

World Heritage Craze in China

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Universal Discourse, National Culture,
and Local Memory



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Introduction

What makes the concept of World Heritage exceptional is its universal application. World Heritage sites belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory on which they are located.

—United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

On 24 June 2011, the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO added the West Lake Cultural Landscape of Hangzhou to the World Heritage List, claiming that it is a “perfect fusion between man and nature” (UNESCO 2011). The deputy mayor of the city of Hangzhou, Zhang Jianting, broke into tears.

The tears not only showed Zhang’s expression of excitement but meant something more. According to Zhang, the designation marked the end of a long frustration with the nomination process. Since the beginning of its preparatory work in 1990, the West Lake had been the subject of a great amount of misunderstanding from the West. As Zhang recalled, a Western heritage expert once said, “There are thousands of lakes like that in my hometown” (*China Daily* 2011). The true significance and the aesthetic philosophy that informs and is inscribed in West Lake itself received little attention and interest from Westerners during the nomination. Therefore, the designation was taken as signifying that the West had finally come to recognize and appreciate the philosophical significance and values of China’s cultural landscape aesthetic.

However, it is still very shocking to me (and probably to most readers) that a Chinese official could break down in tears simply because the West finally recognized the value of a Chinese heritage site. There is an apparent paradox behind the tears. If, as the UNESCO statement says, World Heritage Sites are universal and “belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory on which they are located,” there should be no separation between the West, the Chinese, and all other peoples. Yet

Mr. Zhang's tears show us the opposite side of the story: World Heritage seems to have created a stronger division between China and the West.

The division is more evident as we reflect on China's strategy for World Heritage nomination, which could be said to be a "heritage boom" in recent years. The first group of Chinese heritage sites was listed as World Heritage in 1987. Over the past thirty years, although Italy, France, Spain, Greece, and Germany, among other Western countries, have dominated the World Heritage List, the number of sites in China has quickly risen from zero to fifty-two. The pace is the fastest in the world, just like the pace of China's economic growth. By February 2018, fifty-two sites in China had been added to UNESCO's World Heritage List, with a further sixty-one currently on the tentative list.¹ China has been the most active and high-profile nation in the World Heritage arena. According to Meskill et al. (2015), not only is China active in nomination numbers, but the State Party has been sending the largest delegation group to the World Heritage Committee sessions: twenty-nine official delegates per meeting between 2002 and 2013. "Being the second" on the World Heritage List creates national pride.

As Silverman and Blumenfield note (2013: 6), China's enthusiasm for World Heritage reflects the state's strategy of creating a national cultural soft power. This is revealed in the Five-Year Plans on Cultural Heritage published every five years by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH). According to the thirteenth Five-Year Plan, one of the accomplishments of the twelfth Five-Year Plan was that "World Heritage Sites of China has increased to 50, becoming the second of the world." And an aim of the thirteenth Five-Year Plan is to "strengthen the nomination, conservation and management for World Heritage." Given that, the Chinese efforts in listing World Heritage Sites are to show and underscore the difference between China and the world, especially the West.

This paradox is the core curiosity that inspired me to write this book. Why is World Heritage so important for the Chinese? Also, as perhaps the most active World Heritage player nowadays, China's strategies, acts, and utilizations of World Heritage at both global and domestic levels help us understand not only its heritage policies but also the political, cultural, and social contexts that shape the policies. In this book, I will examine the role of UNESCO's World Heritage program in its discursive and institutional interplay with the Chinese cultural preservation system. Three dimensions of World Heritage in China should be addressed: the universal agenda, the national practices, and the local responses. How is Chinese nation building progress shaped by the supposedly universal program? How are common Chinese people's lives entangled with the nation's World Heritage boom? And what part does the interplay between

the universal, national, and local play in the reflection and reshaping of China's political, cultural, and social contexts?

This book introduces a sociological and reflective lens through which to view UNESCO's efforts to establish a universal cultural model. I argue that the World Heritage program has provided scripts for different stakeholders, especially nation-states, to perform in different modes for particular interests. The universal model, seemingly hegemonic, is in fact largely constrained by the discursive and substantive structures of cultural preservation within national borders. There has been less a universal cultural model than a nation-oriented agenda of heritage issues. The book also epistemologically investigates how narratives of the past—collective memories of the heritage sites—are reframed through an exogenously derived discursive frame, with apparent nationalistic discourses. What are the roles of national and local authorities in this process? And finally, in a “world society,” who has the power to make whose heritage and for what purposes?

World Heritage Craze in China

World Heritage has become prevalent in China's public sphere. The news of West Lake's designation as a World Heritage Site inspired nationwide excitement and celebration. Immediately after the designation, thousands of Chinese people used Weibo—the most popular Chinese miniblog site, which is similar to Twitter—to circulate the news. Hundreds of media reports about the designation came out the next day. The central government nominates and manages heritage sites, and local governments and people are preoccupied with World Heritage. As Zhu and Li (2013) show, in the World Heritage Site Emei, the local government proactively maximizes local social and economic benefits of the World Heritage Site title by interpreting and identifying the site in its own way, which is remarkably different from the official designation.

Even small towns that are barely known to people in their own provinces have announced their intent to compete for a World Heritage nomination. In 2004, the small ancient town of Qikou, located on the shore of the Yellow River, hosted the International Symposium on the Protection of Ancient Architecture in Qikou, which suggested that the ultimate goal of the preservation project was to get Qikou placed on the World Heritage List. Local officers and scholars acknowledged that this goal seemed impossible but admitted that the statement itself would strengthen public and tourist impressions and bring more bureaucratic attention in the form of financial support. The case of Qikou reveals that the national preoc-

cupation with World Heritage does not rest merely on the designation. Rather, it is deeply anchored and implemented in political, social, and cultural discourses.

World Heritage has been cognitively and practically entangled with not only substantive issues of historic preservation but also the discursive structures of history, culture, and politics. The rhetoric of World Heritage constitutes a new nationalistic sensation, which in turn provides terminological weapons for young Chinese patriots to legitimize their anti-Western sentiments and actions. In January 2007, Chinese TV personality Rui Chenggang² wrote a blog entry that was the beginning of a crusade against a Starbucks retail store in the Forbidden City, the palace of late imperial China between 1406 and 1911 and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Rui said that the store marred the solemnity of the Forbidden City and undermined Chinese culture.

He claimed, "The Forbidden City is a symbol of China's cultural heritage. Starbucks is a symbol of lower middle-class culture in the West. We need to embrace the world, but we also need to preserve our cultural identity. There is a fine line between globalization and contamination" (Watts 2007). The campaign soon became front-page news, which rapidly spread around the world. Thousands of people responded to Rui's blog, many calling for Starbucks to leave the historic site. Among the responses, one frequently mentioned term was "heritage": "We should protect our heritage," "Starbucks has trampled over Chinese World Heritage!" The result was that Starbucks closed this retail store.

The anti-Starbucks crusade highlights a paradoxical aspect of the UNESCO World Heritage program: it inevitably oscillates between its original intention to promote cultural preservation for all humankind and local utilization to deepen cultural distinctions between groups, nations, and cultures (Barthel-Bouchier and Hui 2007). World Heritage nomination, designation, and management have become more a signifier of a nation's image and self-esteem than a "world" project. For example, preeminent historian Luo Zhewen remarks that all the World Heritage Sites in China represent the nation's "ancient history, unique land of charm and splendid scenery . . . for thousands and even hundreds of thousands of years, the cultural tradition of the Chinese nation has all along continued without interruption, which is rarely seen among the ancient civilized states" (Luo 2008: 20–21).

In this sense, World Heritage symbolizes what Tunbridge and Ashworth call "the permeability of political frontiers to aesthetic ideas" (1996: 58). Contentions for World Heritage nominations have increasingly become a regional concern. In 2004, the Republic of Korea nominated a local traditional festival, called Ganjeung Danojie, to become a World Intangi-

ble Cultural Heritage. This evoked a nationwide anti-Korean sentiment in China because the Chinese people believed that the nominated festival originated from, and remained largely affiliated with, China's Duanwu Festival (Dragon Boat Festival). Many people condemned South Korea for "stealing heritage from China." The retired professor and heritage expert Wu Bingan, who first discovered South Korea's agenda, wrote a letter to cultural authorities appealing for intensified efforts to defend Chinese traditions. Public reactions were much more heated than Wu's appeal.

