, people-centered approach or a mechanism for self-determinism. Rather, it is a process in which the public negotiates the Chinese state system in order to exercise control over their own affairs. Since the 1980s, the function of community participation has taken the form of economic and social involvement, in which subjects understand and engage in their role as subjective actors in a larger program of development and modernization. Community participation in China has become not so much a right but a responsibility of the people in executing government, international agency, and company strategies and programs around economic and social development, forming the participation paradigm in China. However, that is not to say empowerment does not exist. As people aspire to economic and political power for self advancement, we see an increase in collective action and decision making capacities, closely linked with community agency (Ruiz-Ballesteros and Hernández-Ramírez 2010). On the one hand, recent

developments in community and political participation in China have made scholars question whether the increasing flexibility of the Chinese social and political structure has introduced processes of democratization and pluralism, as it embraces global capitalism, promotes village elections, and experiences a growth in social organizations (O'Brien 2001; Tsai 2007; Zhao 2000). On the other hand, China's government and party organs remain extremely powerful; censorship of the internet and the crackdown of dissents is on the rise; and elections are not as democratic as they seem, referred to as only "skin deep" (Luard 2005). Similarly, the notion of "participation" in China is often seen as a veil for government and donors' project agendas, such as the recent call for the "orderly participation" of Chinese citizens (see Li and He 2008). What this dynamic socio-political context illustrates is an ongoing process of power shifts, generation, and fragmentation seen clearly at the national-level through the centralization and decentralization of government and party authority and at the local level through the three cases explored in this chapter. What is clear from the above cases is that heritage protection projects in China do not simply adhere to the strict dichotomy of what Greer (2010) calls an interactive process ("involving the knowledge and expertise of both community and 'expert'") or reactive process (in which "the community responds to an expert-driven agenda"). Rather, the border between the two processes is blurred and projects can shift from one process to the other. While a project may start as a reactive process, villagers do shape the course of the project by developing their own agendas of cultural heritage protection. At the same time, the interactive process can easily become a reactive process due to the Chinese bureaucracy embedded in the political and social structure.

China has undertaken the important and difficult first step to place the community at the center of heritage work through the integration of the community participation discourse. In all the above three cases, local people negotiate their position and voice in a larger context of economic and political order. Understanding community participation as a politically dynamic and contested process will allow heritage work to move beyond the rhetoric of community engagement toward a collaborative approach that positively supports the needs and interests of local community groups.

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Part V
Routes as Heritage: Branding Space in a
Global(ized) China

Chapter 12

The Ancient Tea Horse Road and the Politics of Cultural Heritage in Southwest China: Regional Identity in the Context of a Rising China

Gary Sigley

Introduction

In 2005, a tea caravan (*mabang* 马帮) emerged out of the mists of time and made an epic journey from Yunnan to Beijing, from the “periphery” to the “center”.¹ The caravan, consisting of forty muleteers and over one hundred mules, was transporting a precious four tonne cargo of pu’er tea cakes from the tea producing regions of southeast Yunnan to the capital of the People’s Republic. The tea was highly valued as “tribute tea” (*gongcha* 贡茶) calling to mind the time when precious commodities from across the empire made their way to the imperial court, and also reflecting in the present the rapacious demand for luxury and exotic goods among China’s *nouveau riche* (and also we might add as gifts to curry favor with those in positions of power). Pu’er tea, a distinctly Yunnanese form of broad leaf

¹ There were two different caravans, one in 2005 travelling under the banner of “The Ancient Tea Horse Road Bearing Precious Tribute to the Capital” (*chama gudao ruigong jingcheng* 茶马古道瑞贡京城), and one in 2006 that styled itself as “Caravan Tribute Tea Traversing the Endless Miles [to the capital]” (*mabang gongcha wanlixing* 马帮贡茶万里行). The money raised from the sale of the pu’er from the first caravan was donated to the well-known Communist Youth League charity “Project Hope” (*xiwang gongcheng* 希望工程). There were numerous reports in the Chinese media at the time. See: http://www.cnr.cn/minzu/mzdt1/200510/t20051017_504116722.html accessed March 22, 2012; <http://news.sina.com.cn/s/2005-08-18/03516717469s.shtml> accessed March 22, 2012. The commercial value of these public relations and media events associated with the tea road and pu’er tea (even in the case of raising money for charity) was clearly revealed when the organizer of the first caravan attempted to sue the organizer of the second caravan for one million yuan for infringement of intellectual property. A Kunming court ultimately squashed the case declaring that no infringement had occurred. See: http://www.yndaily.com/html/20070612/news_93_184539.html accessed March 22, 2012.

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tea (*camellia sinensis assamica*), and possibly the first variety of tea to be ever consciously cultivated (as opposed to the harvesting of wild trees), had only recently emerged from relative obscurity to become a hot item for Chinese investors looking for the next big thing to channel piles of idle cash (Zhang 2010). Pu'er tea, unlike most varieties of tea, is ideally suited to investment as it can be stored for decades and, depending on quality, will "improve" with age. Pu'er tea cakes (the tea is compressed into small disks for ease of storage and transportation) were at this time fetching astronomical prices. Some cakes presented to this author were valued at over 200,000 yuan² (in this case the tea cake in question was a collectible from the 1930s). The media campaign associated with the tea caravan, which was at its heart a public relations campaign (a "cultural concoction" (*wenhua chaozuo* 文化炒作) in Chinese) added to the pu'er frenzy by playing on the twin senses of nostalgia and greed. Less than a year later the fantasies of quick fortunes built on expanding tea plantations and towering piles of pu'er tea cakes came crashing down as the bubble finally burst, leaving many in the chain of tea production and consumption battered and bruised.³ This paper explores the confluence of cultural heritage, economic development, and regional identity around the discourse and multifarious representations that are associated with the "Ancient tea horse road" (*chama gudao* 茶马古道) (ATHR) of Yunnan Province. It argues that the ATHR as a loose conceptual totality is a salient example of how one particular "object" can serve multifarious purposes. First, the ATHR is an assemblage of tangible and intangible cultural heritage and cultural landscapes that has become the increasing focus of efforts at preservation and revitalization. Second, the ATHR is also a cultural resource used as a marketing tool to promote tourism development. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the ATHR is a narrative of national and ethnic unity that attempts to reimagine the importance of the periphery *vis-à-vis* the center. The background for all of this is the profound cultural, social, and economic transformation taking place in Yunnan that is contributing to an overall anxiety concerning the loss of the past and the possibilities for the future.

In teasing out these three different yet interrelated uses of the ATHR this paper also argues that the ATHR is representative of the new confluences of government mentality in contemporary China which are fashioning artifacts at the intersection of the state, the market, and what I will term the "cultural purveyors." In this sense, I understand culture as "a set of institutionally embedded relations of government in which forms of thought and conduct of extended populations are targeted for transformation" (Bennett 1992: 26). By "cultural purveyors" I refer to those forms

² At the time of writing this was approximately equivalent to US\$ 32,000.

³ The rise and fall of pu'er was also well reported in the Chinese media. See, http://news.xinhuanet.com/comments/2007-06/26/content_6291109.htm accessed March 22, 2012; http://news.sznews.com/content/2008-07/24/content_3131527.htm accessed March 22, 2012. It was at this time (2007) that Simao, long known as one of the key tea trading markets in the pu'er cultivation and production zone, was renamed as "Pu'er" in order to capitalize on the growing fortunes of pu'er tea even as those fortunes were on the brink of collapse.

of experts who work with both state and the market in shaping “culture” in specific ways. This includes both the scholars dedicated to researching the cultures and peoples associated with the ATHR and also the entrepreneurs (e.g., tourism developers) seeking to maximize opportunities for financial gain (and we should note that in this day and age of the “cultural market” in China there is often a cross-over between “the scholar” and “the entrepreneur.” The relationship between the three (the state, the market, and the cultural purveyors) is by no means straightforward and at moments is marked as much by tensions between different interests as it is by a collective consensus. The paper therefore also considers the anxieties around notions of Yunnanese identity that provide insights into the ruptures on the surface of what seems to be a unified ideology of cultural/national development.

Discovering the ATHR: Cultural Exchange and Cultural Heritage

The ATHR refers to a network of trading routes linking the tea producing areas of Yunnan (mainly concentrated in the southeast of the province in Pu'er 普洱 and Xishuangbanna 西双版纳) and Sichuan (around the area known as Yaan 雅安) with the tea-consuming regions across China, but in particular with Tibet. The network first emerged in significant terms during the Tang Dynasty (618–907) and reached its zenith during the late Qing (1644–1911) and first half of the twentieth Century. The network, as shall be duly noted below, extends into mainland Southeast Asia, Nepal, and India, thus also embodying an international dimension.⁴ In this paper I focus exclusively on the ATHR in Yunnan.⁵

In this case, while there are many side routes, the tea road begins in Menghai (Xishuangbanna), then proceeds to Pu'er (the first major trading town), and through Fengqing, Dali, Lijiang, Shangrila, and finally crossing into Tibet and toward its final destination of Lhasa (as far as this particular route is concerned).⁶ The tea road, in what was approximately a 6 month caravan journey from Menghai to Lhasa, crosses innumerable rivers, including the Mekong (more than once) and Yangtze (known as the Jinsha River (*jinshajiang* 金沙江) in Yunnan), and over

⁴ The term “tea road” is also used in Mary Avery’s (2003) excellent work to describe the caravan tea trade between northern China and Russia. Within China, however, the term “Ancient Tea Horse Road” (*chama gudao* 茶马古道) almost exclusively refers to the network of trading routes described here, with the addition of Sichuan and Qinghai. It is also worth noting that while in some contexts the term “tea” and “horse” refers to the exchange of Chinese tea for Tibetan horses (and those of other peoples of the steppe specializing in horse breeding), in Yunnan this form of dynastic controlled exchange was much less significant. For work on the system of exchange of tea for horses in Sichuan see Paul Smith (1991).

⁵ For a contemporary travel account of the tea road from Yunnan to Tibet see Fuchs (2008).

⁶ Note that the place names listed here refer to current preferences. Place names for some staging posts, towns, and regions have changed over time.

many high mountain passes (some as high as 5,000 m). In so doing, the tea road, in what was no doubt an arduous undertaking, traverses a range of distinct topographical zones ranging from the temperate rainforests of Xishuangbanna through to the high altitude alpine forests and meadows of Shangrila.⁷ It also passes through many different cultural zones inhabited by a diverse range of ethnic groups including the Dai (*Daizu* 傣族), Bai (*Baizu* 白族), Naxi (*Naxizu* 纳西族), and Tibetan (*Zangzu* 藏族) peoples, to name but a few. In short, the tea road fortuitously, as we shall see, finds itself located in China's most topographically diverse region, rich in flora and fauna (including at least one World Heritage biodiversity hot spot, the Three Parallel Rivers World Heritage Site), and home to the largest number of ethnic groups in the People's Republic.

In this regard the ATHR does indeed refer to significant items of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. In terms of tangible heritage the ATHR includes remnant paths and roads, bridges of various sorts (arched, cantilever, and cable), caravan sari (*madian* 马店), market towns (large and small), staging posts, and shrines and temples (including mosques and even a few Christian churches). With regard to intangible cultural heritage the ATHR as a trading network points to the central place of tea culture in the lives of the many ethnic groups in Yunnan (and beyond). It also refers to the rapidly disappearing culture of the caravan itself, which for as long as recorded history, was the main conduit for the transportation of goods and ideas to and from Yunnan.⁸ The tea road was thus an important conduit for commercial activity (including tea, salt, medicinal products, and luxury goods) and cultural exchange, especially between Tibet and Southwest China (it was another important entry point for Buddhism into China in addition to the more well-known Silk Road). Working under the relatively new concept of "cultural route heritage"⁹ the state administration of cultural heritage (SACH) is at the time of writing working with relevant departments and bureaus in Yunnan in the compilation of an application for UNESCO World Heritage status (current Chinese items already on the tentative list in this category include the Silk Road and the Grand Canal).¹⁰

⁷ The rich and unique flora was particularly attractive to Western "flower hunters" in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For an overview of the "flower hunters" and other Western explorers in the region see Glover et al. (2011).

⁸ Along the ATHR a variety of "beasts of burden" were used including boxen, horses, donkeys, mules, yaks and, at times, people. For a detailed overview of "caravan culture" see Wang and Zhou (2008).

⁹ A cultural route is defined as, "a land, water, mixed or other type of route, which is physically determined and characterized by having its own specific and historic dynamics and functionality; showing interactive movements of people as well as multidimensional, continuous, and reciprocal exchanges of goods, ideas, knowledge, and values within or between countries and regions over significant periods of time; and thereby generating a cross-fertilization of the cultures in space and time, which is reflected both in its tangible and intangible heritage." <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5335/>, accessed March 22, 2012.

¹⁰ For descriptions of the Silk Road and the Grand Canal as they appear on the tentative list see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5335/>, accessed March 22, 2012, and <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5318/>, accessed March 22, 2012, respectively. The author attended the first

Yet as Laura Jane Smith (2006: 56) argues, the distinction given here between “tangible” and “intangible” heritage is disingenuous. Given that even so-called tangible heritage needs to be labeled, interpreted, and consumed in order for it to bear meaning, all cultural heritage is intangible. Smith (*ibid.*) instead suggests we place emphasis on the “act of heritage” rather than the “object” or “event.” In following this train of reasoning we can begin to consider the ATHR, both in terms of the tangible and intangible (which despite our protestations are still important conceptual categories in their own right) as a “cultural heritage artifact” of the type outlined in the introduction. This brings to our attention the constructed, and often contested, nature of cultural heritage itself. It therefore also begs the questions: who are the actors and agents in this process, and to what specific ends are their endeavors directed? The “past”, therefore, is a condition of “the present”, or as John Urry (1996: 48) puts it, “There is no past out there or back there ... There is only the present, in the context of which the past is being continually re-created.”

The ATHR is therefore as much, if not completely, a product of the present in the sense of the associated governmental, cultural and identity signifiers. Indeed, as I argue below, the ATHR is perhaps the example par excellence of the intersection of the agendas of the state, the market and cultural purveyors in contemporary China.

Imagining the Ancient Tea Horse Road: Nostalgia, Remembering, and Cultural Tourism Branding

To emphasize the constructed, contingent and historical nature of the ATHR is not by any means to downplay the significance of the ATHR as an artifact worthy of preservation. On the contrary, this author is actively involved in the education of the significance of the ATHR as part of China’s cultural heritage. There is also a growing body of work exploring the practical issue of cultural heritage policy in the China context (du Cros et al. 2005). It is, therefore, indeed heartening to consider that the Chinese cultural heritage authorities are finally coming to the table when it concerns the preservation of the culture associated with the ATHR. Yet the recognition that the ATHR rightly deserves from the largely state-sponsored heritage community lags far behind its conceptual development within the broader realm of the market and the cultural purveyors. Indeed, it may even be argued that the “cultural heritage lag,” and its recent correction in the form of the “World Heritage frenzy,”¹¹ is in fact partly a response to the possibilities the

(Footnote 10 continued)

ever national meeting on the cultural heritage of the ATHR at which the proposal to lodge an application for World Heritage status was first made public. See, <http://www.chinawatch2050.com/puer-ancient-tea-horse-road-cultural-heritage-forum-june-2010>, accessed March 22, 2012.