Accusations against South Korea proliferated in mass media and internet forums. However, the Chinese government and most heritage intellectuals remained cool headed and objective in the debate, acknowledging that the festival nominated by South Korea was different from the Chinese festival. The difference, admitted by the government, was ignored by the public because of lack of education about this kind of national heritage. In 2009, the Ministry of Culture nominated China's Duanwu Festival as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. Jing Qinghe, director of the Intangible Culture Heritage Protection Center of Hubei province, said that the Ganjeung Danojie instance provided an opportunity for the Chinese to learn from others about the preservation of national heritage (Wang 2009).

Both the Starbucks crusade and the Duanwu debate show that the Chinese are now discursively well equipped to use the language of World Heritage for nationalistic ends. Nevertheless, the protection and preservation of old landscapes and architecture were not commonly practiced in imperial China. As Baode Han (2006) argues, in imperial China, old architecture and landscapes were not considered worth preserving. David Lowenthal agrees, arguing that Chinese "esteem for tradition goes hand in hand with recurrent destruction of material remains" (1998: 20). This being the case, we should ask: What has caused the extensive preoccupation with World Heritage (and heritage preservation in general) in contemporary China?

Lowenthal lays out two general causal factors for the current heritage boom in Western countries: "traumas of loss and change and fears of a menacing future" (*ibid.*: 11). He suggests that postmodernity isolates and dislocates individuals from their original roots, namely family, neighborhood, and nation. Increasing longevity, family dissolution, mass migration, and the development of technology have all reformulated arrangements of time and space, whereby the interest in heritage has grown because people wish to remember the past and do so by "clinging to remnants of stability" (*ibid.*: 6). Lowenthal's account may explain why China is increasingly enthusiastic about cultural heritage.

Like the West, China has witnessed "traumas of loss and change and fears of a menacing future" in recent decades. However, this accounts

only for the preoccupation with heritage in China: it is inadequate to explain why China is so preoccupied with the designation “world” for their heritage sites. To explain this interest, we need to first review the UNESCO World Heritage program. What does World Heritage mean? What was it created for? And to what extent has it represented the world?

World Heritage Convention

The aforementioned anti-West Starbucks crusade was effectively articulated, organized, and fostered around the conceptual weapon of Chinese cultural heritage. Ironically, the movement reveals a characteristic paradox: the core message of “heritage” is in fact derived from this campaign’s target—the West. The original meaning of “heritage” in Chinese—*yi chan*—is identical with that in English: that which has been or may be inherited; any property, and especially land, which devolves by right of inheritance.³ Until China ratified the UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, or World Heritage Convention (WHC), heritage in Chinese rarely entailed cultural implications. It merely referred to heredity, probate law, and taxation.

It should be noted that the extension of the meaning of the term into the cultural dimension in the West is also new. Tunbridge and Ashworth write that the expansion of the meaning of “heritage” is a recent phenomenon. It has expanded from the primary meaning of an individual’s inheritance from an ancestor into at least five much broader categories: (1) any physical relict surviving from the past, (2) a nonphysical aspect of the past, (3) all accumulated cultural and artistic productivity, (4) elements in whole or in part from the natural environment, and (5) the industry that is based on selling goods and serves with a heritage component (1996: 2–3). As Lowenthal observes, in the West, the modern meaning of heritage as cultural patrimony and legacy can be traced back only to the mid-1970s. This new usage, however, has rapidly spread throughout the world (1998: 4–5).

In fact, historical preservation was well organized in the West before heritage became the guiding concept. As early as the 1830s, cultural preservation in Great Britain became an intellectual and artistic concern, culminating in the establishment of the Commons Preservation Society in 1865 in order to protect beautiful lands. As public interest in preservation increased, the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty was founded in 1895 because of concerns about the destructive influences of industrialization on the preindustrial landscape (Barthel 1996: 13–15). In the United States, in contrast, the preservation movement was

more locally oriented. Until the 1930s, the federal government had little involvement. At the public level, the National Park Service started to play a more important role in preservation. In the private sector, the founding of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1949 marked a breakthrough in cultural preservation in the United States (*ibid.*: 20–23).

In addition to these endeavors bounded within national parameters, a transnational initiative for historic preservation emerged after the two world wars. These wars included the massive devastation of world famous places, such as the historic Warsaw. In 1955, the Hague Convention was instituted to promote protection for historic monuments during wars. In the meantime, industrial construction that engendered destruction of historic sites drew increasing scholarly and public attention to the state of cultural heritage in developing countries. The construction of the Aswan High Dam in Egypt during the 1960s provoked the worldwide cooperative rescue of the temples of Abu Simbel. The rescue gave the United Nations hope and the desire to create a more ambitious convention for global heritage preservation. A series of proposals were presented to UNESCO, which eventually culminated in WHC in 1972 (Turtinen 2000).

WHC addresses the growing issues of social and economic change that aggravates the poor situation of heritage sites of “outstanding universal value.” More importantly, it maintains that “it is incumbent on the international community as a whole to participate in the protection of the cultural and natural heritage” (UNESCO 1972: 1). This explicitly articulated goal of heritage preservation is consistent with the United Nations’ fundamental principle of the “culture of peace” (Di Giovine 2009: 75). It is crucial to acknowledge that “parts of the cultural or natural heritage are of outstanding interest and therefore need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole” (UNESCO 1972: 1).

Accordingly, nation-states are simultaneously empowered to facilitate heritage preservation by working with transgovernmental organizations and required to allow outside forces and resources to be involved in their domestic cultural affairs. Di Giovine indicates that this is a “distinctive placemaking endeavor” to reformulate territorial perceptions to create a universally framed understanding of the world, which consequently promotes the culture of world peace (2009: 77).

WHC is a flagship program of UNESCO. Its rhetoric of “outstanding universal value” develops a set of narratives that effectively diffuse the moral responsibility for cultural preservation as a universally adopted principle. In mid-2001, the Taliban regime of Afghanistan decided to destroy the Bamiyan Buddhas to clear the nation of non-Islamic elements. Global society responded with extreme concern and demanded that the Taliban desist from such activities. Although UNESCO failed to dissuade

the Taliban government, the massive global anxiety their destruction engendered showed that the international belief in the principle of cultural preservation for “all humankind” had been widely accepted. Moreover, since then, the Taliban regime has been portrayed as culturally illegitimate by world society because it violated this fundamental norm of the world cultural system (Di Giovine 2009: 332; Meskell 2010: 193).

The discursive and institutional reputation of WHC lies not only in its intergovernmental nature. Its rhetorical credibility is derived from its embodiment of an objective, scientific, and politically neutral authority. As stated in the convention, its mission is to establish a close, collaborative relationship with the existing nongovernmental organizations for cultural preservation, including the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and the Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), and the International Union for Preservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). By consulting with these advisory bodies “in their respective areas of competence and capability, [the committee] shall prepare [its] documentation and the agenda of its meetings and shall have the responsibility for the implementation of its decisions” (UNESCO 1972: 8).

With assistance from these scientific and professional nongovernmental organizations, WHC provides the world with a successful example of “cosmopolitan law,” which transcends the boundary of nation-states and underscores basic humanitarian values (Held et al. 1999). It also maintains its institutional legitimacy in its formation of the World Heritage Committee, a transnational committee consisting of twenty-one States Parties that have ratified the convention. The committee is empowered to inspect and evaluate the state of preservation of heritage sites. The most remarkable program in the convention is the World Heritage List, an inventory of heritage sites that meet one of ten criteria for outstanding universal value.⁴

The transnational committee is required to consult with the professional bodies for the nominations: ICOMOS for cultural heritage, ICUN for natural heritage, and ICCROM for advice on restoration techniques and training (Turtinen 2000). Another factor that reinforces the power of WHC is its list World Heritage in Danger (UNESCO 1972: 6). This list empowers the committee to strengthen its image as an objective judge, thereby reinforcing the discourse of the universality of cultural preservation.

By 2017, 1,073 sites had been added to the World Heritage List. The list helps States Parties reconsider and redefine their heritage within the discursive framework of “outstanding universal value.” It to some extent builds a world culture of cosmopolitanism (Meskell 2016). As Diane Barthel-Bouchier and Ming Min Hui (2007) suggest, a number of World Heritage Sites have acquired a characteristic that makes them candidates

for “cosmopolitan memory,” a notion originally developed by Levy and Sznaider (2002) to articulate such events as the Holocaust. According to Barthel-Bouchier and Hui, the narrative that World Heritage belongs to all humankind has created and promoted the cognitive mapping of World Heritage’s cosmopolitan value for the people who have no territorial or cultural connection with it. In this sense, WHC and its affiliated lists is an ideal peacemaking achievement of cosmopolitanism that entails “a process of ‘international globalization’ through which global concerns become part of local experiences of an increasing number of people” (ibid.: 87).

World Heritage as a Field of Scholarship

Researchers have reviewed the accomplishments of WHC over the past forty-five years. As Christina Cameron suggests, perhaps the most successful achievement of WHC is the dissemination of a series of concepts that shape today’s heritage field, such as outstanding universal value, authenticity, integrity, and cultural landscape (2016). In addition, it has raised public awareness and increased the capacity of civil society for involvement in heritage conservation. Another unexpected consequence of WHC, says Cameron, is the emergence of the interdisciplinary field of heritage studies. World Heritage has become a field of scholarship, which has given rise to a “heritage discourse,” with a set of theories, concepts, methodologies, and research topics. As a result, a new field of literature on heritage has evolved. Courses, departments, research centers, and even global academic associations have been developed accordingly.

The rise of academic reflection on World Heritage has brought a critical approach to the understanding of WHC and its affiliated conventions, advisory bodies, practices, and future. With the increasing influence of the *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, and the follow-up Association of Critical Heritage Studies formed in 2012, a new and influential paradigm of heritage studies has taken shape, with the help of Laurajane Smith, especially. The paradigm can be seen as a “discursive turn” in heritage studies, or a “paradigm change” (Logan, Kockel, and Craith 2016: 18).

Criticisms about World Heritage should be addressed and analyzed. As Meskell pointed out at the fortieth anniversary of WHC, there are three key challenges that the convention faces: the increasing time gap between suggestions by advisory bodies and the committee’s final decision, the overt politicization of the committee, and UNESCO’s fiscal crisis. I will not delve into the fiscal issue in this book but will focus on the other two challenges. As elaborated below, the politicization of World Heritage has

challenged the credibility of its universal claims and concepts, and the discrepancy between recommendations of advisory bodies and the final decisions of World Heritage listing reveals the strong intervention of States Parties in the nomination process, a representation of proactive national construction of the past with World Heritage.

To fully explore the discursive construction of and challenges for World Heritage, four key concepts need to be addressed before my analyses: politicization of heritage, universality, memory and identity, and nationalism. The first two revolve around the WHC's practical and conceptual paradoxes, while the last two reveal an in-depth nexus between heritage and nation building. In the next sections, I will review four main bodies of literature on or related to World Heritage revolving around its politicization; the question of universality; the relation between heritage, memory, and identity; and the national construction of past with heritage resources. My discussion of the literature provides an overview of the evolution of actual practices and academic reflections on World Heritage.

Politicization of World Heritage

Although it is claimed to be politically neutral, WHC is criticized as being an arena of tensions and contentions. The nomination and designation processes for World Heritage Sites have been increasingly politicized. Such politicization is first manifested in the disjunction between the recommendations of the advisory bodies and the final decisions of the World Heritage Committee. As observed by former ICOMOS World Heritage advisor Jukka Jokilehto (2011), the credibility of WHC is at stake because an increasing number of newly designated sites were originally not recommended by ICOMOS. The increasing frequency of WHC's neglect of ICOMOS's evaluations reflects political pressure from States Parties. States Parties are countries that have ratified the World Heritage Convention.

Jokilehto (2011) describes the decision making for World Heritage designations in 2010. Fourteen nominations were recommended by the advisory body for inscription (39 percent of all nominations), but the World Heritage Committee finally accepted twenty-three nominations (64 percent). In the early years, the evaluations of the advisory bodies were mostly accepted by the World Heritage Committee; the increasing disjunction reflects the professional organizations' weakened role and a more intense political situation for World Heritage. Jokilehto indicates that World Heritage designation has become more likely to be decided in a lobbying process than in scientific evaluation.

As Meskell reveals, the politicization of World Heritage first appears in

its committee. There has been a geopolitical alliance, such as Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS), that are proactively engaged in nominating potential sites. The annual meeting of the committee is like a marketplace in which States Parties lobby for inscription. The lobbying was even institutionalized in the 2013 amendment to the Rules of Procedure. According to Cameron, the politicization was unexpected and “is a reflection of the global situation, where national interests and regional alliances vie for a greater say and a fair distribution of power and resources” (2016: 331).

Meanwhile, the politicization of World Heritage involves competitions and tensions between nation-states in terms of either the legitimacy or the ownership of the nominated sites. Olwen Beazley (2010) cites the nomination of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome) in Japan as an example of this, suggesting that the final designation involved a series of contested narratives about the meaning and embodiment of the site. While Japan hoped to describe the site primarily in terms of its mnemonic value for a traumatic event of the first atom bomb to be dropped on human beings, the United States contested Japan’s proposal by attempting to control the narrative of the place.

The United States saw the site as unsuitable for inclusion on the list because it is war related and sought to avoid its embarrassing role in the event (Beazley 2010: 57). Therefore, although the memorial was added to the World Heritage List in 1996, the United States still holds a different narrative of this site from the Japanese statement approved by the World Heritage Committee. Beazley concludes, “Although assumed to be a depoliticized process, the nominations to the World Heritage List is deeply politicized” (*ibid.*: 45).

Not only does World Heritage generate political tensions, but it has also created and reinforced brutal and bloody conflicts between nation-states. The most revealing example is the armed conflict between Thailand and Cambodia over the ownership of Preah Vihear Temple. The temple has been a pivotal point in boundary contentions between the two nations for hundreds of years (Winter 2010). Thus, the designation of the temple as a World Heritage Site of Cambodia on 7 July 2008 engendered much controversy. While the Cambodians were celebrating the designation, the Thai government received a lot of pressure locally for not taking action before the designation.

As a result, the border tension quickly intensified, as both countries sent troops into the area. Since then, a series of military actions have been undertaken by both sides, ending with a number of fatalities. The situation intensified in early 2011. After two Thai nationalists were sentenced by a Cambodian court to up to eight years in prison for espionage, a Thai

bombardment at the Preah Vihear Temple evoked a clash at the site and evacuation of thousands of Cambodian civilians (BBC News 2011).

In May of that same year, the nationalist tensions were inflamed again, resulting in military clashes and the deaths of at least twelve people, including one civilian (Huey-Burns 2011). The tension culminated in Thailand's withdrawal from WHC after the committee decided to consider Cambodia's management plan of the Preah Vihear Temple. According to Suwit Khunkitti, Thailand's minister of natural resources and environment, the World Heritage Committee ignored Thailand's suggestion that the plan would intensify rather than solve the border conflict. "They ignored it and they did not care about our sovereignty and territory" (*The Nation* 2011). This case vividly demonstrates what Tunbridge and Ashworth call the "dissonant heritage" (1996): the contemporary use of heritage often engenders conflicts and dissonances, in spite of its ostensible purposes of solidifying and reinforcing coherences.

In addition to the political conflicts engendered by the WHC, the nomination and selection process is often contested. A major part of the global heritage program is the list-making procedure (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004). This, however, is highly selective and sometimes redefines the cultural narrative of the heritage being nominated (Di Giovine 2009; Smith 2006; Turtinen 2000). A great variety of the meanings of a site may be curtailed with fixed categories and narrative frames.

In order to nominate a site for World Heritage, a State Party should first establish a tentative list that includes the potential candidates for designation. These sites' "outstanding universal values" need to be described and justified with the standards defined in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention. The guidelines provide a clear narrative format and a set of forms for the States Parties to complete the application. In addition to the justification of outstanding universal value, the nominator should also provide detailed agendas for heritage management and preservation and should outline precise procedures of protective measurements.