¹¹ The link between cultural tourism development and the “World Heritage craze” (*shijie yichan re*, 世界遗产热) is discussed in Sigley (2010).

ATHR represents for the development of the cultural economy and cultural tourism. That is, in recalling Smith's (2006) notion of the "the act of heritage," the late intervention of the heritage authorities comes at a time when the discourse of the ATHR has already been well established and its "cultural value" much more significant to other government agencies (such as those concerned with tourism for example), the market and entrepreneurs.

For instance, pu'er tea is itself a tangible item and a series of associated social and cultural practices that unites the disparate peoples of Yunnan. It thus fits very well into the tourist marketing vision of Yunnan as a "cultural whole" and has emerged across all relevant prefectures and cities as a major form of cultural branding. The image of a mule laden with tea cakes (carefully wrapped in dried bamboo leaves, seven cakes per package (*qizibing* 七子饼)) being led by a muleteer clad in simple mountain attire with an old musket or crossbow slung over his shoulder is now common place and has entered the popular imagination.¹² "The ATHR" is now actively associated and used as a marketing icon for pu'er tea. More significant, however, is the association and attachment of the "tea road" to forms of cultural heritage tourism. There are now at least two tea horse road theme parks in Yunnan (one in Pu'er and another in Menghai). Visitors to ATHR staging posts such as Shuhe (in Lijiang) are offered rides through the ancient (and new) cobblestone streets of the town to experience firsthand the ancient route on the back of a horse (mules, perhaps due to their odd and unsightly appearance, seem to be excluded from this activity). Further down the road, the recently renamed "Pu'er" now markets itself as the "origin of tea and the start of the (tea) road" (*cha zhi yuan, dao zhi shi* 茶之源,道之始). As part of what is no doubt incorporated in a tourism development plan, in 2010 Pu'er held the inaugural "Pu'er ATHR Festival" (*pu'er chama gudao jie* 普洱茶马古道节).¹³

In their detailed study of the politics of cultural heritage in Lijiang, once a very important staging post for caravan trade, Su Xiaobo and Peggy Teo (2009: 130) consider that the rampant commercialization of Lijiang has resulted in the "museumization of heritage" and turned Lijiang into a "themed shopping mall." They also draw our attention to the novelty of the ATHR even as the Naxi people themselves are concerned: "... the commodification of the horse-drawn caravan is potentially damaging for Naxi heritage. Most Naxi born after 1949 have no knowledge of the caravan route. The commodification of this part of their heritage may in fact harm local knowledge as the current generation will begin to look upon the Tea Horse Caravan Route through rose-tinted glasses similar to the tourists" (Su and Teo 2009: 139).

Part of the fascination with the tea road, other than its obvious colorful and exotic appeal, is a form of nostalgia for times past in a society undergoing rapid social transformation (Sigley 2010). The loss of a particular way of life is real and was captured beautifully in Tian Zhuangzhuang's *Delamu* (2004) which followed

¹² Public sculptures on this theme can be found in Menghai, Pu'er, Lijiang, and Shangrila.

¹³ See: <http://expo.people.com.cn/GB/58536/11072325.html>, accessed March 22, 2012.

the travails of those people living in the rugged fringes of the Nu River (known as the Salween when it flows into Myanmar) gorge along the remote border of Yunnan and Tibet in which the use of small caravans is still part of daily life. It has also featured as the basis of a television drama by the same name, that is, *The ATHR* (*Chama Gudao* 茶马古道), which describes the role of the ATHR during the height of the Japanese military penetration into Yunnan during World War II. As the television drama is at pains to highlight, at this crucial time for China and the Allies, it was only through the mobilization and unity of the different national minorities (*shaoshu minzu* 少数民族) through the extensive network of the ATHR that the invaders were stopped in their tracks. The tea road, in performing one of its important ideological functions, in this instance is allegorical not for just the trade but more importantly for the bonds of “kinship” that unite the peoples along the ATHR into the collective fabric of what we call “China” (*Zhongguo* 中国).

As Tim Oakes (2006) notes, it was in the early 1990s that the Central Government put “culture” clearly on the development agenda as an artifact in its own right. On the 10th January 1990, the *People’s Daily* printed a speech by the then Minister of Culture Li Ruihuan titled, ‘some questions relevant to enhancing the outstanding elements of national culture (*guanyu hongyang minzu youxiu wenhua de ruogan wenti* 关于弘扬民族优秀文化的若干问题). The speech contained the standard stock and trade remarks about culture, nationalism, and legitimacy, but also pointed to an economic agenda directed toward local government in which “culture” was to become an important artifact. This marks the beginning of the “modern” cultural industry. Oakes (2006) refers to this as China’s own “cultural turn” in regional development strategies, in which “cultural resources (including repackaged and reinvented cultural heritage) have come to be viewed as possessing equal if not greater economic potential than traditional factor endowments typically marshaled by local governments in their development planning” (Oakes 2006: 14).¹⁴

Wang Jing (2001) has also argued the case for carefully considering the role of the Chinese state in the development of “culture,” and “leisure,” as part of an overall economic strategy of development of domestic-driven consumption and a strategy for shaping certain kinds of desirable citizen-subjects. In particular Wang Jing takes to task the notion that the market is sidelining the state when it comes to culture. On the contrary, in drawing upon the work of Foucauldian-inspired cultural studies scholars such as Tony Bennet (1992), Wang Jing (2001: 41–42)

¹⁴ The important role of culture in terms of domestic development and governance, and as a form of soft power, was most recently reaffirmed in the October 18, 2011 “Central Committee Resolution Question Concerning the Deepening Reform of the Cultural System and Developing a Flourishing Socialist Culture” (中共中央关于深化文化体制改革推动社会主义文化大发展大繁荣若干重大问题的决定) which states that “Culture is increasingly becoming an important source of creativity and unity among the nation, is increasingly a crucial element of overall national strength, and increasingly becoming a vital support for economic and social development.” (http://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2011-10/25/content_1978202.htm, accessed March 22, 2012).

argues that the state is skilfully creating a new “common sense”: The crux of the matter then is not the weakening of the purpose, but the technological refinement—or, shall we say, modernization—of the state ruling apparatus—a modern vision of governance materialized neither in force nor in crude ideological campaigns but in a newly made COMMON SENSE. So skilfully is the post-socialist state weaving its agenda into a new common sense that ideology is blurring into (commercial) culture, and the haunting presence of the state is disguised in the new apparel of the market. Today, on the mere surface, “leisure culture” represents market reasoning rather than a statist logic. This is, after all, what hegemony is all about: naturalization of ruling technologies.

The ATHR has thus emerged as a powerful form of cultural branding in Yunnan over the last 20 years, one that is now linked to a range of different functions. This is quite remarkable given that the term “The ATHR” did not exist prior to 1990. Some explanation as to the origin of the concept now needs to be considered.

What’s in a Name? Asserting Regional Identity

In the aforementioned television drama, *The ATHR*, set in the 1940s, the protagonists anachronistically make reference in the dialogue to “the rules of the ATHR” (*chama gudao de guize* 茶马古道的规则). Yet the actual term *chama gudao* (“The ATHR”), was not coined until the early 1990s. The term is the collective invention of six scholars, often referred to as the ‘six gentlemen’ (*liu ge junzi* 六个君子) who in the early 1990s traveled extensively through the border regions between Yunnan, Sichuan, and Tibet. The product of these journeys was the seminal book *An Exploration of the Great Cultural Triangle of Yunnan, Sichuan, and Tibet*, (*Dian Chuan Zang Da San Jiao Wenhua Tanmi* 滇川藏大三角文化探秘) in which the notion of the “ATHR” was first articulated. The book, written in a typically Chinese fashion in the tradition of non-fiction literature (*sanwen* 散文) rather than the disciplinary-based prose of the Western social sciences, explores the role of tea as a form of cultural exchange among the peoples of Yunnan, Sichuan, and Tibet. The ‘six gentlemen’ were the first cultural purveyors to describe the ATHR and bring to general attention its narrative structure, cultural value, and significance *vis-à-vis* Yunnanese identity.

The Chinese saying stressing the intersection of “time, place and people” (*tianshi dili renhe* 天时地利人和) seems to aptly describe the fortuitous circumstances surrounding the birth of the “ATHR” as a concept. First, in terms of time, the early 1990s were a historical juncture of relative uncertainty. The People’s Republic had just passed through the first decade of “reform and openness.” The first waves of economic, social, and cultural change had made their way from the eastern seaboard to remoter parts of western China, including landlocked Yunnan. Although in the immediate aftermath of the crackdown following the events of Tiananmen in 1989, there was some uncertainty as to whether reform would continue, there was also a heightened sense of expectancy that something even

greater was about to unfold. When Mu Jihong, one of the ‘six gentlemen,’¹⁵ and his colleagues published their book in 1992 (Mu Jihong et al. 1992), little could anyone really know that with the birth of the ‘socialist market economy’ at the Fourteenth Party Congress in the same year China would enter a period of even more rapid, intense, and profound change. As, recalling Oakes’s (2006) notion of the “cultural turn” discussed above, local governments looked in their own localities for appropriate cultural artifacts to form the basis of cultural branding and tourism, the ATHR readily found itself a welcome home in the plans of local government, tourism developers, and pu’er tea producers. As time progressed and the Chinese boom seemed to have no end, the ATHR and its associated imagery and signifiers found fertile soil in the imagination of a general public, now with more leisure time and exploring the lures of tourism, looking for a form of romantic escapism and nostalgia not too far from the comforts of home.

Second, in terms of place, the Yunnanese scholars found themselves in a difficult situation. On the one hand, they were concerned about how the unique cultures of Yunnan may be affected by the changes yet to come. The ATHR was a convenient label to cover the complex set of cultural exchanges and landscapes of Yunnan. Yet on the other, they also wanted Yunnan to break its relative isolation and play catch up with the pace of economic and social change taking place along the eastern seaboard. As the eastern seaboard continued to develop, seemingly leaving Yunnan further behind, these scholars also lamented the lack of recognition of the importance of Yunnan as a commercial and cultural thoroughfare between central China and Tibet. Rather than seeing Yunnan as an isolated backwater, as was sometimes the case, they argued it should be acknowledged as one of China’s important links to the outside world. In this sense the ATHR was an attempt to put Yunnan back on the map, so to speak, and to have the ATHR recognized and sit alongside the Silk Road (or what Yunnanese scholars refer to as the “Northern Silk Road”) (*beifang sichou zhi lu* 北方丝绸之路), the Tang-Tibetan Ancient Road (*tang fan gudao* 唐蕃古道), and the Southern Silk Road (*nanfang sichou zhilu* 南方丝绸之路).¹⁶ This reconfiguration between center and periphery not only relates to Yunnan’s position *vis-à-vis* the rest of China, but to mainland Southeast Asia and the subcontinent as well. Tea road maps proudly on display in public venues now depict a variety of trading routes connecting Pu’er to Beijing, Lhasa, Nepal, Vietnam, Myanmar, and Laos. In this sense, Yunnan is no longer “isolated” but rather at the forefront of China’s efforts to “go global,” both now and in the past.

Finally, in terms of people, the ATHR struck a chord with a renewed regional identity. The author was informed on numerous occasions that the ATHR was conceptually conceived by Chinese scholars, unlike the Silk Road, which was “discovered” by the German geographer Ferdinand Freiherr von Richthofen in the

¹⁵ For an interview with Mu Jihong, visit <http://www.chinawatch2050.com/interview-with-professor-mu-jihong>, accessed March 22, 2012.

¹⁶ For a more recent historical revisionist account see Yang Bin (2008).

1870s. On this point, the Yunnanese scholars seem quite proud of the complete “home grown” nature of the ATHR. However, the emergence of the ATHR has not been without controversy in scholarly circles. Scholars outside Yunnan, and in particular in Sichuan, have expressed concern that the “tea road” has been hijacked. The critics argue that while the concept of a “tea road” between Yunnan and Lhasa is valid, it lacks substantial material evidence to match the claims of historical continuity and significance that is attributed to it. They argue that the tea road between Yaan (Sichuan) and Tibet has a much stronger claim. For a long period since the Song Dynasty (960–1279), dynastic Chinese governments controlled the tea trade between Yaan and Tibet through an official “Tea and Horse Bureau” (*chamasi* 茶马司). There are thus substantial records of the amount of trade in both Chinese and Tibetan. More recently other tea producing regions and locations with trading routes with Tibet have also begun to assert their connections to the “tea road”. There is now a growing body of research emerging from Qinghai and China’s Northwest (*xibei* 西北). The ATHR as a concept covering the exchange of tea and culture through the mountainous trading networks between Southwest China and Tibet is now expanding across the country. What this will mean for the development of regional identity and cultural tourism in other parts of China remains to be seen.¹⁷

In this connection, cultural purveyors such as Mu Jihong hold an ambivalent attitude toward the now rapid commodification and commercialization of culture, including that of the ATHR, in Yunnan. On the one hand, it is seen as a welcome push to bring Yunnan into line with the rest of China. On the other it is regarded as bearing potentially counter-productive consequences as the up until recently relatively isolated “cultural ecosystems” of Yunnan are exposed a rapacious capitalism. In this connection, Mu Jihong (2003: 27) expresses the hope that during rapid social change a focus on the ATHR by the scholarly community would contribute toward the construction of a new “humanitarian ecology” (*renwen shengtai* 人文生态), which would provide a survival model for fragile cultures.”

Conclusion

Yunnan, it seems, is now at last catching up. The transport infrastructure is undergoing a major upgrade (at enormous expense given the terrain). Kunming, the provincial capital, is now beginning to more resemble a massive construction site and frenzy of activity rather than the more quiet and laidback place that it used to be. Places like Lijiang have been catapulted into the twenty-first century and become major destinations of both domestic and international tourism. As the pace

¹⁷ The sources for this section are taken from the authors personal communications with scholars in this field and from the as yet unpublished work of Frank Booz who is completing a doctoral dissertation focusing on the tea trade between Yaan and Tibet.

and scale of change gathers momentum in Yunnan, the anxiety around cultural and social change that concerned Yunnanese scholars in the early 1990s now looks like coming to reality. It is at this moment that the ATHR, with already 20 years of development and deployment as a form of cultural branding, a marker of regional identity, a platform for promoting national unity, and a signifier for a past that is irrevocably lost, will find its second wind.

Mu Jihong (2003: 53) describes the ATHR as a “moving culture” (*liudong wenhua* 流动文化), referring to the very intrinsic nature of a “road” as an object built for the transfer of people, goods, and ideas. In this paper, understanding the ATHR in terms of the “act of heritage” and as a “governmental artifact,” I conclude that we can still consider the ATHR in its present form as a “moving culture”. In our historical moment, the caravans have been replaced by trains, planes, and automobiles, the muleteers by tourists, and the tea by the consumption of nostalgia and the experience of leisure. This indeed is the ATHR of the twenty-first century.