The management, preservation, and measurements are all assessed by the advisory bodies against the criteria. From 2004 to 2017, each year, each State Party was allowed to nominate up to two heritage sites for evaluation.⁵ In order to increase the chance of designation, each nomination needed to be described in strict compliance with the criteria. For those sites that entail multiple narratives, the nomination dossier needed to focus on the "most suitable theme." According to Harrison, because of the cultural diversity of a nation, it is impossible to "attribute a single set of positive values to a single 'canon' of heritage" (2013: 145). As he observed in Malaysia,

The distinct inequalities that characterized the treatment of different ethnic groups at different points in Malaysia's history are largely ignored in the interpretation of the heritage of George Town, which instead focuses on the great variety of religious buildings of different faiths, ethnic quarters, the many languages, worship and religious festivals, dances, costumes, art and music, food, and daily life as if these were somehow all treated equally in the past. (ibid.: 155)

For another example, Assisi in Italy was originally nominated as a heritage town of the medieval era, but this characteristic was not distinguishable, as there were a great many medieval towns in Italy. Therefore, the central narrative of the site shifted from an architectural landmark to a cultural landscape with religious meanings: the birth and expansion of a philosophical movement, the Franciscan movement (Jokilehto 2011).

The selective modification of heritage value is especially apparent in the nominations from developing countries. As Di Giovine observes, although Angkor Wat's meaning changed a number of times since its construction and it was always a memorial, the World Heritage Committee designated it merely as an important archaeological site in Southeast Asia. This narrative, says Di Giovine, "suggests ossification rather than a continually evolving living history" (2009: 89). He further reflected on the selective nomination process and indicated that the World Heritage Committee tends to use common descriptive terminology to underscore the sites' representation for pastness, which largely neglects cultural continuities. The terminological commonality engenders a level of universality in the World Heritage Sites, which are juxtaposed and made "to be understood in the same way," creating a "homogenizing sense of place" (2009: 78).

The Question of Universality

The homogenizing effect is rooted in the principal mission of the World Heritage program—universality. However, this is also one of the major challenges of WHC. It is criticized as UNESCO's hegemony of heritage making, as well as a reflection of Eurocentrism in the field of heritage conservation. The claim of World Heritage's universality has created its rhetorical paradox. As Harrison shows, there are two subtly different ways WHC articulates universality: one is the universality of each World Heritage Site, which is said to represent values universal to all humans; the other is the universality of the World Heritage List, which means that the selection of sites should take into consideration cultural diversity, especially marginalized groups' right to equal representation. In other words, WHC "expresses itself as a *totalizing* discourse representing a *global* hier-

archy of value" (Harrison 2013: 116). Therefore, it is inherently conflictual to claim both senses of universality, which has generated a series of difficulties for practices in reality.

Jan Turtinen argues that WHC and its affiliated advisory bodies are powerful actors that define and diffuse the concept of cultural heritage. World Heritage is constituted on the basis of the assumption that the whole heritage system has a center-periphery binary. The international (mainly Western) expertise serves as the central actor that defines and interprets the heritage, whereas local knowledge is highly standardized and formalized in the institutional system. In this sense, WHC creates a "global grammar" in which the traditions and cultures of the local people are made sense of in a formalized fashion. This discursive hegemony lies in the application procedure, which is fully controlled by the World Heritage Committee. "It is through the application of this global grammar locally that the dispersed sites can be reinterpreted and reorganized as a heritage of human kind" (Turtinen 2000).

The discursive power of the "global grammar" is seen by many scholars as not merely an institutional consequence. Rather, as Rudolff and Buckley reveal, the Eurocentrism of World Heritage is not about the dominance of European States Parties in the World Heritage Committee but about the hegemony of conceptions (2016). World Heritage (and in a broader sense the concept of heritage itself) is challenged as an embodiment of the hegemonic dissemination of Western values into non-Western cultures. The language of heritage that proliferates in the contemporary world, as Lowenthal suggests, is mainly Western.

Its aims and traits are assessed in similar terms in Bergen and Beirut, Tonga and Toronto. The same concerns with precedence and antiquity, continuity and coherence, heroism and sacrifice surface again and again, nurturing family bonds, strengthening fealty, and stressing stewardship. Most heritage is amassed by particular groups, but media diffusion and global networks make these hoards ever more common coin. (Lowenthal 1998: 5)

Using the concept *authorized heritage discourse*, Laurajane Smith criticizes the fact that the predominant heritage language originates from the Western culture of elitism. The materiality and high-culture narrative excludes the possibility that local cultures can be treated equally. The authorized heritage discourse created the present heritage practices, which became hegemonic, so that "the 'preservation ethic' is imposed on non-Western nations" (2006: 21). This discourse differentiates material heritage from its intangible aspects, such as language, knowledge, rituals, and folk lives.

WHC can thus be seen to be a result of this discursive control. It “unintentionally identifies a hierarchy of monuments” and has even “further institutionalized the nineteenth-century preservation ethic” (ibid.: 96). Smith also analyzes the role of global institutions as the authorized heritage agencies in shaping local discourses. Framed by the discourse, they impact preservation policies and practices at both national and international levels. The international charters and conventions serve as discursive devices that articulate a “correct knowledge” that is to be taught in a top-down manner. “Heritage management, preservation, preservation and restoration are not just objective technical procedures, they are themselves part of the subjective heritage performance in which meaning is re/created and maintained” (ibid.: 88).

Smith’s statement is derived from postcolonialism theory, which maintains that the narrative and knowledge of developing countries are highly dependent on the dominant discursive power of the West. Edward Said argues that the social and rhetorical construction of the “Orient” primarily functions in creating a binary between the East and the West. By imagining the former as exotic, mystical, and romantic, the latter acquires its own positional superiority (1979: 7). For Said, the West has established a powerful discursive device that characterizes the Other on the basis of its own imagination, that is, the East is always timeless, frozen, and, above all, anachronistic, in comparison to the West’s progressiveness. Also, Said suggests that Orientalism not only resides in elite and governing classes but also occurs in social movements organized by workers and feminists (Said 1993).

Ostensibly, Said’s remark is applicable in understanding World Heritage, which tends to emphasize the designated sites’ traditional and anachronistic characteristics (Di Giovine 2009). However, both Smith and Said fail to acknowledge the importance of local actions that promote or resist the hegemonic discourse. The overemphasis on the constitutive power of the West is challenged by Arif Dirlik, who finds that Orientalist discourse can never be effective in the Oriental world unless this rhetoric is adopted and implemented by native agents. He calls this process “self-Orientalization” (1996). Similarly, Homi Bhabha claims that the constitution of the Orientalists not only lies in the colonialists themselves but also includes the colonized Other. Bhabha suggests that Orientalism is conceptually ambivalent. He uses three concepts to depict the actual relationship in cultural colonization—hybridity, mimicry, and third space—which all suggest the complicated dynamics between the Western colonialists and the colonized objects: the latter has engaged in imitating the former when it also has a lot of freedom to resist it (1994).

Reevaluation of Western hegemony has become evident in World Heritage rhetoric and principles in recent years, and both UNESCO and non-Western countries have taken action, culminating in the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, or the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention (ICHC), which endeavors to revise the current terminology of heritage into a broader conceptual and technical scope, considers the global diversity of cultural practices in non-Western cultures. This new convention is seen as a challenge to the authorized heritage discourse of WHC at both practical and philosophical levels (Smith and Akagawa 2009).

However, new debates have emerged since the negotiation and development of ICHC. Some Western countries have not acknowledged its relevance, including the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, Canada, and Switzerland (Kurin 2004: 66). Furthermore, as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2004) and Hafstein (2009) say, the new Intangible Cultural Heritage lists⁶ will inevitably generate meaning distortion because of the evaluation criteria. Therefore, Kreps argues, the new ICHC, in spite of its original goal of protecting the diversity of indigenous cultures, "can lead to the standardization and homogenization of practices that are inherently varied, and governed by specific cultural protocol" (2009: 204), thereby undermining the real cultural vitality in local communities. Also, William Logan suggests, the ICHC is a new Pandora's box for heritage practitioners in that "the common issues of subjectivity and authenticity are likely to inflame existing global/local tensions" (2001: 56).