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Chapter 13

Branding Tengchong: Globalization, Road Building, and Spatial Reconfigurations in Yunnan, Southwest China

Yongming Zhou

Globalization, Road Building, and “Boxing Out”

On April 26, 2007, a 200 km long paved highway crossing the Sino-Myanmar border was opened. About evenly divided in length between the two countries, the road links Tengchong County in southwest Yunnan province of China with Myitkyina city in the northeast of Myanmar. The road project was the top priority on the agenda of local government. This high-grade road was fully funded by the Chinese, and constructed by a Chinese workforce several thousand strong that endured harsh working and living conditions; eleven workers died in the process.¹ Although the price was high, the positive effect of the road seemed to be self-evident, with the travel time between the two places it links more than halved. I conducted my dissertation research in the Tengchong area in the mid-1990s, and one of my deeply rooted memories is the danger of traveling on the then treacherous roads in the area. Returning to Tengchong in December 2008, I drove along the road and found the conditions were excellent compared to a decade ago, yet to my surprise, there was an abnormally light amount of traffic. Along the two-hour drive, I encountered fewer than several dozens of vehicles traveling on the road. I revisited this road again in the summer of 2009, the situation remained unchanged. With such light traffic, the huge amount of effort and money that the locals had invested seemed at risk of gaining little useful return. Puzzled, I asked a number of

¹ After the Tengchong-Myitkyina road completed, Local television station broadcasted a documentary entitled *A Broad Road to the End of World* (大路通天涯), which by now provides the most detailed account of the whole process of road reconstruction. The number of workers died is from the documentary transcript.

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locals why they built this transnational road so enthusiastically. As an anthropologist who has been interested in globalization, I was expecting to get answers along these lines. It turned out, in answering my question, nobody used academic jargon on globalization; many simply said building the road was good for “do[ing] business” (做生意) or “going outside” (出门). One local official replied: “It is part of a grand plan. This road is built for the future.”

To local officials, the grand plan is to resurrect the Stilwell Road, a road built during World War II linking British India, Burma, and China, and mainly used to transport military supplies and strategic materials. The road started in Ledo, a small town in Assam, entering northeast Burma and reaching Myitkyina, and then dividing into the southern and northern routes: the former route went south and connected with the preexisting Yunnan-Burma Road at Wanding (Ruili today) and continued northeast to Kunming, the capital of Yunnan province; the latter road extended east into China through Tengchong and connected with the Yunnan-Burma Road at Longling. From Ledo to Kunming, the southern route is 1,731 km long, and the northern route is a slightly shorter 1,568 km. The Americans, Chinese and Indians worked together on the road, and it was completed in January 1945.² The whole route was named the Stilwell Road by the Chinese to honor the American general who was the theater commander for India, Burma, and China. The newly paved Tengchong-Myitkyina road is a section of the northern route, and it is part of a concerted plan by the Chinese to rebuild the Stilwell Road to connect southwest China with Southeast and South Asia.

This Chinese enthusiasm and expectations for reopening the Stilwell Road are related to a particular understanding of economic globalization. While we are very familiar by now with globalization’s dark side, China has, on balance, been a conspicuous successful example of the process, as demonstrated in its phenomenal near-double-digit GDP growth over the past three decades. In fact, the take-off of the Chinese economy began with the so-called “Reform and Opening Up” policy that advocated China’s involvement in the global economy by encouraging export-oriented production. Over the years, development through “reform and open-door” has obtained the status of an unofficial state religion. In the context of a booming economy that has transformed China into the “world factory,” the negative consequences of globalization have been the subject of little critical thinking and, not surprisingly, the push for a fuller integration with the global economy as a way to future economic development has been the persistent concern of Chinese leadership.

This state of near-wholesale embracing of economic globalization has prompted not only central government action, but also local initiative. The building of the Tengchong-Myitkyina road is one local initiative that seems to make a lot of sense in this context. As mentioned before, the road is a step to connect China with India via Myanmar that will not only link the two potentially biggest consumer markets in the world, but also facilitate the importing of raw materials that China needs to sustain its mass industrial production. If we go back

² For a detailed history of the Stilwell Road, see Anders (1965).

to locals' answers to my questions about the benefits of building the road, their emphasis on its being helpful to "business," "going outside," and "future" reflects both spatial and temporal perceptions of the road in relation to economic gain. Yet the puzzle remains as to why the local authorities have shown such eagerness to rebuild the road, given the fact that the actual economic benefits have not lived up to its builders' expectations, at least for the time being.

The answer lies in the strategic maneuvers performed by local authorities in order to obtain an advantageous position in what are conceived as integrated regions on the southwest China border. I call these maneuvers "boxing out," which means to jockey for position to get rebounds in basketball parlance. As I will illustrate below, by foresight and strategic thinking, Tengchong is boxing out its rivals in its quest to become a crucial node along the to-be-rebuilt Stilwell Road, which is projected to be a future trans-regional thoroughfare. Its concrete policy considerations in building the Tengchong-Myitkyina road have much to do with a broader conceptualization of the rightful position Tengchong should occupy in relation to the changing spatial configurations of Yunnan province. Instead of giving a full account of the political and policy factors that affected the building of the Tengchong-Myitkyina road, this article will thus rather focus on the changing spatial and temporal perceptions that underlie the locals' perception of how they might position themselves in the era of globalization.

Time–Space Compression, Time–Space Distanciation, and Time–Space Expansion–Compression

Contemporary social theorists have come up with different conceptualizations of globalization. As Inda and Renato have pointed out, globalization is much more than growing global interconnectedness, but also "implies a fundamental reordering of time and space" (2002: 5). Cultural geographer Harvey points out that "time–space compression" is one of the most readily apparent phenomena of the ongoing era of globalization, with its starting point tracing back to the early 1970s. "Time–space compression" enables the speeding up of economic and social processes that contribute to periodic capitalist overaccumulation and related crises (1990: 201–323). Giddens, on the other hand, emphasizes the notion of "time–space distanciation" which refers to "the condition under which time and space are organized so as to connect presence and absence" (1990: 14). With the help of modern transport and communication systems, "time–space distanciation" means to stretch out social life in time and space that was formerly confined to face-to-face contact.

While their insights are thought-provoking, they also reflect a certain bias in over-relying on western experiences that calls for cautiousness when applying to the Chinese context. In the case of Harvey's assertion, for instance, in order for people to perceive time–space compression they have to be part of the vast time–space order that is compressed. In the West, the rise of capitalism has interlinked

the world into a single system for centuries. When postmodern conditions are now made possible by the changes in the process of accumulation and the breakthroughs in information and communication technology, Westerners thus experience “time–space compression” under these changed circumstances. According to Giddens, new technologies can easily connect social interactions based on presence and absence together. To many Chinese, stretching out their social relationships has to start from constructing infrastructure that would physically make the long-distance interactions possible first. In this case, the phase of presence and absence connectedness can only come after the increase of face-to-face interactions facilitated by roads and other means of communication.

The difficulties these Western-based temporal-spatial conceptualizations faced reflects the fact that the rapid economic development in the past three decades has made Chinese perceptions of time and space heterogeneous, it is difficult to represent them in a single term. It is important to acknowledge differences of perception among Chinese in coastal metropolitan centers such as Shanghai and others in the vast hinterland. The fact that it took China only several decades to accomplish economic and technological developments that required several centuries of time in other industrialized countries means that many historical processes have been condensed in China. I think “time–space expansion and compression” may better reflect the Chinese experience. To borrow Polanyi (2001, 1944) term “The Great Transformation,” I think China is in a historical period that could be characterized as “compression of history” where pre-modern, modern and post-modern practices coexist in the pursuit for a rapid modernization. Participating in and benefiting from the globalization process, China has so far experienced both “time–space compression” and “time–space distancing.” In fact, these perceptions are ever changing, overlapping at times and fragmented or juxtaposed at others. It is in this overall context that I will focus on the aspect of a more complex, multidirectional, and flexible spatiotemporal sense-making which is saliently experienced in hinterland places such as Yunnan. The process involves spatial reconfiguration, historical reinvention and place branding in which globalization is perceived, conceived, imagined, and lived by the Chinese. In the ensuing discussion, I will use the rebuilding of the Tengchong-Myitkyina road as a revealing case.

“Bridge,” “Bridgehead,” and Spatial Reconfigurations of Southwestern Frontier

The decision to rebuild the Tengchong-Myitkyina road is based on the changed spatial configurations of Yunnan province and Tengchong County, both of which are eager to thrust themselves into the globalization process to obtain more advantageous positions. Yunnan is located in the southwestern-most part of China, bordering Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar. With a long border and a large population of ethnic minorities, Yunnan had been a “backward” frontier province with

low degree of social-economic development, as shown in its near bottom ranking in per capita GDP in China and a large number of ethnic peoples.³ Yunnan, in addition, was the frontline during the Sino-Vietnamese border clashes from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s, and this further enhanced its frontier identity.

With China's rapid advancement in the world economy, especially its ever-increasing economic influence in Southeast Asia, Yunnan has wasted no time in taking advantage of its geographical location in the region. In contrast to its neighbor Guangxi province, Yunnan is landlocked and has no seaport. However, the province shares 4,000 km borderlines with more countries and is closer to India, the economic center of South Asia. To foreground its geographic advantage, Yunnan has adopted the new metaphor of a "bridge" to define its role and position in relation to neighboring countries, representing a spatial reconfiguration of the once landlocked province. As a "bridge," Yunnan envisions itself playing the key role in linking southwest China to both Southeast Asia and South Asia. In public imagination, this integration of Asia will enable Yunnan to obtain an advantageous position in China's national strategy of benefiting from economic globalization.

To substantiate the "bridge" claim, Yunnan authorities have made road network construction a priority in their agenda. The Chinese have strongly believed in the potential of road building to produce economic benefits. The common saying "to get rich, build the road first," (要致富, 先修路) indeed, is widely accepted as a self-evident truth. In Yunnan, roads not only aim to link local cities and towns, but also to connect with neighboring countries. In addition to superhighways, Yunnan has started constructing several "international" railways to connect itself to Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand. The ultimate goal is to construct a Pan-Asian railway running through Yunnan to mainland Southeast Asia and all the way to Singapore.

The process of spatial reconfiguration has also occurred at local level. Tengchong is a case in point. Tengchong County is located in the southwest part of Yunnan, bordering Myanmar. Historically, it has been an important frontier town since the imperial times, and it has witnessed the ups and downs of the Chinese empire. Tengchong was a fortress town of military significance. Indeed, throughout history, Chinese armies often marched into Burma from Tengchong during conflicts. In the Ming dynasty, the town was rebuilt under a military general, and Tengchong was designated as the "number one town of the utmost frontier (极边第一城)" (Tengchong Gazette Compiling Committee 1995: 18). While the 'first town' acknowledges its strategic importance and its well-fortified city walls, the notion of the "utmost frontier" implies its remoteness from the imperial center and its proximity to areas external to Chinese civilization.

Such associations of "remoteness," "frontier" and "fortress" often result in Tengchong having the related spatial sense of being at a "dead end." In this spatial vision, the town is the end point of the Chinese southwestern boundary, with no

³ According to China Statistical Yearbook, among 31 provinces, Yunnan's per capita GDP ranked second to last in 2010. China has 55 ethnic minority groups and there are 25 in Yunnan.

further outlet. This sense is enhanced by the local geophysical conditions, in which Tengchong is surrounded by high mountains and impenetrable tropical jungles that make traveling across the national boundary a daunting task, even to caravan merchants. Culturally, Tengchong is known for its strong upholding of Han Chinese cultural orthodoxy in a multiethnic area. In times that borders were sealed and trade was interrupted, Tengchong was indeed the dead end of both a trade route and the end point of a symbolic Han-Chinese culture.

The “opening up” of China and the subsequent waves of globalization have changed Tengchong significantly. The border trade with Myanmar was reestablished in the early 1980s, and since then several government-approved border trading outposts have been set up, both at national and provincial levels. Among the most common imports from Myanmar are jade, logs and raw minerals, with all kinds of consumer merchandise and machinery products serving as the main Chinese exports. Even though cross-border trade has increased steadily in recent years, it has proved difficult to penetrate a larger market in Myanmar because of the lack of reliable trans-border roads. This has made the “dead end” position of Tengchong persist. To overcome this problem, it is not surprising that the project of building a high-grade road to reach Myitkyina, the nearest urban center that has both railroad and inland river navigation links to the rest of Myanmar, was put on the agenda of the local government. More importantly, Myitkyina is also envisioned as a transit point to enter India’s huge market of a billion people.

If we put the building of the Tengchong-Myitkyina road in the context of the spatial reconfiguration of Yunnan, it is easier to understand that Tengchong is envisioned as a key element in the integration of China, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and areas beyond. Following the provincial metaphor of serving as the “bridge,” Tengchong has proposed itself as a “bridgehead.” Being a “bridgehead” invokes multiple meanings at once. While reconfirming the old position of being a strategic location, a “bridgehead” is not a mere fortress; it is the most important part of a structure that extends human horizons beyond natural hindrances. By using this new metaphor, Tengchong is ridding itself of spatial associations with the remoteness and dead ends, repositioning itself as a vital point in a newly imagined spatial continuum crossing China, Southeast Asia, and South Asia. “Bridgehead” also signifies a space of strength, security, and stability. It is the ideal role for Tengchong to play, and through this role it will achieve prosperity and fame in the global era.

Road, History, and Selective Interpretation

Spatial reconfiguration, however, is a complicated process. The changing sense of space at both provincial and local level involves a host of political, economic, and cultural factors. In describing the way in which people deal with space, anthropologist Low differentiates the social production of space from the social construction of space. The former “includes all those factors—social, economic,

ideological, and technological—the intended goal of which is the physical creation of the material setting,” while the latter refers to “the actual transformation of space—through people’s social exchanges, memories, images, and daily use of the material setting—into scenes and actions that convey symbolic meaning” (1996: 861–862). Although it is analytically convenient to distinguish them, these two elements are inseparable in practice, and the case of Yunnan is no exception. Furthermore, research concerning meaning construction of this road would be incomplete if ordinary people’s perceptions, conceptions, and lived experiences of this newly built road were not investigated. Nonetheless, I want to highlight here the meaning-making practices at a micro level by local policy makers and cultural elites. In particular, it will examine how local history is reinterpreted or invented to harmonize with the policy initiatives to build road networks, serving as an important part of a “branding” package that includes spatial and historical representations of Tengchong.

History concerns the temporal dimension of space. In Yunnan’s effort to position itself as a vital point of transnational trade, a fascinating phenomenon has been that history is seen from the perspective of both the past and the future, and this phenomenon in itself constitutes an example of the “expansion of time” discussed earlier. This expansion of time is manifested first through going back to the past and reiterating histories that may be helpful to reify the new spatial configurations of “bridge” and “bridgehead.” So far, Yunnan has been quite successful in portraying itself as an important regional trade powerhouse by situating itself on two ancient trade routes: the Ancient Tea-Horse Road and the Southern Silk Road. The Ancient Tea-Horse Road refers to the caravan trade route between Yunnan, Sichuan, and Tibet, through which the Chinese exchanged tea for Tibetan horses, and which first operated in the Tang dynasty. It was formerly thought of as an obscure conglomeration of loosely connected caravan routes until the current descriptive term was coined by several Yunnan scholars in the 1990s.⁴ The new term gives the old road an aura of romance and nostalgia that fits perfectly with the exotic and mysterious picture many Chinese have of China’s far West, and made an instant impact in attracting tourists to the area. Local towns and villages have wasted little time in positioning themselves as nodes on the Ancient Tea-Horse Road, hoping to benefit from the tourism boom.

For Tengchong, the Ancient Tea-Horse Road is of secondary importance, because the town was neither a major tea producing area nor a tea trade center. The Southern Silk Road, however, offers the potential to put a spotlight on the town. The Silk Road (the trade road connecting China with Europe through central Asia) represents the archetypical example of long-standing inter-regional trade, and this is why the Southern Silk Road name has been adopted to designate the long distance trade route between southwest China and ancient India that existed as early as the Han dynasty. In academia, there are debates about the precise course

⁴ In 1992, a travelogue published by six young Yunnan scholars signaled the formal adoption of this new term to describe the old caravan roads. For details, see Mu et al. (1992).

of the route, and it seems that there may have been several co-existing routes (Song 1996; Wu 1999). The so-called “Yongchang Route” that started from Chengdu, passing through Dali, Baoshan, and Tengchong to enter what is currently Myanmar, is presented as the main route in local historical writings, since the choice of this route foregrounds the important position of Tengchong. Being part of the Southern Silk Road establishes a historical precedent for Yunnan serving as a “bridge” of interregional trade, as well as placing Tengchong as a “bridgehead” that extended the trade route to far-off places.

The selective usage of history makes even more sense when Yunnan and Tengchong employ more recent history to consolidate their claims of spatial particularity. If the Southern Silk Road reconnects Yunnan and Tengchong to inter-regional trade patterns that emerge from two thousand years of history, the Stilwell Road invokes historical memories only decades old. Although the Stilwell Road was left to disintegrate after World War II, its marks on the physical landscape and in people’s memories are still tangible. By refreshing a recent historical memory and rebuilding the old road, Tengchong is making a statement that the Stilwell Road is still the most viable route to connect China with India, thus positioning itself as the “bridgehead” on this route.

Yet, Tengchong faces many challenges in claiming ownership of the Stilwell Road, both in history and in reality. If we study the history of Stilwell Road, it is apparent that the southern route was the designated main artery and carried most of the traffic. The northern route, which entered China through Tengchong, was not used heavily, partly because of the poor road conditions. Thus, Tengchong has a strong rival, Ruili, a small border city that sits right on the southern route of the Stilwell Road. Ruili has been a national-level open land port since the 1980s, and the majority of Yunnan’s trade with Myanmar is through Ruili. Solid infrastructure and readily available trade-related services have placed Ruili in a strong position in competition with other local places such as Tengchong for “bridgehead” status in Yunnan. Many have recognized its strength, and indeed a government-sponsored research project exploring the possibility of rebuilding the Stilwell Road recommended focusing on the southern route and Ruili as the near-term priority (Niu and Ren 2005: 200–201).

Tengchong has responded by relentlessly emphasizing the fact that the shortest distance to India is the northern route, providing a rationale for the future road-rebuilding plan to select the northern route as the first choice, since it would save time and money. The wide acceptance of such spatial thinking thus dilutes the historically unimportant status of the northern route and Tengchong. Furthermore, by rebuilding a crucial section of the northern route, Tengchong has given a direct answer to its rivals, letting the changed landscape to speak for itself about the feasibility in making the northern route the “natural” starting point of the rebuilding plan. So far, this strategy seems to have worked well. Almost all the media reports on the Tengchong-Myitkyina road acknowledge that it is a section of the yet-to-be-fully-rebuilt Stilwell Road.

In focusing on the Stilwell Road, the local government cannot avoid the history of World War II. While Tengchong can selectively present the history of the

Southern Silk Road to its advantage, presenting the history of World War II in the region is a more delicate issue, because the major battles against the Japanese were fought by Nationalist troops, along with the Allied armies in the India-Burma-China theater. This puts the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in an awkward position, since it has always claimed to have served a leading role in the war of resistance against the Japanese invasion. Within this context, the locals have to walk a fine line in historical representation. On the one hand, by publicizing once-neglected local World War II history, Tengchong is being reconfigured as a place of historical and national significance; on the other, to avoid directly contradicting the official history sanctioned by the central authorities, a spatial limitation has been placed on war efforts of the Nationalists by confining them within the local boundary. By so doing, the locals are able to negotiate multiple histories to enable their desired spatial reconfigurations.

Spatial Branding and Role of State

So far, the locals have adopted a variety of strategies to make Tengchong a place of attraction, including actual production of space by rebuilding the Stilwell Road, symbolic construction of space by adopting new metaphors such as “bridge” and “bridgehead,” and selective interpretation of local history by emphasizing the area’s longstanding position as a trading and strategic post. These strategies serve a twofold task: to reconfigure and to represent.

Globalization critic Klein points out that one of the most important characteristics of global capitalism is its focus on the branding of products instead of producing them, and we are living in “the age of the brandasaurus” (2000: 59). Harvey also thinks “the construction of new sign systems and imagery...is itself an important aspect of postmodern condition” (1990: 287). The representation of local space we have explored above is in many ways like a branding process. In addition to presenting itself as a bridgehead to the potentially huge market beyond the national border, Tengchong has depicted itself as a place in which the glorious history of national defense against the Japanese invasion was enacted. A huge cemetery for several thousand fallen soldiers has been well kept, and indeed has become a tourist attraction. Furthermore, because of its numerous volcanic mountains and hot springs, Tengchong has been able to use its natural beauty to enhance its image as an attractive place worthy visiting. Better still, this natural beauty has been complemented by rich local cultural traditions that have produced a number of well-known politicians and scholars in modern China.⁵

Because of its geographical proximity to the region, Tengchong has a large diasporic population in Southeast Asia, and this fact has been used to demonstrate

⁵ Among the most famous ones are Li Genyuan (李根源), a Republican-era politician and Ai Siqi (艾思奇), a Marxist philosopher in the 1950s and 1960s.

locals' long-standing status as a place of border crossing. The use of the "bridge" metaphor to imply the special role played by the diasporic Chinese is not uncommon. In discussing the new role of Chinese overseas businessmen in the age of globalization, anthropologist Ong points out members of this diasporic group also use the "bridge" metaphor to envision their "flexible citizenship" within a global situation (Ong 1999: 133). By emphasizing Tengchong's existing connection with the outside world, the locals are trying to vindicate its new spatial configuration as a bridgehead to the outside world. Working with the media and tourism promoters, Tengchong has successfully branded an old town, Heshun, that has a large number of residents abroad as the "number one famous town in China."

Tengchong's status as a place of constructed meanings and significance has to be placed within the context of desired spatial orderings in China in the age of globalization. So far, indeed, Tengchong has been doing quite well in achieving its goals. More border trade outposts have been approved and set up, enhancing the county's position as an international trade "bridgehead." Tourism is booming. Tengchong has successfully promoted its various tourist attractions and become a magnet for tourists. Infrastructure has continually been improved and upgraded. An airport was opened in May 2009, shortening the travel time between Kunming to Tengchong from almost a day to only one hour, thus helping to bring in more mass tourists and businessmen.⁶ The unusually light traffic on the Tengchong-Myitkyina road is thus an abnormality in an otherwise vibrant scenario of economic development. Why is this the case?

The answer is that globalization is a much messier business than local officials expected. Their conviction on the positive returns of rebuilding the Stilwell Road is based on expectation, imagination, and hope. It is an example of what anthropologist Miyazaki (2006) calls "Economy of Dreams." In a globalizing world, many factors remain beyond local control. As far as reopening the Stilwell Road is concerned, India and Myanmar have very different considerations and reservations from the Chinese road advocates, and are in no hurry to carry out the project. In 2003, India held a two-day national seminar at the Dibrugarh University to discuss the feasibility of reopening the road, and the stability of North-East India was raised among other concerns (Nath 2004). On the Myanmar side, conflicts between central government and ethnic militia, as well as the lack of funding were hindrances to the road rebuilding efforts. All these factors out of Chinese control have contributed to diminishing the prospect of an immediate reopening of the Stilwell Road in the foreseeable future. Nonetheless, there is no sign that the local Chinese authorities will reconsider their grand plan based on spatial reconfiguration. Most likely, the case of Tengchong-Myitkyina road will be treated as a small setback in their march to become "bridge" or "bridgehead" for the integrated Southeast and South Asian market that China believes will eventually become a reality in the

⁶ According to *Yunnan Daily*, it took less than three years for the Tengchong airport to surpass half a million passenger flow a year, making it the fastest grow county-level airport in China. http://news.yunnan.cn/html/2011-12/23/content_1968178.htm, accessed December 28, 2011.

future. Thus, it is worthwhile to jockey for position and box out competitors at the earliest possible opportunity.

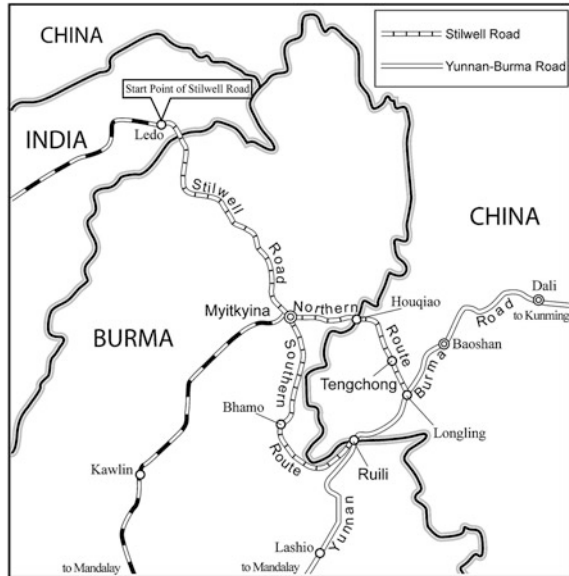
Economist Bhagwati, a staunch defender of globalization, points out that compared to earlier phases, “the story of globalization today must be written in two inks: one colored by technical change and the other by state action” (2004: 11). Although Bhagwati’s pro-globalization arguments are overly optimistic and sometimes simplistic, he makes an acute observation on the proactive roles many governments have played to promote globalization in the past several decades. This article has shown that based on a near consensus conviction on the positive effects that globalization would bring to China, local policy makers in Yunnan have taken initiatives to jockey for position within an expected/imagined future of Asian and even global economic integration, and that these initiatives involve spatial reconfigurations in this traditional border region of China.

While Harvey and Giddens’ theorizations of the experience of contemporary globalization are very insightful, the situation of China is different from the west and complicated by a number of ways in which temporal and spatial perceptions coexist and juxtapose with each other. Aiming to transform Yunnan’s long-standing spatial identity as a borderland, the newly emergent metaphors of “bridge” and “bridgehead” illustrate the new meanings being instilled into the making of Yunnan’s new spatial positions. Spatial reconfiguration and spatial representation go hand in hand in this process. This is by no means an easy task and might be seen as a comprehensive branding exercise. To achieve the new desired spatial configuration, both the “hardware” of infrastructure and “software” of historical reinterpretation have been developed. The effort in rebuilding the Stilwell Road is exemplary. Facing fierce competition from other places for the “bridgehead” position, the local leadership has used the rebuilding of the Tengchong-Myitkyina road as a pivotal “boxing out” maneuver.

On a final note, in July 2009, Chinese president Hu Jintao visited Yunnan and told local officials to define Yunnan as the “bridgehead” for China’s opening-up to Southeast and South Asia. Hu was not the first one to use this metaphor, but his endorsement simply became an instruction to be followed. Nowadays the term “bridgehead” is much politicized and has become a part of official discourse. Both national and provincial governments have come up with specific policies to promote “bridgeheadization.” Riding the tide, Ruili, the archrival of Tengchong, has been selected as the designated primary trade port city. For the foreseeable time, it is certain that Tengchong will continue to engage in all kinds of tactics to jockey for the position of being the “bridgehead” for southwest Yunnan. The ever shifting space will continue to be experienced, perceived, and imagined by local peoples, and reconfigurations of space and time will provide them a flexible framework for defining what they are in the process of China’s charging march to globalization (Fig. 13.1).

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Fig. 13.1 Map of the Stilwell Road



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Chapter 14

The Role of Underwater Archaeology in Framing and Facilitating the Chinese National Strategic Agenda

Jeff Adams

Introduction

A growing international consensus on the appropriate treatment of submerged cultural resources has emerged through the UNESCO convention for the protection of underwater cultural heritage (CPUCH). This doctrinal convergence coincides with the mounting influence of the World Heritage Convention, seeming to further evince a global expansion of the ‘Western heritage management (WHM) paradigm.’ Even if one accepts its putative ‘hegemony,’ history suggests that individual instantiations of this paradigm will reflect local circumstances and understandings. To be sure, the WHM paradigm looks rather different in Canada, Australia, England, Germany, and France, let alone in non-Western countries. Superficially similar approaches may serve divergent purposes, while disparate preservation regimes may embrace common ends. These variations, their origins and outcomes provide fertile ground for the conceptualization and theorization of international heritage management as a field of practice and cultural phenomenon.

This investigation into the national symbolic and strategic mobilization of Chinese underwater archaeology is dedicated to the refinement of intercultural comparison. As submerged cultural heritage management capabilities proliferate around the world, disciplinary advancement depends on the development of a firm conceptual, informational, and analytical basis. The Chinese heritage management establishment warrants attention, furthermore, due to its rapid advancement, the immensity and diversity of its cultural resource base, and the magnitude and tempo of socioeconomic threats with which it grapples. Finally, the unique associative possibilities afforded by the transcultural semantic itinerancy of maritime heritage may elicit valuable yet under-appreciated theoretical insights into the reproduction of popular and political identities.

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A Singular Case

Sovereign government policies toward underwater treasure hunting exhibit bewildering variety, ranging from Cuba's formerly exploitative program to India's strict prohibitive stance, Haiti's extemporizing, and Papua, New Guinea's utter lack of regulation. Amid this shifting global panorama of policy positions, two patterns are discernible: (1) a rough correlation between looting pressure, poverty, and permissiveness and (2) a gradual move toward the adoption of CPUCH-inspired management regimes. The connection between the often mercenary stance of poor but archaeologically well-endowed countries and the progressive regulatory trend seems to be a recurring developmental sequence eventuating the subordination of private commercial to public scientific and symbolic heritage values through the imposition of successively more stringent preservation policies. Thus Barbados, Jamaica, Panama, and other countries in the galleon-rich Caribbean have gradually discontinued the issuance of treasure-hunting concessions and prohibited market-driven historic wreck salvage. The same process, in its earlier stages, is at work among countries fringing the world's other great concentration of valuable wrecks: the South China Sea.

The development of underwater heritage management policy in the South China Sea region has been shaped by a handful of major illegal salvage episodes. The discovery by Malaysian officials of the active looting of the eighteenth-century Dutch East Indiaman *Risdam*, for example, spurred the formulation of policy limiting commercial salvage to wrecks not deemed of sufficient national cultural value (Taha 1998). The controversial 1990s transshipment of a \$50 million hoard of porcelain and other artifacts by a salvor working in Philippine waters reverberated throughout the region, sparking a rush of Philippines National Museum-led public/private archaeological investigations underwritten by for-profit salvage partners (Pultra 2003).

The most influential case in the South China Sea region is that of a British salvor, who in 1987 allegedly recovered and illegally exported \$20 million worth of Ming Dynasty porcelain from a 1752 Dutch East Indiaman, the *Geldermalsen*, resting in Indonesian waters (Pope 2007). The entry of the so-called 'Nanking Cargo' into the world art market caused the price of antique Chinese porcelain to skyrocket, strengthening public demand, and heightening regional incentives to loot. A watershed moment in the awakening of regional governments to the value and vulnerability of shipwrecks in sovereign waters, this incident was a leading impetus for the aggressively pro-salvage policy instituted by the Indonesian government and inspired the formation of the profit-motivated, state-owned Vietnam Salvage Corporation (*ibid.*).