The founding of ICHC and the continuing skepticism about its effect point to the dilemma encountered by almost all international organizations that are discursively idealized with humanitarianism. That is, any discursive invention that aims to reconcile the hierarchy and binary between the dominant and subordinate groups will eventually be manipulated and controlled by those in power. The real locals may not have a chance to express, let alone the ideal expectation of, "globalization from below" or "grassroots globalization" as proposed by Appadurai (2001).

Tomlinson, for example, finds that even though the "environmentalists have tried to embrace the localist perspective . . . the environmental movement as a whole has tended to reinforce the globalist perspective" (1999: 190). A seminal work by Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988) explicitly addresses the problem of the peripheral or marginalized peoples, claiming that they will never escape from the marginal status in the processes of power and knowledge. Similarly, with respect to the nomination tensions surrounding the Hiroshima Memorial for World Heritage, Beazley concludes that the tensions are primarily between the

Japanese government and world society, whereas the real victims are completely silenced (2010).

Heritage, Memory, and Identity

Heritage is dialectically linked to identity. As Anico and Peralta put it, “Identities, in order to be effective, have to have some kind of materiality” (2009: 1). Therefore, heritage is a kind of cultural and political resource used by any group to create or reinforce collective identities. And heritage “distills the past into icons of identity, bonding us with procurers and progenitors, with our own earlier selves, and with our promised successors” (Lowenthal 1994: 43). From a broader theoretical perspective, the link between heritage and identity is established through the mediation of “collective memory.”

Emile Durkheim argues that collective memory is one of the major “intellectual and moral frameworks” of society (1973 [1925]: 277). As a student of Durkheim, the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs elaborates the concept of collective memory by arguing that memory is socially shaped and constituted. Halbwachs distinguishes memory from history, indicating that history is dead memory and is externally situated above groups, whereas memory has to be constituted within particular social frames at the collective level (1980). Furthermore, memory and identity are reciprocal.

On the basis of collective memory, groups make sense of their distinctiveness vis-à-vis others, forming collective identities. As Eric Hobsbawm puts it, “To be a member of any human community is to situate oneself with regard to one’s (its) past, if only by rejecting it” (1972: 13). Gillis maintains that the core meaning of both individual and collective identities is sustained with memory (1994: 3). Also, as Peter Novick observes, “We choose to center certain memories because they seem to us to express what is central to our collective identity” (2000: 7).

The relationship between memory and identity is convincingly analyzed by Jan Assmann (1995), who revisits Halbwachs’s (1980) ambivalent topology of individual and collective memories and suggests that a large-scale cultural memory should be understood differently from the memory formed through daily communications (communicative memory). This cultural memory is constituted within particular ritual components such as festivals and symbols, which in turn transmit cultural messages into a particular consciousness of belonging—cultural identity.

However, the mechanism by which collective memory shapes collective identity is not simple. Instead, the memory-identity nexus is dialectic-

tically conditioned and situated in processes in which collective memory is represented and articulated. There has been a longstanding debate in the field of memory studies on the very nature of memory: is it durable or malleable? The durability approach contends that it is the past that defines our memory. As Schudson says, "the past shapes the present, even when the most powerful people and classes and institutions least want it to" (1989: 113). But the faculty of the past is contested in a constructivist approach, which characterizes collective memory as a representation and device for present interests. Because memories are malleable, "we need to understand how they are shaped and by whom" (Burke 1989: 100). To transcend this paradigmatic dichotomy, Barry Schwartz acknowledges the reciprocal association between the past and the present. He characterizes collective memory as both political and cultural systems, arguing that the past is "neither totally precarious nor immutable, but a stable image upon which new elements are intermittently superimposed" (Schwartz 2000: 203).

This debate is instructive for our understanding of heritage, which embodies both the durability and malleability of memory. On the one hand, its material form represents the continuity of the past. On the other, it is a symbolic arena for malleable interpretations and narratives. Halbwachs states that spatial surroundings and people's sense of their attachment to their surroundings play a very important role in shaping collective memory. "Every phase of the group can be translated into spatial terms" (Halbwachs 1980: 130). Thus, the physical forms of the past can solidify the collective identity across generations and spaces. This affinity has been largely agreed on in collective memory studies (Barthel 1996; Crane 2000; Vinitzky-Seroussi 2002; Wagner-Pacifici 1991; Young 1993).

Moreover, scholars also admit that heritage is selectively interpreted and sanctioned with certain discursive means. When different groups impose distinct narratives on one heritage site, the collective memory of the heritage is inevitably instrumentalized. For example, as Susan Crane puts it, museums "inhibit random access in favor of orderly, informative meaning-formation" (2000: 4). Likewise, in order to make sense of the present, heritage interpretation should be formulated with a credible memory collectively sanctioned (Anico and Peralta 2009).

Lowenthal sees the selectiveness of heritage interpretation as a positive construction for group identity. He distinguishes heritage from history: "Heritage and history rely on antithetical modes of persuasion. History seeks to convince by truth and succumbs to falsehood. Heritage exaggerates and omits, candidly invents and frankly forgets, and thrives on ignorance and error" (1998: 121). Thus, Lowenthal optimistically states that heritage even requires falsified historical legacies, which are integral

for identity formation (ibid.: 132). He lays out three ways in which heritage alters history: updates the past by garbing its scenes and actors in present-day guise, highlights and enhances aspects of the past now felt admirable, and expunges what seems shameful or harmful by consigning it to ridicule or oblivion (ibid.: 148–72).

Many scholars, however, see the instrumentalization of heritage in a negative light. Patrick Wright (1985) attacks the heritage industry for its legitimization of the triumph of an elitist culture and nostalgia. In a more critical manner, Robert Hewison contends that true history is absorbed into and overwhelmed by the heritage industry. He criticizes the commodification of heritage and contends that the meaning of heritage embedded in the heritage industry has been alienated from its origin (1987). Likewise, Raphael Samuel sees the heritage industry in Great Britain as “a way of compensating for the collapse of British power” (1994: 243).

Hobsbawm and Ranger’s *The Invention of Tradition* (1992) is a seminal work on heritage’s constructive and instrumental function; it argues that groups, especially nations, tend to create new traditions in order to secure and maintain their national cohesion. In the transformational period of the nineteenth century, old traditions no longer functioned to maintain group identity. Therefore, officially or unofficially, invented traditions offer and legitimate the newly constructed class and national identities. For instance, as Hobsbawm suggests, between 1870 and 1914, there was a period witnessing a process of “mass-producing traditions” in Europe due to the rapid formations of classes, nations, and the Socialist movement.

The mechanism by which collective memory and identity are shaped by heritage in Europe is explicitly analyzed in Sharon Macdonald’s *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today* (2013). In this volume, Macdonald argues that because of the fear of cultural amnesia, there has been a burst of memory work, such as heritage sites, memorials, and museums, which are being created and maintained to remember the past. According to Macdonald, the memory work is largely conditioned by spatial and temporal contexts. That is, there is not an all-encompassing cultural blueprint for the mnemonic practices that are associated with heritage. Instead, European memory “is characterized more by certain changes underway, and also by particular tensions and ambivalences, than by enduring memorial forms” (Macdonald 2013: 2). There are always multiple forms of memory and identity: local, national, European, and even cosmopolitan.

Heritage and the Construction of National Past

Although the nexus between heritage and identity has multiple forms, the most fundamental and powerful linkage is the one between heritage and

national identity. The collective identities embedded and embodied in heritage are primarily oriented toward symbolic inclusion and exclusion in the discourse of nation-states. The rise of nationalism in the late nineteenth century brought about an unequivocal affinity between memory and the nation (Olick 2003). The transformation of both temporal and spatial frameworks facilitated the increase of interest in and capabilities of “imagining” the national community (Anderson 2006). Collective memory studies are well established in theorizing the dialectic processes of memory and the nation. It is largely agreed that memory and national identities are established and sustained through material or symbolic practices, such as traditions, historical figures, urban landscapes (Hancock 2008), commemorative activities, and national calendars and myths (Ben-Yehuda 1995).