In the stock narrative of China's entry into state-sponsored underwater archaeology, the triggering mechanism was the indictment of the *Geldermalsen* salvor (China Daily 2002). Having unsuccessfully attempted to block the auction of the Nanking Cargo, the State Administration of Cultural Heritage in 1987 created the Underwater Archaeological Research Center (UWARC) under the

auspices of the Museum of Chinese History (now the National Museum of China). In 1989, the State Council imposed the ‘Regulations Concerning the Management and Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage of the People’s Republic of China,’ which assert control over all submerged cultural resources in territorial waters and prohibit unlicensed commercial salvage.

Compared to Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, and other economically challenged countries having rich submerged cultural resource bases, the Chinese developmental path has been exceptional for, among other things, the unwavering hostility it has shown toward private commercial treasure salvage. What is not emphasized in Chinese accounts is that prior to the formation of UWARC, commercial salvage concessions were permitted. The discovery of China’s most famous wreck, described below, occurred during the dredging of the seabed by a British company holding a legal concession to search for a British East India Company vessel. Nevertheless, with the possible exception of Thailand, China’s response to major regional looting episodes sets it apart from its Southeast Asian peers.

With its rising affluence, China’s conservation-oriented approach might, in part, reflect the lesser domestic marginal value of saleable antiquities relative to its poorer neighbors. The policy may also stem from emerging Chinese heritage values, a desire to maintain ‘face’ vis-a-vis Western heritage arbiters or to join the larger community of nations supporting CPUCH principles, if not ratification of the Convention itself. The expulsion of the British salvage team from the *Nanhai 1* site upon recognition of its Chinese provenance also hints at a growing sense of proprietary cultural ownership, tinged with resentment at foreign possession of Chinese civilizational patrimony. In the majority of notorious South China Sea shipwreck salvage cases, the *Geldermalsen*, *Sinan*, *Tek Sing*, *Vung Tau*, *Binh Thuan*, and *Ca Mau* wrecks, for example, the bulk of the commercial value—entirely accruing to foreign actors—derived from Chinese porcelain and other antiquities. Also, commercially valuable wrecks in Chinese waters are likely to be of Chinese origin, thus appealing directly to this sense of cultural ownership, whereas those in the waters of Southeast Asian nations are more likely to be foreign, whether European or Chinese, and thus of lesser national symbolic value.

This burgeoning custodial sensibility is one facet of a larger national ‘heritage boom’ fueled by growing national pride among an increasingly wealthy, educated citizenry subject to a concerted government program of cultural promotion. Popular signs include a surge in domestic heritage tourism, an associated scramble to nominate sites to the World Heritage List (Mazurkewich 2004) and an epidemic of looting to feed heightened domestic interest in collecting Chinese antiquities (Fiskesjo 2010; Pogrebin 2011). Incipient Party concern over the escalating loss of archaeological and built heritage has manifested itself in the rapid expansion of municipal, provincial, and national heritage management capacities (Chen and Hong 2010; Pogrebin 2011). The Chinese government recently issued a “Cultural Industry Promotion Plan,” reportedly matched by a \$4.45 billion investment, and has declared a ‘Cultural Heritage Day,’ been active in supporting minority folk religion, intangible heritage, and cultural revival as well as constructing museums,

staging exhibits and cultural exchanges, and promoting Chinese language and culture abroad (McCarthy 2004; Szántó 2010). They have also supported the China Cultural Relics Recovery Program, demanding the international repatriation of Chinese antiquities and requesting tighter restrictions on U.S. imports from China (Bezlova 2005).

A closer look at the circumstances surrounding the rise of UWARC suggests that there is more to the story than a proprietary interest in the past. The pace and scale of China's investment in underwater archaeology has been unprecedented in the annals of twenty-first century underwater heritage management. Prior to the *Geldermalsen* affair, China had negligible underwater archaeological capabilities. Since 2000, however, hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent on training, equipment, engineering, transport, surveys, reconnaissance, recovery operations, monitoring, conservation, museum construction, foreign capacity building, and other items. The total bill for the *Nanhai One* project, described below, was more than \$150 million; the complete salvage of another wreck, the *Nan'ao*, is under consideration (Hilgers 2011; Morais 2005). A National Conservation Center for Underwater Cultural Heritage was founded in 2009, a series of 'underwater protection bases' are being established (just one of which will reportedly cost \$24 million), and an 860-ton custom UWARC research vessel is under construction (Xinhua 2012a, c). The lavishness of investment is all the more apparent when compared with the meager-to-nonexistent underwater archaeological budgets that are the international norm.

The ambitiousness of the Chinese underwater archaeology program may be linked to the prodigious rate of wreck despoliation by illicit salvors and unregulated coastal development, which demands immediate response if the resource is to be conserved; virtually every wreck so far encountered by UWARC has suffered prior looting (Flecker 2002; Zhang 2005). Another factor is that the Chinese central government, in concert with the private sector, possesses the means and authority to undertake engineering and infrastructure projects on a stupendous scale. In comparison to the construction of the Three Gorges Dam or renovation of the Grand Canal, expenditures on underwater archaeology have been insignificant. Finally, the centralized bureaucratic structure of Chinese underwater archaeology facilitates concentrated spending on conspicuous projects, rather than the diffusion of resources across many functions and agencies, as seen in many Western countries.

When placed in its larger historical, social, political, and economic context, however, the question of China's commitment to maritime archaeology becomes even more interesting—and open to interpretation. The timing of the establishment of UWARC by central authorities, coming as it did during a period of social and economic transition, cannot have been devoid of political contrivance. The self-aggrandizing tone of sanctioned rhetoric cataloging UWARC achievements—"showcasing the preeminent place China's UW salvage protection ideas and technologies occupy in the world"—is redolent, moreover, with nationalistic overtones (People's Daily 2010a). Above all, UWARC's bias toward certain locations, activities, eras, and artifacts privilege the sensational recovery,

calculated interpretation, and touristic display of material culture indexing the wealth, power, and reach of Chinese civilization during its maritime Golden Age. In order to fully understand the salience of the UWARC research agenda we need to examine its correspondence with a larger popular and state-sponsored celebration of past maritime greatness, the icon of which is the fifteenth-century Eunuch admiral Zheng He.

Rising Tide of Maritime Heritage

Taken captive as a child by Chinese soldiers in the annexed border territory of Yunnan, the Muslim Zheng He attained prominence in the Imperial court after finding favor with a powerful prince. Between the years 1405 and 1433 he led seven hemispheric tours as an envoy of the Yong—le Emperor to locations throughout Southeast Asia, India, the Middle East, and East Africa. These voyages have come to be recognized as the historical zenith of Chinese sea power. Their overarching purpose was to promote trade relations with area kingdoms by encouraging submission to the paternalistic Son of Heaven, the Chinese Emperor (Stuart—Fox 2003).

Zheng He's legacy endures in the hearts, minds, and physical environments of the Chinese, their overseas ethnic brethren and their countrymen in Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, and elsewhere. Prominently remembered is the unprecedented size of his fleet, the grandeur of his vessels, and the geographical reach, navigational prowess, and purported pacificity of his tours (Levathes 1994). According to one scholar, "the Ming voyages must rank as the earliest state-sponsored effort to seek out new lands, markets, and spheres of political influence" (Lunde 2005). Unlike Western naval heroes, Zheng He's iconic status is not due to spectacular military victories but to his personification of the enlightened splendor and naval might of the Celestial Kingdom. He spread belief in the Chinese folk deity Matsu throughout Southeast Asia, a religion that presently boasts more than 200 million adherents, and is himself revered at a scattering of temples across the region (Xinhua 2009). Over the course of his voyages, he established fortified trading depots in South China Sea ports that became centers of transmission for Chinese culture and architectural forms (Widodo 2003). Many of his sailors and soldiers later settled in these former ports of call, expanding the regional Chinese diaspora.

China has recently exhibited an explosion of interest in maritime heritage, as seen in the 2005 national commemoration of the 600-year anniversary of Zheng He's first voyage, including a celebration at the recently renamed "Zheng He Memorial Shipyard" in Nanjing, featuring a new \$50 million Zheng He museum; the construction of replica Ming Dynasty vessels (Hvistendahl 2008) including the Princess Taiping junk, intended to demonstrate that Zheng He could have sailed to North America (BBC 2009); and the foundation of the International Zheng He Society (International Zheng He Society 2012). These have been accompanied by

Zheng He-themed monuments, conferences, exhibits, commemorative coins and stamps, books, comics, films, documentaries, soap operas, a 2008 Olympic opening ceremony vignette, a musical stagershow, and a business leadership seminar (Lorenz 2005; National University of Singapore 2012; Tharoor 2010). Archaeology and historic preservation have also been enlisted to highlight sites associated with Zheng He, including the excavation of the Nanjing shipyard and the restoration of his original stockade in Malacca (China Daily 2005; International Zheng He Society 2012). Other indications of the promotion of maritime heritage generally, apart from investments in underwater archaeology and the Maritime Silk Road Museum, include the nomination to the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding of ‘watertight–bulkhead technology of Chinese junks’ and ‘Mazu belief and customs,’ a bid by seven Chinese port cities to inscribe the Maritime Silk Road on the UNESCO World Heritage List (Xinhua 2011), and the attempted government purchase of the hoard from the *Batu Hitam* wreck (Taylor 2011).

UWARC has played a special role in the canonization of Zheng He and the resurrection of Chinese maritime greatness. Despite the almost limitless array of research possibilities presented by its vast and archaeologically untapped underwater domain, they have focused on finding traces of the Maritime Silk Road, searching specifically for vessels of the Zheng He treasure fleets, and have assembled a track record of high-profile salvage excavations of porcelain-laden wrecks dating from the years spanning 1100–1644 (China Daily 2002; Kuhn 2010; Lin 2010). That a majority of UWARC’s salvage activities have focused on wrecks from the Yuan (*Sandaogang*, *Bao Jiao I*, *Penglai*, *Bohai Bay*), Song (*Quanzhou*, *Nanhai One*, *Huaguangjiao I*) and Ming (*Nan’ao I*, *South Australia I*) Dynasties is partly a function of the increased maritime activity—and thus greater incidence of wrecks—associated with historical demand for Chinese exports. It is ultimately due to the special urgency the government places on monopolizing the value of these highly sought-after salvage targets.

The case of the amazingly well-preserved thirteenth-century treasure ship *Nanhai One*—tourist attraction, archaeological wonder, and national status symbol par excellence—captures the spirit of China’s underwater archaeology program. Found off the Pearl River estuary in 1987, the vessel’s size, age, and intact state presented huge opportunities and even bigger challenges to the fledgling archaeological team (Jiao 2010). It was not until 2001 that sufficient resources were in place to carry out the audacious plan of raising the entire mud-encased wreck, transporting it to its own custom-built museum, and reimmersing it in a huge glass-walled tank, where it could be slowly and publicly excavated (Morais 2005). This colossal technical feat was brought off without a hitch, becoming the crowning achievement of UWARC and a source of immense national pride. Eclipsing European counterparts *Vasa* and *Mary Rose* in size and commercial splendor, *Nanhai One* is the centerpiece of a regional tourism-based economic development strategy. It is not clear how authorities dispose of the many thousands of ‘duplicate’ pieces of porcelain recovered from wrecks such as the *Nanhai One*. Even if

retained they will be able to generate income through ticket receipts, reproductions, and loans.

On a symbolic level, the *Nanhai One* perfectly unites notions of past enterprise, present achievement, and national destiny. The cost, complexity, and notoriety of the project reflect glory on the archaeologists, businesspersons, and bureaucrats who planned, funded, engineered, and executed it. The inestimable social, monetary, and archaeological value of the wreck assemblage lends prestige to the residents of Yangjiang, where it was found and now resides, the citizens of Guangdong province and, more diffusely, the country at large.

The work of UWARC both stimulates and feeds on nationalist valorization of maritime cultural heritage and associated economic activity. It appears, cursorily, that the agency's overriding purpose is promotion rather than preservation. A closer examination of the transcendent symbolic resonance of China's maritime past in this age of social, economic, and political resurgence shows, in fact, that UWARC is not just involved in celebrating history but in charting the national course.

“Consider the Past and You Shall Know the Future”—A Chinese proverb

Zheng He fell ill and died at sea during the return leg of his seventh voyage. Shortly afterward Emperor Zhu Qizhen, under the influence of Confucian officials seeking to eliminate Eunuch influence in court, issued the first of three edicts canceling further diplomatic voyages, citing their expense. The Emperor subsequently enacted a monopoly on overseas trade, banning all private vessels from coastal waters. Officials deliberately burned the records of Zheng He's voyages in 1479; by 1525 the construction of sea-going junks with more than two masts was outlawed and all such vessels were ordered destroyed. The Imperial navy atrophied as construction of the Grand Canal shifted importance to inland water transport and the threat of Mongol invasion loomed in the northwest. The suppression of private maritime trade caused a general coastal economic decline and proliferation of Chinese rogue merchants and Japanese pirates. It was not until the mid-sixteenth century that this policy was repealed and legal coastal trade once again flourished.

China's ill-timed maritime withdrawal allowed armed Portuguese and Dutch traders to supplant their influence in the Indian Ocean and East Indies, respectively, leading to eventual European commercial dominance and naval hegemony in Asian waters. Portuguese adventurers seeking direct access to the 'spiceries' of the Far East had reached the Moluccas within a half century of the coastal trade ban and in 1511 captured the key port of Malacca, winning control of the adjoining straits and foiling one of Zheng He's strategic objectives (Shaffer 1996). Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, and/or English mercantile interests dominated South China

Sea waters for the next 450+ years. Still, it was not until the severance of all Southeast Asian tributary relations in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century through European and Japanese sea power that the Chinese world order fully collapsed (Stuart—Fox 2003).

It is difficult to overstate the importance of the self-imposed isolation of the early Ming Dynasty in the Chinese national consciousness. The recent UWARC-enabled apotheosis of Zheng He and maritime heritage mania has to be understood in the light of this perceived national failure, which is itself emblematic of a larger, civilizational ‘identity crisis.’

In the year between the founding of UWARC and the Tiananmen Square protests there aired a wildly popular and highly controversial Chinese television series called “Heshang—Yellow River Elegy.” Written by a dissident, this trenchant political, economic, and cultural critique attacked some of China’s most cherished cultural icons as symptoms of a terminal national malaise. These symbols included the Great Wall, which was described as having imprisoned the Chinese rather than having kept barbarians out, and the Dragon, representing the paralyzing grasp of the emperor. The Yellow River—acclaimed ‘cradle of Chinese civilization’—was cast as a silted-up backwater in which the Chinese impotently paddled while Europeans bestrode the blue ocean waters—“symbol of the indigo myth of modernity” (Jing 1996)—forcibly establishing the trade networks that would make their nations the economic and political powerhouses of the world.

Yellow River Elegy was really an attack on autocracy, hierarchy, xenophobia, anti-business prejudices, and ‘peasant mentalities’ and their stultifying effect on national development. It highlighted a deep and oft-recognized frustration, felt at least since the ignominy of the Opium Wars, about the challenge of creatively finding a Chinese path to modernity, prosperity, and predominance while maintaining a hidebound sinocentric worldview. This frustration has manifested itself in an historical ambivalence about the role of traditional culture in the tension between continuity and transformation, a historical pendulum swinging between insularity and openness that ties China’s vision of its national political and economic stature to geography and heritage. This ambivalence may be read in the episodic, ideologically charged erasures of the material past that characterized the nationalist iconoclasm of the mid-nineteenth-century Taiping Rebellion, the anti-traditional backlash of the May 4th New Culture Movement of the 1920s and 1930s, and in the assault on the “four olds”—customs, culture, habits, and ideas—during the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s (Cohen 1992; Hsu 2012; Ryckmans 1989; Tu 1991).