However, in the meantime, the real environments for the development of memory are argued to be eroding as historical narratives became increasingly controlled and rearticulated by the powerful nation-states. Pierre Nora states that the rise of *lieux de memorie*, sites of memory, is at the cost of the demise of *milieux de memorie*, real environments of memory (1989: 7). Hence, “Modern memory is, above all, archival. It relies entirely on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image” (ibid.: 13). Insofar as the real environments of memory are eroded, it is arguably much easier for the nation-states to create a dominant unitary discursive frame to narrate national history by controlling the sites of memory.

The relationship between memory and national identity is therefore repressive. China’s history has been bifurcated because a linear grand historical narrative has established the repressive teleology of history and silenced those “different and non-narrative modes” (Duara 1997: 19). Moreover, there is no monolithic national memory. Rather, there are various forms of memories, such as official memory, vernacular memory, popular memory, local memory, and, broadly, countermemory (Jelin 2003). In these, collective memories may be multivocal or fragmented, as are heritage interpretations (Anico and Peralta 2009).

The attempt to create a totalizing and unitary narrative for the past is also evident in heritage. Although heritage supplies sentimentalized sources of national identity, it is more true that it is a political resource for the nation-states (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996). Kate Moles, in her discussion on the heritage construction for a Dublin park, finds that in spite of the multiplicity of narratives embedded in a particular heritage site, the state process of legitimation and authentication is always oriented toward creating only one sole national narrative, which helps define and incorporate a concrete national history (Moles 2009: 130). As a

political instrument, heritage serves to deliberately diffuse and disseminate state-supporting ideologies in order to secure the legitimacy of the state.

This ideological instrumentalization of heritage is manifested in the Communist regime's strategies for historical restoration in China. As mentioned earlier, Luo Zhewen explicitly claims that China's World Heritage Sites implicitly substantiate that "the cultural tradition of the Chinese nation has all along continued without interruption." In fact, the rhetoric of historical continuity has long been one of the most important discursive devices used by the Communist regime to claim its legitimacy. As Joseph Levenson observes, the Communist Party employs a strategy of "museumification" in order to restore symbols of the feudal past for ideological usage. Rather than destroying all the historical remains, the state separated the cultural relics' physical remains from their spiritual essences. By storing them in museums, the state maintains the narrative of historical and cultural continuity inherited from preceding dynasties, while simultaneously characterizing the relics as static and frozen in history to avoid any potential challenges for the present:

The communists themselves were "restoring" (in a way), not scuttling the past. Their way was the museum way. The restoration—of imperial places or classical reputations—was not a restoration of authority but of a history which the Chinese people (under new authority) could claim as its national heritage. Their historicism enabled the communists to keep the Chinese past as theirs, but to keep the past *passé*: the communists owned the present and would preside over the future. (Levenson 1968: 76–82)

Since Levenson's seminal work, the museumification of Chinese heritage has been examined by many scholars regarding various heritage sites, and all assert that the state has established a strategic discursive means to claim legitimacy. Even after certain sites have been designated as World Heritage, the state has continued to maintain its strategic museumification with the newly introduced universalistic model. For example, James Hevia finds that the World Heritage designation of the Tibetan-style buildings in Chengde has allowed the Communists to reinforce the articulation of ethnic harmony and cohesion, in order to solidify its legitimacy in Tibet (2001). A study by Tamara Hamlish on the Forbidden City's transformation from imperial palace to World Heritage Site finds that the process of the museumification of the Forbidden City is configured in, as well as empowered by, the World Heritage rhetoric (2000).

With respect to the World Heritage program, nation-states to some extent utilize rather than simply abide by the UNESCO discourses. As Logan observes,

Some governments make use of the “external enemy” for domestic political reasons, such as the wish to forge national cohesion, rather than because of real differences over heritage issues. Other governments “collude” with UNESCO for similar domestic reasons, hoping to gain prestige and electoral support for being seen to operate “internationally” or obtain international recognition of the national culture. (2001: 54)

A more revealing strategy employed by nation-states when nominating World Heritage is to create a “totalizing and correct” narrative of history in its nomination dossiers. Sophia Labadi (2010) has surveyed a number of dossiers and points out that the central aim of many nominations is to create a linear presentation of history. Articulating a glorious past with a symbolically stable history imbues the nation with a narrative of continuity and eternity with the deliberate interpretation of the heritage site, thus providing a rhetoric for national pride and a legitimization of the nation. Also, as Labadi (2013) indicates, the opportunity to realize this linear history lies in the very paradox of WHC itself. It is the concept of outstanding universal value that “encourages States Parties to focus on the positive and ‘safe’ historical accounts associated with the nominated site rather on polemics and tensions connected to it” (Labadi 2013: 67).

As Beazley suggests, “World Heritage inscription can assist in the unwelcome homogenization of cultural difference within the boundaries of nation-states” (2010: 63). Nation-states, hence, seem to be empowered, rather than disempowered, by the globalization of culture. A major challenge to the ideal of fostering a World Heritage preservation program lies in the power of states to produce and manipulate of heritage (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996). Simply put, World Heritage Sites are still firmly embedded within national boundaries. The World Heritage program reflects a contradiction in that it superficially propagates universalism while stressing cultural identity with national sentiments at a more substantial level. It is still unclear how World Heritage can reconcile the binary between national identity and cosmopolitan memory (Barthel-Bouchier and Hui 2007).

The Neoinstitutional Approach

As shown above, the current literature on heritage has explored and reflected on both macro- and microaspects of the heritage boom over the past decades. The criticisms of the politicization and universal claims of World Heritage underline the dominant, Eurocentric power of the universalizing/Westernizing World Heritage. By contrast, the literature on memory and identity emphasizes the power of nationalism in creating

a totalizing historical narrative via World Heritage nomination. Nevertheless, the paradox of China's current World Heritage craze is still confusing: a nation with a sophisticated strategy of "museumification" is ardently preoccupied with global recognition, especially with giving its heritage sites the title of "World."

If, as Levenson and others have convincingly demonstrated, the state can maintain its legitimacy by restoring its heritage in museums and asserting its embodiment of cultural continuity, the world-level recognition of this national heritage should be understood as an optional rather than an inevitable choice. Why then is it so important that this powerful state-controlled discourse be recognized and acknowledged by world society? If, on the other hand, the Westernization or homogenization of heritage is irresistible, why have so many World Heritage Sites been tied to national identities or even provoked transnational tensions and conflicts? The central question, then, is how does a culturally and economically strong non-Western nation-state like China engage in negotiating with a Western heritage discourse while simultaneously maintaining its own ability to totalize its national heritage?

A neoinstitutional approach serves as a sophisticated tool to answer these questions. This approach argues that the isomorphism of a world culture is not forcibly imposed by a dominant power. Instead, it involves an associational process. Drawing from DiMaggio and Powell's notion of "mimetic isomorphism," John Meyer et al. (1997) suggest that this type of isomorphism is distinct in that it is created on the basis of neither a coercive nor a normative mechanism. The two key elements of this isomorphism are (1) context and (2) legitimacy.

The context (environment) consists of cultural models that are enacted by embedded actors. According to Drori and Krucken, world society is formulated with authoritative actors that are diffuse and normative in nature. "Nation-states adhere to global norms of justice and progress and enact related scripts of social policy in order to be regarded as legitimate members of world society" (Drori and Krucken 2009: 14). In this sense, the power of diffusion is "soft," rather than direct physical contact. Meyer believes that the international systems, as organizational structures, act as "scriptwriters" that provide normative frameworks by which actors can play their roles in appropriate ways (Meyer 2009c: 44).

The legitimacy of the nation-states is derived from the script learning and practicing procedures. The world cultural model and its related discursive system, although stateless, are integral to the articulation of nation-state identities. The nation-states address the core meaning of their identities as the dominant actors, in spite of the variations in local perceptions, resources, and cultural settings (Meyer 2009b: 156). Thus, "world-cultural

principles license the nation-state not only as a managing central authority but also as an identity-supplying nation. . . . Moreover, in pursuing their externally legitimated identities and purposes by creating agencies and programs, nation-states also promote the domestic actors involved" (Meyer et al. 1997: 160). The set of domestically developed changes of the current cultural system, therefore, has to be understood as an infusion with the world cultural model.