Specifically, in hinging its argument on a binary yellow water/blue water opposition, *Yellow River Elegy* helped to crystallize the equation of an outward-facing saltwater maritime orientation with national redemption. In the context of China’s recent political and economic liberalization, it paved the way for the self-congratulatory popular valorization of maritime heritage as an inspiration and vehicle for promoting a more expansive national strategic vision, one capable of resolving the country’s identity crisis once and for all.

“The History of the Reform is... the History of the Great Development of Chinese Seafaring”—People’s Daily (2005)

In a 1984 address, Deng Xiaoping evoked Zheng He’s largely forgotten expeditions as historical proof of the wisdom of an ‘Open Door Policy’ (Xiaoping 1984). The fifteenth-century mariner’s rehabilitation was part of Deng Xiaoping’s advertisement of a Chinese ‘civilizational identity’ intended to distance socialist ideals from the legacy of Mao Tse Tung (Rozman 2012: 85). Deng Xiaoping’s exploitation of Zheng He’s multivalent rhetorical utility, during a time of diplomatic opening, economic liberalization, and naval buildup, was echoed in the Chinese Communist Party’s sudden, roughly coincident interest in maritime archaeology. Underlying both, particularly following the Tiananmen Square protests, was the goal of galvanizing the Chinese people as flagbearers of a superior civilization under threat from the West (Friedman 2008).

With the subsequent growth of trade and investment vis-a-vis regional overseas Chinese and governments in Africa and the Indian Ocean region, Zheng He became a star in the firmament of a revived Chinese maritime glory, a popular nationalist rallying point and political discursive mainstay referenced by Jiang Zemin, Wen Jiabao, and Hu Jintao, among other leaders (National University of Singapore 2012). Within the context of the Chinese Communist Party’s conscious effort to incorporate culture in its newly adopted soft power tactics, the strategic evocation of Zheng He continues to offer a powerful yet oblique alternative to more overt propaganda.

By materializing the symbolic salience of the Maritime Silk Road in general and Zheng He in particular, UWARC contributes to the currency of popular and party narratives of an evolving national identity. Promotion of the legacy of China’s former maritime strength challenges the nation to reclaim its destiny, legitimizing attendant governmental actions, and naturalizing the strategic rivalries that have inevitably ensued. Domestic elevation of China’s past maritime glory signals the government’s commitment to growing national prosperity through increased international trade and muscular defense of economic, territorial, and navigational prerogatives. Zheng He’s power, and the navigational and technical precocity he represents, augur a resurgence of strength and international respect that erases the humiliation, envy, and resentment associated with the ‘usurpation’ of Chinese entitlements by Europe and the USA. In a nation threatened by ethnic heterogeneity and political instability, moreover, Zheng He’s status as a subjugated border-dweller cum national hero provides a powerful unifying diversion.

If evocation of the legacy of Zheng He pays broad symbolic dividends at home, it is especially useful in selling the image of a peaceful and powerful Chinese expansion abroad. His legend lends itself to representation as evidence of contemporary China’s purely beneficent intentions in reassuming a historically precedented position of regional cultural, political, economic, and military dominance. Many of Zheng He’s sea routes retain the strategic significance they held

half a millennium ago; the mutually beneficial tributary relationships his tours were designed to foster have their present day mirror image in the diplomatic balancing act of China's nervous Southeast Asian neighbors. The resonance of such historical parallels are not lost on the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), who reportedly considered naming their first aircraft carrier *Shi Lang* after the Manchu admiral who conquered Taiwan (Saunders 2007). If emphasis on Zheng He's military restraint contrasts favorably with the mercenary, violent, colonialist West, it offers to build common cause with concerned Southeast Asian audiences wavering between attraction to China's markets and fear of their might. As a paternal, Muslim 'cultural intermediary,' revival of Zheng He's memory signals the tolerance and inclusivity of China's future vision.

Servant of the State

We have seen how the work of UWARC, through its selective valorization of historical episodes, facilitates the symbolic mobilization of the past in the interest of national pride, unity, and reform. Yet the advantages provided by state-sponsored archaeological retailing of China's seagoing heyday are not limited to the collective distillation of a national strategic vision: UWARC and peers actively participate in the prosecution of corresponding developmental initiatives.

In its quest for opportunity, influence, and security, China is embarked on a vast, structured program of 'comprehensive national strength-building' predicated on the attainment of global economic power and regional maritime supremacy. According to China's State Oceanic Administration, "the ocean is the next economic growth engine for China" (as cited in Wang 2011). China's 2011 Ocean Development Report estimates that by 2020 "the gross product of the country's marine industries, including offshore oil and gas exploration, marine transport, coastal tourism, fisheries, and shipbuilding industry, will surpass 5.3 trillion yuan (\$814 billion)" (ibid.). Both as regards exploiting these development opportunities and ensuring access to oil and other critical resources through global trade, China's economic geography renders the maritime arena a first-order national security priority (Cole 2010). China's stated core national interests thus include regional maritime dominance, protection of vital sea lanes, sovereign possession of currently disputed peripheral islands, and reunification with Taiwan (Erickson 2008). The fundamental strategic interdependency invoked by these aspirations is that tying economic strength to naval power (Cole 2010).

PLAN has undergone a radical transformation since the 1980s, echoing the growth of the Chinese economy and the rise of state-sponsored underwater archaeology. In 1988, the navy gained independence from the People's Liberation Army (PLA), initiating a rapid program of modernization and expansion aimed at building a blue water navy capable of implementing an offshore defensive strategy

and projecting power around the world. Beginning in 1989, the PLAN training ship *Zhenghe* ushered in a new era of distant operations, calling on ports in South Asia and the Pacific (U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence 2007). The ghost of the Eunuch admiral has since maintained a constant discursive presence as PLAN task groups have circumnavigated the Pacific, conducted humanitarian and anti-piracy operations around the Gulf of Aden and, in a historical first, entered the Mediterranean Sea.

Given the scope, complexity, and opacity of Chinese efforts to realize the strategic development goals set forth in its Five Year Plans, I am able to catch only partial glimpses of underwater archaeology's place in the overall puzzle. It appears, however, that UWARC is enmeshed in a synergistic web of public/private institutions pursuing the indigenous development of maritime technologies for commercial, industrial, and military use. Technologies for underwater survey, mapping, human and robotic exploration, salvage, and surveillance, for example, have direct, critical application to military, industrial, and archaeological undertakings. A 2010 agreement between the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH) and the State Oceanic Administration, for example, jointly made underwater cultural heritage protection one of the key issues of China's ocean strategy and called for cooperative promotion of the marine industry (Wang 2010). Through current or pending cooperative agreements, UWARC maintains a *quid pro quo* with PLAN, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the State Oceanic Administration and other government agencies, as well as public/private maritime salvage and technology companies. In return for facilitating access to key markets, waters, and swathes of seafloor, supporting tourism and promoting the development of maritime industry and technology, UWARC receives information, equipment, expertise, transportation, protection, and other assistance.

Pearls in Zheng He's Wake

Over the course of its existence, UWARC has staged international partnerships with archaeological teams from Australia, Korea, the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Japan. It is their attempts to find physical traces of Zheng He's voyages in foreign waters, however, that provide the best illustration of China's soft power use of underwater archaeology for international economic and political ends. A few examples will suffice to show an emerging pattern whereby self-referential, arguably quixotic expeditions are held out by Chinese officials as the centerpiece of capacity-building agreements designed to foster goodwill at a time when trade and infrastructure deals promising enormous financial and strategic rewards are at stake. For example, a 2010 cooperative agreement on energy, trade, infrastructure, and culture between Oman and China, their largest oil importer, included in its

terms a collaborative survey designed to locate a Zheng He vessel supposed to have sunk in the Straits of Hormuz (Oman News Agency 2012). The agreement also included provision for the Chinese dedication of a monument commemorating Zheng He's three visits to Oman (Xinhua 2010).

When Chinese officials recently proposed to search for remnants of Zheng He's fleet in the waters near Hambantota, Sri Lanka, their offer was received with ambivalence. According to Sri Lanka's Director General of Archaeology, the terms of the agreement stipulated that the host country furnish a vessel and forfeit 50% of recovered antiquities to China (AFP 2012). Also noted was the coincidental timing of the proposal, coming as it did precisely while China vied with India for economic and political influence via financial assistance, infrastructure projects, and tourism agreements (BBC 2010a; Lanka News Web 2012). Allowing the Chinese to collect bathymetric data in the vicinity of the massive new port facility, moreover, would alarm Sri Lanka's powerful geographic neighbor, already concerned about China's so-called 'string of pearls' strategy to safeguard oil supplies by establishing a series of naval provisioning bases in the Indian Ocean region (Devichand 2010). This would put the Sri Lankan navy, charged with protecting the country's submerged cultural resources, in an awkward position.

In another case, the National Museum of China, UWARC's host body, concluded a three-year, multi-million dollar archaeological agreement with the Kenya National Museum, the marquee component of which was a survey to locate a Zheng He vessel reportedly lost off Lamu during a 1414 visit to the port of Malindi (BBC 2010b; Conway-Smith 2011). The admittedly dubious research aim notwithstanding, the project was explicitly cast in a romanticized historical symmetry celebrating 'reaffirmation' of tenuous fifteenth-century cultural ties. The agreement also called for terrestrial archaeological survey and excavation designed "to confirm the authenticity of some local villagers' claims that they are "descendants of the ancient Chinese people," evidence for which was purportedly unearthed in the form of Ming Dynasty coins and porcelain demonstrating a fifteenth-century Chinese presence (People's Daily 2010b).

A Chinese scholar's remark that Zheng He's "trip is truly symbolic of what China's intentions toward Africa were then and what they are now" gives a whiff of the elephant in the room: that this highly publicized, Chinese subsidized, scientific capacity-building effort coincided with the granting of an offshore oil prospecting concession to a Chinese petroleum company and the attempt by Chinese firms to win a multi-billion dollar contract to build the infrastructure for what will be the largest port in East Africa in Lamu (Becker 2010; Kimani 2010). In light of the recent avalanche of Chinese aid for and investment in Africa, there can be no doubt that the accompanying campaign of cultural promotion, of which the underwater archaeology agreement and the erection of a Chinese-supplied Zheng He statue in Mombasa are small parts, is part of a premeditated effort to win economic and political influence on the continent (Shiundu 2012; Tharoor 2010).

Sovereignty, Surveillance and Interpretive Inevitability

China's 1989 Regulations Concerning the Management and Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage apply not only to all cultural relics in Chinese waters and Chinese cultural relics in the open sea and foreign jurisdictions, but also to "cultural relics that are of Chinese origin or of unidentified origin that remain in sea areas outside the Chinese territorial waters but under Chinese jurisdiction according to the Chinese law"—an area including waters surrounding islands claimed by neighboring countries (State Council of the People's Republic of China 1989). This stipulation opens the door to what Communist Party leaders may view as the primary strategic utility of UWARC: legitimating sovereignty claims over disputed islands in the South China Seas.

In April of 2012, two Chinese surveillance vessels warned a Manila-registered archaeological research ship to immediately leave the vicinity of Huangyan Island, also known as Scarborough Shoal, in the South China Sea (Landingin 2012). According to Chinese authorities, the ship lacked the necessary permission from Beijing to undertake archaeological activities in the area, despite its close proximity to the Philippine coast. The Chinese embassy elaborated: "There is, indeed, an ancient Chinese wreck ship in Huangyan Island area, of which China has the ownership" (ibid.). Though apparently engaged in a joint French/Philippine research project, only arriving in the immediate vicinity of a days-old confrontation between Chinese fishermen and the Philippine Navy by accident, one is left to wonder why such a politically volatile survey area was selected by the Philippine National Museum in the first place. Indeed, with limited underwater archaeological capacity, a geography encompassing more than 7,000 islands, and the fifth-largest coastline in the world, the selection of Scarborough Shoal is unlikely to have been made independent of the recently intensifying territorial conflict with China.

Since at least the release in the 1940s of a Chinese map showing a dashed line delimiting sovereign waters, it has been well known in the region that one of China's top maritime priorities is to acquire unchallenged possession of remote islands in the East and South China Sea, including Scarborough Shoal. This would afford access to gas, oil, and fisheries, provide enhanced control over vital sea lanes, and support an enlarged defensive buffer. Enforcing their claim to Scarborough Shoal is thus a tactical maneuver in PLAN's larger three-stage strategy for expanding their sphere of operations through the so-called first (Japan–Taiwan–Philippines) and second (Guam–Indonesia–Australia) island chains and into global waters (Dreyer 2012).

China's bids for ownership of South China Sea Islands have led to confrontation with Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Vietnam, and Taiwan, as well as the Philippines. While many of China's rivals have based their claims to South or East China Sea islands on legalistic arguments, China, Taiwan, and Vietnam have stressed issues of historical sovereignty (Lasserre 1999). This strategy, in which

archaeology is a prominent fixture, is consonant with China's repeated assertions of sovereignty over all 'previously occupied' territory, including Xinjiang, Tibet, and Taiwan. According to Rozman, "the state is intent on glorifying the territorial expansion of past dynasties, in this way confirming control over... existing boundaries" (Rozman 2012: 81).

By referring to the South China Sea as 'sacred territorial waters' from 'time immemorial,' Chinese officials discursively reinforce their claims to have initially occupied and uninterruptedly possessed contested islands and waters (Lasserre 1999). Each archaeological find demonstrating an ancient Chinese presence in the area reinforces this instrumental narrative of longstanding maritime supremacy. Thus the 1997 discovery by French company ELF of a Ming Dynasty Chinese junk off the coast of Brunei was trumpeted by Beijing as further evidence of China's perennial regional influence (Willis 1999). In its dispute with Japan over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea, China has based its argument on its own early discovery and use of the islands as a defensive outpost against Japanese pirates during the Ming and Qing dynasties. In its South China Sea conflicts with Vietnam, China has again employed terrestrial archaeological finds of porcelain, coins, and structural remains to buttress their historical claims (Lasserre 1999; Tønneson 2001).

In light of the propensity of Chinese authorities to employ archaeological remains as evidence of past occupancy and present sovereignty, it seems more than coincidental that UWARC's first open water operation was a mid-1990s expedition to the hotly contested Xisha, or Paracel, Islands, seized by China from Vietnam in 1974 (China Daily 2002). Indeed, UWARC's clear, geographically disproportionate interest in wrecks lying in disputed South China Sea waters is enshrined in its work plan as outlined by UWARC's director in a 2005 address (Zhang 2005). Declaring the Xisha Islands "an inalienable part of the inviolable territory of China," the director further stated that underwater archaeology promises to demonstrate China's preeminent historical claim to and inarguable sovereignty over all South China Sea Islands (ibid.) His 1999 interpretation of Xisha finds as proof of Chinese sovereignty prompted vehement refutation from Vietnamese embassy officials in Beijing (Kyodo News International 1999). UWARC's subsequent salvage of the Song Dynasty *Huaguang Reef 1* wreck in the same area was once again presented as evidence for continuous Chinese occupation (Xinhua 2007). Professing the aim of safeguarding submerged cultural resources in the Xisha Islands, provincial Cultural Relics Bureau officials later announced the construction of an 'offshore supervision platform,' equipped with satellite and video surveillance systems (Beijing Review 2012).