The neoinstitutional approach offers two analytical dimensions to aid in our understanding of China's World Heritage system: (1) how has it been established and transformed with an exogenously derived cultural model? and (2) how is the pursuit of a national identity then internally legitimized and enacted with this world cultural model? Neoinstitutionalism implies that not only the text of the model but also the acts of "mimetic isomorphism" empower the nation-states' international identity and legitimacy.

The most compelling feature of World Heritage is that it reveals a characteristic dynamic of national identity formation. That is, it is not merely constructed in the distinctions vis-à-vis the Other but also constituted and celebrated in the Other's perception, recognition, and appreciation of the distinctions. The institutional and discursive formations of China's cultural heritage are exogenously framed with a world cultural model provided by WHC. But this process is not coercively imposed by a dominant world (Western) power. Instead, it entails the active involvement of the state; and the state involvement is constitutive of national identity in two dimensions—domestic homogenization and international recognition. The world cultural model serves as a set of scientific and rational scripts that empower the state's cultural legitimacy.

Neither the state nor WHC has gained full discursive control over heritage interpretation. What is happening in the interaction between the two is constant negotiation, communication, and reconciliation, which are all contingent on particular textual and contextual settings. The state has to manipulate its heritage narratives in accordance with a universal framework, and WHC's power lies only in its decision for designation, which is largely problematic and unconstructive for actual narrative articulation.

Although memory and identity are still largely bounded within nation-states, they have been articulated and framed in a process of "heritagization" that is exogenously enacted and configured. The politicized process of the selection, nomination, and management of World Heritage is itself constitutive of the creation and transition of collective memory and identity. One creative means employed by the state is Heritage Enlightenment. The state has deployed a set of practices to "educate" the people to adopt the narrative transition from cultural relic to cultural heritage, to be aware

of the importance of national heritage, and above all to be responsible for heritage protection and publicly active. In sum, the enshrinement of World Heritage and the deployment of Heritage Enlightenment are integral to the state's discursive power over not only cultural affairs but also social and political agendas.

The Book

Because WHC serves as a scriptwriter, it is analytically useful to examine the relationship between the convention and the state in two dimensions: (1) contexts of the scripts, and (2) texts of the scripts. The former involves the organization and transformation of the state's heritage institutions, including the forms, policies, laws, international conferences, and other affiliated activities and agendas. The latter consists of narratives of particular heritage sites, their formation and transformation, and local responses to them.

The major documents analyzed in this book include hundreds of official announcements, circulars, regulations, and unpublished sources. In addition, I have collected and analyzed newspapers and magazines, mainly *China Cultural Relics* and *China Cultural Heritage*. The official documents and newspapers and magazines with official backgrounds are a helpful tool in tracing the discursive transformation of cultural preservation—from cultural relics to cultural heritage—and, especially, the influence of the UNESCO World Heritage program on this transformation.

The “script texts” were collected at three carefully selected World Heritage Sites: Fujian Tulou, the Historic Monuments of Dengfeng, and the Great Wall. For each heritage site, the foremost “site of memory” lies in its nomination dossiers for World Heritage designation. The production of the nomination files, however, involves a multistep procedure. In order to apply for World Heritage designation, each nomination must submit a set of documents that includes the description and the justification of its cultural and historical significance and value. Local bureaus first submit the applications to the state, and then SACH makes the final nomination to UNESCO.

This book will explore how the universally developed values and criteria for World Heritage are represented in the nomination files. The application documents represent only an officially stated justification of the site's significance and value. They may entail differences from how the site is actually viewed and narrated in society. Therefore, I will explore media narratives describing the heritage site. The way the World Heritage discourse influences the Chinese will be revealed in the conjunctions and

disjunctions between the current and the old narratives (before designation) in Chinese media.

In addition, participant observations on heritage tourism and interviews conducted with both local residents and tourists help to explore the perceptions of World Heritage and the cultural memories embedded in the heritage narratives as well as how these processes have shaped particular national and local identities. Also, similar observations and analysis were made of communications between the locals and international tourists.

Chapters 1 and 2 will examine the discursive formation and the transformation of China's heritage preservation since 1949. Chapter 1 analyzes the organizational and conceptual interactions between China and the World Heritage program, demonstrating that the knowledge and the scripts of World Heritage have dialogically shaped the Chinese heritage preservation system and empowered China's status in world society. Chapter 2, taking a domestic angle, discusses how the state translates, manipulates, and utilizes the World Heritage scripts to articulate national solidarity, ethnic harmony, and cultural continuity to develop and reinforce the state's legitimacy.

Chapter 3, 4, and 5 will investigate three particular World Heritage Sites in China. In Chapter 3, I explore how the local identity of Fujian Tulou is embodied not only in heritage per se but also in the making and managing of heritage. In Chapter 4, I examine how a taken for granted historical identity of the Historic Monuments of Dengfeng can be completely altered in accordance with WHC. In Chapter 5, I discuss how the Great Wall's original meanings of war and exclusion are replaced by the narrative of global peace and cultural inclusion through its World Heritage designation and international tourism. I also explore how this new narrative is managed to articulate the state's cultural identity and confidence in world society. Finally, I conclude by suggesting that contemporary nation-states acquire and legitimize cultural identity not only by creating distinctions vis-à-vis the Other but also through the Other's recognition and appreciation of the distinctions.

Notes

1. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/cn>.
2. In 2014, Rui was taken in for questioning by local prosecutors; he was then in custody for years. The crime he was charged with was assumed to be politically oriented. His probable crime has nothing to do with his position in the Starbucks case.

3. The definition is from the Oxford English Dictionary.
4. World Heritage includes two major types, cultural heritage and natural heritage. The first six criteria are designed to evaluate cultural heritage sites. The next four criteria are for the evaluation of natural heritage sites. If one site meets at least one standard from each category, it can be designated as mixed heritage.
5. In 2000, the World Heritage Committee issued the Keynes Resolution, which aimed to solve the increasing imbalance in world heritage designations, allowing only one State Party to nominate one heritage site for consideration each year. In 2004, the Keynes Resolution was revised to allow each State Party to nominate two sites, with at least one of them being natural heritage. However, in 2016, the Keynes Resolution reverted to each State Party being allowed to nominate only one site.
6. The Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

1



From Relics to Heritage

The modern actors whose uniqueness and autonomy are most celebrated are precisely those most subject to the homogenizing effects of diffusion.

—John Meyer, “Diffusion: Institutional Conditions for Diffusion”

Cultural Heritage: A Stone from Other Hills?

On 11 June 2011, China’s sixth Cultural Heritage Day, the director-general of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage Shan Jixiang delivered a public speech at a ceremony in Shandong province, explaining that Cultural Heritage Day was an important cultural festival that drew wide public attention and active civic participation (SACH 2011). In another interview, Shan explicitly and frankly admitted that this national festival, which aimed at promoting and strengthening national pride and cultural identity, was externally introduced from the West. He metaphorically used a traditional Chinese saying “a stone from other hills” to describe the Western-derived idea of a cultural heritage day. The full saying is “A stone from other hills may serve to polish the jade of this one.” As Shan hinted, the central issue was not where the stone was from, but how the Chinese could polish their jade—cultural heritage.

Yet, where the stone is from has become a public concern in recent years. Some are worried that China’s cultural conservation system has been oriented too much toward Western standards and models. Du Yue, deputy secretary-general of China’s National Commission of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), states

that China's nomination of sites for World Heritage and their conservation is very passive, being dominated by the Western discursive power that controls the making and manipulation of regulations. He feels that China is overwhelmingly constrained within the current cultural models derived from Western frames and has very little freedom in the construction and negotiation of the larger framing discourse (Du 2010).