The other area of operations specified in UWARC's 2005 work plan, besides that of the *Nanhai One*, was the Nansha, or Spratly, Islands, site of China's most notorious South China Sea dispute. On more than one occasion China has used armed force to defend its claim to this tiny, barren, strategically advantageous archipelago against those of Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, and the Philippines. The 2010 SACH/SOA cooperative agreement, referenced previously, called for an 'emergency' reconnaissance expedition to the Xisha, Nansha, and other South

China Sea Islands to document the impact of looting on wrecks (Zhuo 2010). SOA is one of the so-called ‘five dragons,’ competing Chinese maritime agencies whose growing surveillance and law enforcement mandates overlap in the defense of Chinese sovereignty claims in South China Sea waters (Goldstein 2010). It is in this light that the 2012 return of underwater archaeologists to the Nansha and Xisha Islands in the first SACH/SOA ‘cultural heritage law enforcement cruise’ must be understood, for which officials cited the common need to safeguard national maritime rights and interests (Xinhua 2012b).

Conclusion

There are no simple explanations for the unique developmental trajectory of underwater archaeology in China. The official narrative, portraying it as a natural response to the looting of national cultural patrimony by a Westerner, distinguished only by its vitality and technical brilliance, is disingenuous. That the program has been a social and scientific achievement of the first order is indisputable. That it is a driver of commercial tourism is much to its credit. The argument here is that, first, by emphasizing the importance of the Maritime Silk Road and according Zheng He such prominence in its research program, UWARC formalizes and amplifies their national symbolic significance, indirectly promoting the idea of expansionary capitalist reform as reclamation of civilizational destiny. Second, through its utility as a diplomatic deal-making carrot, irredentist evidentiary stick, and military–industrial auxiliary, Chinese maritime archaeology directly expedites the practical attainment of the national strategic program it inspires.

Unpalatable though it may be to their international colleagues, UWARC and its affiliates are Communist Party instruments. The lavish, newly refurbished National Museum, UWARC’s host organization, presents an ideologically sanitized version of Chinese history (Johnson 2011). The National Museum’s parent body, SACH, is implicated in political gamesmanship with North and South Korea over the national paternity of the ancient Koguryo Kingdom (Byington 2004; Korean Broadcasting System 2012; Scofield 2004). SACH falls under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture, which reportedly trains paid citizen-censors in how to reshape online public commentary in conformance with Communist Party expectations (Bandurski 2008).

It should therefore come as no surprise that neither the nationalist version of Ming Dynasty history supported by UWARC’s work nor its proposed contemporary analogue find universal acceptance. Whereas Zheng He is presented as a peaceful emissary seeking harmony and friendship on behalf of a benevolent emperor, he is seen elsewhere as gunboat diplomat for a tributary system based more on pragmatism than respect (Wade 2004). Whereas some attribute the historical spread of Matsu worship purely to grass-roots cultural diffusion, others see it as part of a deliberate imperial program for extending patronage and control (Watson 1985). Similarly, the ostensibly innocuous nature of the Chinese government’s recent

promotion of Zheng He, Matsuisism, maritime heritage, and Chinese culture generally is gainsaid by detractors who instead see it as a mercenary ploy designed to lubricate a bid for regional political and economic hegemony.

That maritime archaeology should be subject to political manipulation under an authoritarian regime is all but axiomatic in light of the growing body of academic literature cataloging the near-universal political expediency of state-sponsored archaeology. The apparent unanimity of party and popular interpretations of maritime heritage demonstrates the continued relevance of Bruce Trigger's (1984) observation that Chinese archaeology is more concerned with the cultivation of nationalist sentiment than ideological purity. Maritime China expert Geoff Wade has commented that "Chinese nationalism is fed on ignorance of its past relations. The way Zheng He is being represented is part of this" (as cited in Murphy 2010). The criticism is echoed by Byington: "In the People's Republic of China, history has tended to be written in such a way as to use the past to validate the present political order" (2004) and brought full circle by Von Falkenhausen: "The principal goal of (Chinese) archaeological work on the historical periods now lies in giving substance to orthodox historiography" (1993). The same point has been consistently reinforced by the political capital made of archaeological discoveries at Anyang, Xi'an, the Tarim Basin and elsewhere.

UWARC's nationalist antiquarianism casts a shadow on their scientific credibility. The unilinear historical narrative they propagate leaves little room for alternate interpretations. The emphasis they place on the recovery of artifacts associated with historical power elites and the overt predetermination of their Xisha and Nansha Islands findings are not consistent with the principles of problem-oriented research design. Falkenhausen raised the former issue 30 years ago, writing: "To an extent unparalleled in capitalist countries, research over the last 40 years [in China] has focused almost exclusively on the remains of the social elites... Archaeologists' obsession with spectacular objects... has led to a veritable treasure-hunting mentality" (1993). The tendency is especially pronounced when UWARC's record is compared with that of decentralized Australian, British or American systems preoccupied with less sensational tasks, such as outreach and regulatory compliance, referencing more quotidian, broadly representative maritime legacies. More rigorous critical analysis of UWARC's approach must occur in relation to those of its domestic professional peers and in the context of other national underwater archaeology/heritage management bodies. It would be useful, for instance, to compare the research priorities and larger mandates guiding underwater archaeological institutions in various countries, both as apply to teams such as the U.S. National Park Service' Submerged Resources Unit or Ireland's Underwater Archaeology Unit and to agencies such as the U.S. National Oceanic Administration.

Of greater immediate concern is the potential for maritime archaeological interpretations and activities to serve as a flashpoint in already tense international situations. The unfolding clash between China and Japan over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands is but one indication that the stakes of the game of "great power rivalry for influence and allies in maritime Asia" (Wade 2012), in which UWARC is a pawn,

are mounting. China's growing assertiveness has met with suspicion, if not open hostility, among regional players and global competitors, giving rise on both sides to incendiary rhetoric, military muscle-flexing and naval reinvestment. The USA and India, alarmed by Chinese interest in the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean, seek to "preclude the emergence of a regional hegemon" by encouraging obstinacy toward China among Southeast Asian allies (*ibid.*).

Crucially, underwater archaeology provides a pretense for entering waters and conducting activities, real or imagined, considered objectionable by suspicious governments. As the proposed Hambantota survey and Scarborough Shoal incident suggest, UWARC and its professional peers are susceptible to characterization as military/industrial Trojan horses. Archaeologically relevant investments in remotely operated vehicles, manned submersibles, and, in particular, seafloor survey and mapping can have direct energy, sovereignty, security and foreign relations implications. In 2009, for example, the *USS Impeccable's* suspected mapping of the seabed within China's Exclusive Economic Zone attracted harassment from a flotilla of PLAN vessels (Shanker 2009), while alleged Chinese attempts to map the East China seafloor in order to establish submarine navigational routes into the Pacific Ocean have elicited consternation among US Naval authorities (Dutton 2009).

When contemplating the instrumentality of Chinese underwater archaeology, the Western observer must strike a balance between cynicism and naiveté. UWARC is more than a tool of the state. UWARC staff is composed of intelligent, superbly trained, highly competent scientists versed in the most progressive preservation principles. They have acknowledged the preferability of in situ preservation, the importance of baseline surveys, the urgency of public awareness, and the need for more robust regulatory measures, including vigorous oversight of coastal dredging and construction. The operational changes these insights imply portend a shift in focus from 'rescue archaeology' toward more broad-based heritage management. It is a matter for more fine grained, anthropologically informed, comparative heritage management research to determine whether this would constitute progression in a universal developmental sequence toward a 'Western heritage management paradigm' or movement along a parallel path more aptly described, if inelegantly paraphrased, as 'Chinese heritage management with Western characteristics.'

The development of Chinese underwater archaeology cannot be read in terms of the imposition of a hegemonic WHM paradigm. Apart from the fact that deliberate cooption and repudiation of Western cultural elements is an essential aspect of Chinese nationalism, making unlikely the passive, uncritical adoption of so elaborate an apparatus, to assume otherwise would be to arrogantly deprive the Chinese people of their own history. Besides, much of what passes for a WHM paradigm is no more than the logical consequence of entrusting responsibility for mediating the tragedy of the archaeological/architectural commons to a bureaucratic state. It is only intellectual honesty to accord China its own developmental story, at times mirroring, but never mimicking, the dawning and institutional maturation of a preservation ethos in the West.

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Part VI
Afterword

Chapter 15

China's Tangled Web of Heritage

Stevan Harrell

The Heritage is Dead. Long Live the Heritage!

On a cloudy, cool day the caravan of minibuses disgorged an awkward gaggle of camera-toting Yi, Han, and foreign scholars into the dirt parking lot of the newly opened Bimo Cultural Park. The scholars were taking a break from the Fourth International Conference on Yi Studies, which took place in Meigu County, Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, along with the concurrent Conference on Tourism and Development and the Yi Cultural Festival. They formed a ragged queue and passed beneath the live chickens suspended from the entry arch of the Bimo Park, to be greeted by middle-aged men in dreadlocks and conical hats. These bimo, Nuosu Yi priests, were working part-time in the cultural park, *performing* rituals whenever there were visitors, and otherwise continuing what their patrilineal ancestors had done for tens of generations, *doing* rituals for the health of the living and the peace of the dead.

Inside the park were more bimo, demonstrating ritual techniques and implements in a variety of outdoor ritual arenas and in the interiors of newly built traditional houses, replete with intricate carved post-and-beam architecture, sheep and cattle skulls mounted over the doorways. In a few minutes, they would be performing an abbreviated version of a ritual for the health and good fortune of the scholarly visitors. One of the visitors, however, a foreign white woman, became quite agitated, and approached a mixed group who were chatting and taking each other's pictures in front of the architecture and scenery. This is horrible. This is the end of Yi culture. This is a pitifully inauthentic, commercialized place that has no connection to real, continuing culture.

A Yi scholar overheard and joined the group, but she was not ready to engage in polite, theoretical discussion. She turned to the complaining foreign scholar and

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lectured her, in perfect English: These men, these bimo, came here today specifically to do a ritual for your health and good fortune. Is this how you show your gratitude?

In one sense, the minute anything, cultural heritage or otherwise, becomes an object of preservation, we know that it is done for. Going further, anytime anything gets labeled “heritage,” it is probably a signal that it is in need of preservation, in other words, done for. Change is an inherent part of culture, to the point that we often think of “culture as process.” Insofar as we try to preserve anything, to stop the organic process of cultural change in its tracks, we are using a kind of cultural formaldehyde that is only suitable for preserving dead things. This was what bothered the visitor in the bimo park: she was not witnessing bimo in their organic setting, but rather in a setting created by the process of cultural preservation, which indicated that they needed help surviving, but could not survive in a meaningful form because they needed help. The heritage is dead.

In another sense, however, preserved cultural heritages continue to exist, even if in changed form, and we can just as easily see that preservation, too, is part of a process of cultural change, and that the forms that emerge in the intentional process of preservation are just as much links in the chain of cultural continuity as are the forms that emerge out of less self-conscious and more organic processes. If the bimo rituals were still effective, it did not matter that they took place in a cultural park, to benefit visitors, in exchange for money (actually, bimo have always performed for money, or for livestock, which is the same as money in the Nuosu language). Anything that allowed this tradition to continue, in whatever form, was worthwhile; it did not matter that the form was changed, since it would have changed anyway if left alone. And the foreign scholar ought to understand and be grateful not only that the tradition was continuing, but that she was benefitting from the ritual protection. This is what bothered the Yi scholar. Long live the heritage!

There is, however, a difference between cultural change as an organic process and cultural preservation or heritage protection. The former just happens, as part of everyday life, and people who are part of an organic cultural tradition do not self-consciously continue it. Once it gets labeled tradition, it enters a different arena, a self-conscious realm of the stage, museum, or coffee-table book, and its function or its efficacy changes. Perhaps the first scholar to articulate this was the great Sinologist and historian Joseph Levenson, who distinguished, in his masterwork *Confucian China and its Modern Fate*, between tradition as a living commitment to an unquestioned set of ideas about the world, and *traditionalism* as a reverence for the past *because it is past*, a reverence that can “take its subjective tone only in a world in which alternatives to the worship of the ‘eternal yesterday’ have been sharply presented” (Levenson 1968: 32). As soon as Confucianism became something objective to be preserved, it was no longer tradition, but rather a servant of traditionalism. Levenson’s poignant example of the general-president Yuan Shikai, clothed in immense power (ibid.: II, 3–7), making a fool of himself trying to be emperor in 1916 points out the distinction clearly. Confucianism as a form of statecraft was already dead, and Yuan died within a few months of his imperial

debacle, but the traditionalist project of Confucianism lives in popular books and TV programs today.

The Land of Reconstruction Encounters the Land of Preservation

As the very existence of this volume indicates, China is in the middle of a cultural heritage preservation fever. Everything from rituals to scenic canyons to shipwrecks is the object of *baohu* or preservation, in an immense but very fractional and sometimes haphazard effort to save something valuable from the bulldozer force of modernization that threatens to sweep away everything that impedes the nation's path toward skyscrapers, superhighways, Wal-Marts, and cosmopolitan culture in general.

Still, the effort to preserve is not simply a feeble, rear-guard reaction to the effort to modernize. It is very much *a part of* the modernizing effort, which in turn is a part of China's continuing process of nation-building. China needs to modernize generally for some of the same reasons it needs to preserve its heritage in particular: to fulfill its national destiny, both as a united polity and society with its thousands of years of heritage (more than a lot of other places, particularly Europe and North America), and as a proud nation among nations that lives up to international standards in every aspect of its existence, including cultural preservation.

Like every other part of China's modernization, cultural heritage preservation is happening both "with Chinese characteristics" and "with universal characteristics." This leads to a paradox: China needs to live up to international standards in heritage preservation as in other aspects of life, but meeting these standards is awkward, given the fact that the Chinese intellectual, architectural, and artistic traditions have never made much of a distinction between what is old, preserved, and authentic, and what is new, reconstructed, and copied.

The world movement for historical and cultural preservation, exemplified in UNESCO's heritage preservation programs, is profoundly Eurocentric, based more than anything on the construction of "Western Civilization" in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries on the basis of a historiographically linked series of cultures and regimes, stretching from bronze-age Mesopotamia and Egypt through the "classical" Mediterranean civilizations of Greece and Rome to the European middle Ages to the then-present of the historiographers. All of these places built monumental architecture out of stone and painted on walls, and later canvases, with relatively insoluble oil paints, and so they have a lot of original stuff left over. And there has developed a cult of the old in those countries that led the effort of heritage preservation: what's valuable is old, and what is old is authentic. New things can be valuable, too (a Picasso can be worth as much as a Dutch Master), but only if they are innovatively, not just recently, made. Anything that is judged a to be a fake or even an honest copy is worth orders of magnitude less than the original, and if the fake is a literary work, it is dismissed or even prosecuted as plagiarism.

Authenticity in this world also applies to culture. Although anthropologists have moved beyond the “Culture, Genuine and Spurious” of Edward Sapir’s description (Sapir 1924), the tourist industry has not. As Oakes and many others writing about China have shown (Oakes 1998), Western tourists consider themselves cheated if they run into invented dances or polyester ethnic costumes, every bit as much as they would be cheated when shown a copy of a painting by Raphael or Leonardo, or when they tour the palaces of Knossos restored, everyone agrees, by a terrible mistake of the early twentieth century archaeologist Arthur Evans. It is acceptable, as in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, to piece together fragments of an ancient marble frieze, even to fill in the missing parts, *as long as it is clearly indicated which are the originals and which are the missing parts*.

How different is the Chinese tradition! While of course Confucianism reveres the old and honors the historian, it does not draw a sharp distinction or make a clear value judgment between the old and the new. This is perhaps because the old for the Confucianist is still present; the past still lives in the present, and things made in the present are just as valid representatives of the heritage as those made in the past. China has been restoring, reconstructing, and copying its cultural heritage for a long time, as Zhao describes in his history of the temples of Fangyang. One of the greatest of twentieth century traditional Chinese painters, Chang Tai-chien, is said to have created a large percentage of the Ming Dynasty paintings exhibited in world museums, and long, unattributed passages quoted from previous authors were traditionally interpreted as respectful to one’s seniors rather than as academic misconduct or violations of intellectual property rights.

There are also material reasons for the Chinese emphasis on restoration or reconstruction rather than preservation. Much of China’s traditional architecture is built of wood, which as Dave Barry has commented is such a popular building material because it will not only burn, it will also rot (Barry 1983: 8). The First Emperor’s Afang Palace was a wonder of the world in its time, but unlike its counterparts at Knossos or Persepolis, it burned when its occupant’s regime was overthrown. Still, something once burned or partially rotten can easily be rebuilt, and I even visited, in 1985, the partially completed Beacon Tower on top of Lishan near Xi’an, where the ill-fated King You of Zhou lit a fire summoning the feudal lords to make his concubine laugh. It was a short hike up the mountain from the pavilion where Bai Juyi, about 1,500 years later, composed his great poetic lament of love and dynastic decline, *The Song of Everlasting Sorrow*. Also recently rebuilt.

Thus we should not be surprised that heritage preservation in China often means heritage reconstruction, as with the *hutong* alleys of Beijing or the Old Town of Lijiang, or even heritage reinvention, as in the clothing, dances, and architecture of the innumerable ethnic minority villages vying for tourist attention and tourist dollars all over China’s southwest.

The problem for China, then, is that the world standards for historic preservation come from Europe, the Land of Preservation, and transplant only with difficulty to China, the Land of Reconstruction. If China wants to meet international standards and become a leader in things cultural and historical, as in

everything else, then it must play by the rules set in the Land of Preservation. And there are a number of reasons why China wants to meet international standards.

The first of these is simply nationalistic pride. Chinese nationalism, ever since its inception in the late nineteenth century, has combined an odd mix of pride in its ancient and marvelous civilization, its moral, social, and culinary superiority to the rest of the world, with self-loathing for not being able to keep up with the West or, even more shamefully, with Japan. During Mao's time, having been shunned by the UN as it was by so much of the capitalist world, China basically gave the imperialists the finger, asserting that it was going to develop its economy, culture, and society its own revolutionary way. But beginning with China's admission to the UN in 1971, and accelerating with the Reform and Opening after 1978, China has been playing catch-up, in areas ranging from superhighway construction to grand events like the Olympic Games to cultural heritage protection. As China asserts itself as a member of the world, in the *shijie* sense outlined by Swain, it must play by the *shijie* rules, and win. At the same time, it can play by those *shijie* rules to assert its identity as *tianxia*, as a cultural and moral exemplar for itself and for the rest of the world.

The second reason China needs to play by international rules is more instrumental; as Zhou shows with the rebuilding of the Stilwell Road (usually called the Burma Road in the Anglophone world), and as Adams shows with underwater archaeology, historical heritage can serve geopolitical interests. If Zheng He's ship was wrecked in a particular part of the South China Sea, it strengthens China's claim to the area within the famous Nine-dashed Line, and if he traveled all the way to Kenya, there is historical continuity with the port that the Chinese are now building to export African minerals. Cultural pride and national interests reinforce each other; as Mao Zedong famously admonished, *gu wei jin yong, yang wei zhong yong*: Use the past to serve the present, and use the foreign to serve China.

Pride and Profit

It is easy to be cynical about cultural preservation. When local officials invent a frog-dragon brand for a village totem, or compose a suite of traditional synthesizer tunes, with accompanying dance steps to teach tourists around a bonfire, when they charge admission to a platform from which people can view rice terraces, we see monetary motivations not far below the surface of cultural heritage protection. Indeed cultural heritage, particularly ethnic heritage in China's minority regions, is often seen explicitly as a way to earn money for the local economy. As Su points out, preservation is not a brake on development, but a part of development or even a reason for development. And of course when money is the main motivation, artistic license in the service of attractiveness or even quaintness takes precedence over the kind of respect for authenticity that might lead to preserving or even copying historical relics that would seem dull to anyone but scholars.

The extreme forms of this tendency to create really cool cultural heritage rather than merely authentic cultural heritage happen when the living, organic cultural forms of people-in-place have to be moved out of the way altogether in order to make way for the flashier and hopefully more lucrative versions. Two of these extreme forms illustrate the complex relationships between the practical needs of the Land of Reconstruction and the world standards of the Land of Preservation. In the Lipo village of Yishala, which I have visited intermittently since 1988, there were no foreign standards in the way of Chinese-style reconstruction. In 2005, local officials contracted with a Chengdu corporation to develop the village for tourism, and one of the first things they did was judge the village office buildings to be not quaint enough and knock them down, planning to replace them with replicas of what a traditional ethnic village office ought to have looked like (even though there never was any such thing). In part of Fangyan, a landscape where people had been living in a relatively harmonious and sustainable fashion for thousands of years, people had to leave altogether, because that part of Fangyan became a national park, and according to the rules of the Land of Preservation, in this case those laid down by the American John Muir in the nineteenth century, national parks are pristine landscapes, not places where people live.

More moderate forms involve simply sprucing up, rather than changing out altogether, pre-existing cultural forms, or adding new ones where the old ones seem insufficient. As Nitzky describes the Horse Mountain Community Museum, “‘authentic’ cultural forms have been reconstructed and performed... [to] build a museum to preserve local cultural heritage.” And of course tourist towns like Lijiang are big-scale versions of this. Not only has the Old Town been transformed into a theme park of new, beautifully traditional houses; World Famous Director Zhang Yimou has created a *son et lumière* spectacle, “Impressions of Lijiang” where visitors can (for a price) absorb the essence, if not the rather more quotidian particulars, of Lijiang’s multi-ethnic cultural heritage.

But lest we become too cynical about heritage preservation, lest we agree too easily with the rules set by the Land of Preservation, perhaps the synthesizer dances, the newly elaborate architectural designs, the cultural spectacle by non-ethnic Zhang Yimou, are really preserving heritage more realistically than would leaving old things alone. If culture is process, and cultural process involves cultural change, can we really draw a sharp line between newly invented traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) and organically evolving traditions? Is the line we draw one between things invented by outsiders, such as Zhang Yimou or the Chengdu tourism corporation, and those invented by insiders, such as the cultural bureaucratic elites that emerge from the communities themselves, including Dr. Wei of the Horse Mountain Community Museum in Guizhou? Or do the insiders become semi-outsiders just by participating in a process where the outsiders have more power?

There is also another reason to be less cynical about heritage preservation, even when it involves inventing new traditions or displacing less “interesting” and thus potentially less lucrative forms. However much cultural preservation is aimed at profits for local communities, local elites, or cultural-touristic entrepreneurs, profit

is not the only reason for doing it. There is also pride. National pride of course is one thing, and both the culture itself and Chinese bureaucrats', entrepreneurs', and scholars' ability to preserve and display it contribute to national pride and the eventual (one hopes) fading of the Chinese compulsion to brood over the insults and depredations delivered by nineteenth and early twentieth century imperialists.

Alongside national pride, however, come regional, local, and ethnic pride. Go to any provincial museum in China today, and you will see the glories of the Ancient [fill in the name of the old state or region] culture. In Chengdu it is the Shu, in Chongqing it is the Ba, in Hangzhou it is the Yue, and in Wuhan it is the Chu. These regional identities do not oppose or conflict with Chinese identities; the central state tolerates and even encourages them, because they contribute to the *duoyuan yiti*, or "*E Pluribus Unum*" national narrative (Fei 1989) that is part of the larger project of nation-building.

Ethnic identity is a little more problematic, because certain ethnic regions, primarily Tibet and Xinjiang, can display their pride only within very narrow limits set by the Party Center; they must begin with the premise that Tibet or Xinjiang is part of China and the Tibetans and Uyghurs are two of the branches of the Chinese national family. But within those limits, even Tibet's and Xinjiang's regional or ethnic cultures are promoted as part of the national narrative of historical fusion.

Other ethnic groups enjoy much more leeway. The Ten-Month Solar Calendar Cultural Park, in the capital of Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan, celebrates the calendrical accomplishments of the ancient Yi, as discovered and reconstructed by Yi scholar Liu Yaohan and his students. It is a rather typical, tacky, 1990s theme park, with imagined and invented architectural forms that correspond to the ancient calendar, though the architecture was probably never built before and the calendar may, in fact, not have existed either. But the Park and the scholarship that gave rise to it are very important for many Yi elites, because they show that not just the Han, but also the Yi, have contributed to the glorious, multicultural process of historical inevitability that has led to the Chinese Nation of today.

Whose Pride, Whose Profit?

Pride and profit, or as Zhu and Li call them, consciousness and commodification, are not necessarily in conflict. The real conflicts in heritage protection are those between the interests of different groups of stakeholders in any project, some of whom may participate primarily for pride, some primarily for profit, but most of them in hopes of both. As we look through the cases of conflict over cultural heritage, we find that these stakeholder interests tend to cleave along five different axes: Bureaucratic versus popular; national versus regional, local, or ethnic; area versus area; department versus department within the national or local bureaucracy; and China versus the world heritage regime.

Despite Chairman Mao's famous mass line—from the masses to the masses (by way of the Party Bureaucracy), contemporary China is not the land of popular initiative. Almost everything in China happens from the top down, to the point where local people undertake very few initiatives on their own, and even when they do, they may have to hang red banners upon completion, thanking leaders for their support and concern. Cultural heritage projects are no exception. And this despite the undoubted belief in the Communist Party's ideology that it, and its projects, exist, to quote the Chairman again, to "serve the people." The problem is that the leaders have little actual faith in the people's ability to know what they need to be served.

So we find cases where organizations that are genuinely *minjian*, or "among the people," often led by very local bureaucrats from the village or township levels, do in fact promote their own heritage, by forming tourism committees like the cadres promoting the historical heritage of the "Eastern Queendom" in Danba, Sichuan (Tenzin 2013); establishing local museums like the Moso Folk Museum at Lugu Lake in Yunnan (Blumenfield Kedar 2010); opening guest houses for tourists, as in Jiuzhaigou National Park in Sichuan, and so on. But it seems that, as soon as there is real profit involved, the state takes over, often in collaboration with private entrepreneurs, local or foreign, and ends up taking the profits of tourism or heritage display away from the locals, or at least away from most of the locals, which can lead to pro-tourist and anti-tourist factions within communities, as happens in Dong tourist villages in Guizhou (Cornet 2011). Even when heritage promoters tout local participation as an important principle, it is only through the rare intervention of a truly understanding member of the national elite, like Director Wei described in Nitzky's chapter, that a project remains totally participatory.

The bureaucracy itself, of course, is not unified. There are conflicts, rivalries, and competitions both between different levels of the bureaucracy—national, provincial, county, and township—and between different *xitong* or functional hierarchies, at the same level. The battles for control over conservation, construction, maintenance, and display at Emei Shan, narrated by Zhu and Li, provide a baroquely complex and almost confusing example. Finishing the article, we cannot quite remember which agency did what, but we get the picture: every agency has its finger in the cultural pie.

It is important to remember that bureaucratic battles are not just over profit, but also over pride. And this is particularly evident when two places are competing over the same cultural resource. There was a huge scramble, for example, around the turn of the century, when it became clear that the name Shangri-la was up for the taking, and that whatever county in Yunnan, Sichuan, or Tibet won the contest would not only be able to attract tourism investment and eventually tourist dollars, but also be able to point to itself as the location of James Hilton's fabled valley, even though Hilton made up the "Tibetan" name himself (Zhongdian, in Yunnan, eventually received the honor). In Danba County, two townships vie to be the seat of the Eastern Queendom, and local elites in each have mobilized both fairly solid and more dubious evidence in service of their claims (Tenzin 2013).

Pride yes, but of course also branding, which ties pride back to profit, and which is becoming increasingly important as the number of tourist sites grows even faster (if that is possible) than the number of tourists. How many places call themselves first somethings, such as Shanhaiguan, the First Pass under heaven (*tianxia*), Panzhuhua, the First City of the Yangzi River, or even my old Yishala, which bills itself as China's first (in what sense I'm really not sure) Yi cultural village. One is reminded of Garrison Keillor's "Lake Wobegon: Gateway to Central Minnesota."

There are so many interests at stake—national and local, bureaucratic and popular, preservationist and developmentalist—within China, that it is not surprising that China, however much its leaders want to comply with international standards, ends up fudging or partially ignoring such standards when the domestic stakes are so high. So a place like Lijiang, which has been de-authenticised in the interest of seeming more authentic, whose original inhabitants have been pushed out in favor of outsiders who can deliver a more minority-like experience, has been threatened with removal from the UNESCO list. Removal would be a blow to Lijiang's and even China's pride, for sure (and for that reason probably UNESCO would never actually do it), but it might be worth it, if not for the cultural bureaucrats who would lose enormous face, at least for the outside investors who would probably see no decline whatsoever in their profits.

Roads perhaps exemplify the nexus of local and national, Chinese and global, pride and profit, most clearly. Whether it is the Ancient Tea Horse Road and its rivalry with the Southern Silk Road, or the Stilwell Road of World War II vintage, tourist and development dollars are of course at stake, but also national pride of two kinds. First, China had ancient trade routes that tied together parts of the *tianxia*, and the presence of Our Road (Tea or Silk, take your pick) shows how important our region was in the construction and cohesion of that kind of Sino-centric world order. Second, our trade routes connected us to India, Central Asia, and ultimately to Persia, the Middle East, and Europe. China has been cosmopolitan for a long time, and the re-cosmopolitization of the era of Reform and Opening is simply reassertion of China's rightful place in the community of nations. And on the Stilwell/Burma Road, even though any real volume of trade is apparently decades away, again China shows its connection to the world not only through trade, but also through its sometimes-forgotten (elsewhere, anyway) role in defeating Japanese Imperialism in Southeast Asia.

A tangled web, to be sure, but are China's culture-mongers actually trying to deceive? Or are they in fact just doing cultural preservation with Chinese characteristics, playing an ancient Chinese game in which I show you a surface, different from the "reality" inside, and you know that's what I am doing, but it is acceptable to both of us because we know the game? Or are they simply practicing cultural preservation like any other country, justifiably proud of their heritage and worried that if they did not work actively to preserve it, it might really be done for? Whatever they are doing, they have some magnificent cultural heritage to preserve, and although we may snipe around the edges of the project, as I have done here, I am sure everyone is glad they are doing it. I cannot think of a single place mentioned in this volume that I would not want to visit.

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