The concern that heritage conservation is oriented in a Western discourse is not only a Chinese issue. This issue has led to a number of debates at the world level. The UNESCO World Heritage program, because of its role as an international initiative with a universalistic discourse, has been the core target of criticisms in recent years. As Laurajane Smith (2006) contends, the existing "authorized heritage discourse," which is rooted in the Western elitist aesthetics of materiality, has impaired rather than promoted the conservation of non-Western heritage. In addition to Smith's argument, which focused on the West's dominance of cultural heritage's cognitive and aesthetic values, Jan Turtinen characterizes UNESCO as a powerful actor in diffusing imposing models for world organizations, "a powerful producer of culture, and a highly influential actor, capable of defining and framing conditions, problems, and solutions, thus framing the interests and desired actions of others, especially those of the world's nation-states'" (2000: 5).

World Heritage, therefore, is seen by these critics as a type of hegemonic cultural model that imposes its Western-centric values upon passive developing countries and institutionalizes them there. In this sense, Western cultural models of heritage conservation, including the World Heritage program, should be condemned as an instrumental strategy carried out by the West in order to culturally penetrate the Chinese society. The "stone from other hills," in this sense, should be understood as a weapon that is not to "polish the jade" of China, but to "destroy its jade."

This may lead to the conclusion that the West determines everything regarding cultural conservation issues for non-Western countries. However, the cultural colonialism statement may lead to two misunderstandings. First, it holds an ahistorical view of cultural heritage. Although it is generally agreed that modern uses of the concept of cultural heritage are derived from the West, it has to be noted that China has had its own cultural conservation practices over the course of its ancient history (Cao 2007: 4–5; Q. Wang 2008). As this chapter will reveal, since 1949, the People's Republic of China has established a sophisticated nationwide system of cultural conservation. The introduction of the Western idea of World Heritage has to be considered as not an imposing process but a negotiating one, in which local historically rooted concepts and practices are entangled with the exogenous and new.

Second, it ignores the discursive power of national and local communities that resist the hegemony. UNESCO's role as an intergovernmental organization is exaggerated here. As Askew indicates, the cultural colonialism theories "underestimate the persistence of nation-states' uses of heritage sites at the expense of UNESCO's universalizing illusions" (2010: 32). In fact, the nation-states are highly capable of manipulating the framed universal grammar. As Tunbridge and Ashworth point out, one major challenge to the ideal of fostering a World Heritage conservation program lies in the power states have in the production and manipulation of heritage.

To map out the relationship between the universal model of cultural conservation and national practices in China, we need to closely examine the discursive and institutional complexities of the processes. This chapter will examine the processes (since 1949) by which China's cultural conservation system is shaped and reshaped by both domestic and exogenous forces and the extent to which this system is influenced by UNESCO's World Heritage program, as well as how the Chinese government legitimizes this institutional and discursive imitation of the universal model.

First, I show how China's cultural conservation has been conceptually and institutionally transformed: (1) the previously used term "cultural relics" is replaced with "cultural heritage," and (2), consequently, government offices and research organizations have been either restructured or created with the title "cultural heritage." Second, the chapter examines three cases of China-world interaction: (1) the creation of China's Burra Charter, (2) the creation of China's Cultural Heritage Day, and (3) the cross-cultural debate over the concept of authenticity. Using John Meyer's institutionalization theory, I demonstrate how the transitional process of China's heritage conservation is historically embedded and dynamically constituted with external cultural models, rather than being unidirectionally imposed on China by a universalistic World Heritage discourse.

New Vocabularies

Over the past decades, China's cultural conservation has shifted its core concept from cultural relics to cultural heritage. The discursive transition is a manifestation of international influence. There are three phases: cultural relics phase (1949–1985), transitional phase (1985–2005), and cultural heritage phase (2005 to now). In 1985, China ratified the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention), which marked the beginning of the transitional phase. In 2005, the State Council enacted the "Circular on Strengthening

the Protection for Cultural Heritage,” using “cultural heritage” as the official term for cultural conservation for the first time. This narrative transition is manifested in narrative changes in official documents, including announcements, circulars, and speeches, as well as regulations, protective measurements, and laws.

The Relics-Heritage Transition

“Cultural heritage” is not a new term in the Chinese vocabulary. It has appeared in official documents since the beginning of the establishment of the People’s Republic of China. The Communist regime used terms such as “ethnic cultural heritage,” “historical cultural heritage” (State Council of PRC 2009 [1961b]: 28; 2009 [1974]b: 67), and “scientific cultural heritage” as general descriptions of historical artifacts and relics. However, while the term “cultural relics” was precisely defined and articulated in this period, the use of “cultural heritage” was ambivalent. In some cases, “cultural heritage” seemed to contain “cultural relics.” For example, the State Council of PRC’s “Circular on Strengthening the Protection of Cultural Relics” said, “Cultural relics discovered underground are the precious cultural heritage of the nation, of the people” (2009 [1974]a: 65). Likewise, “Ancient wooden architecture . . . is [the] precious cultural heritage of the Chinese people” (State Council of PRC 2009 [1980b]: 104). But in other cases, cultural heritage was often characterized as subordinate to cultural relics.

According to a Chinese encyclopedia, “cultural relics” was defined as “all valuable material heritage that is created by or associated with human activities, handed down along the course of human history” (S. Liu 2008: 85). In contrast to cultural relics, which had a precise definition, the concept of cultural heritage was never clearly and explicitly constituted. Therefore, it was common for the term “cultural relics” to be used as the central theme or the title of a document, with “cultural heritage” being an explanatory term to specify and elaborate on the general theme.

Even in the revised Law on the Protection of Cultural Relics of 2002, “cultural heritage” is mentioned only once (National People’s Congress Standing Committee 2002). Furthermore, similar terms were used in particular contexts, such as “cultural property” and “cultural remains” (Ministry of Culture 2009 [1984b]: 166). The government occasionally described revolutionary sites, architecture, and artifacts as “tangible cultural heritage” (Ministry of Culture 2009 [1985]: 181). Until 2005, the use of “cultural heritage” had been neither precise nor consistent.

During the transitional phase between 1985 and 2005, “cultural relics” was still the official term used in articulating cultural preservation issues,

while generally “cultural heritage” appeared as part of the term “historical cultural heritage” (Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Public Security 2009 [1986]: 197; Supreme Court of PRC and Supreme People’s Procuratorate of PRC 2007 [1987]: 227; the Central Propaganda Department of CCP, Ministry of Culture, and SACH 2009 [1989]: 242; National People’s Congress Standing Committee 2009 [1989]: 248), indicating that it was not yet an independent term. It did not even appear in a crucial official document issued by the State Council of PRC, “The Circular on Strengthening and Promoting the Protection of Cultural Relics” (2009 [1997]).

Despite the consistent domination of “cultural relics” in cultural preservation discourse, a terminological transition was slowly in progress. This transition was largely initiated by the UNESCO World Heritage program; it was also associated with communications with other international organizations, such as ICOMOS. In 1989, an official Chinese document for the first time characterized the inclusion of five sites on the World Cultural Heritage List as proof of China’s rich and long-lasting civilization (The Central Propaganda Department of CCP, Ministry of Culture, and SACH 2009 [1989]: 242). Two years later, “cultural heritage” was independently mentioned in the memo on Management Regulations on Foreign Affairs of Archeology, revealing that at least in international affairs, the government had realized the importance of the term “cultural heritage.”

In 1997, the general secretary of the Communist Party Jiang Zemin, in his report at the Fifteenth Party Congress, promised to strengthen the undertaking of “the protection of scientific, historical, cultural heritage and revolutionary cultural relics” (Jiang 1997). This was the first time that “cultural relics” was ontologically separated from “cultural heritage.” Moreover, in 2003, a bilateral agreement was achieved between China and Peru. The main terms used in this agreement were “cultural property” and “cultural heritage” (SACH 2009 [2000]c: 366).

In 2000, the Beijing Consensus was promulgated during the International Conference on China’s Cultural Heritage Preservation and Urban Development, in which both “historical cultural heritage” and “cultural heritage” served as the principal concepts (SACH 2009 [2000]a: 370). It is evident, reading these documents, that the more internationally oriented, the more likely that cultural heritage is used as a core concept. International and transnational dynamics of cultural conservation constituted the major forces underlying the dissemination and prevalence of “cultural heritage” as a significant term in contemporary China.

This correlation between the conceptual elevation of cultural heritage and its international background is largely associated with the increasing adoption of the World Heritage program. In 2001, SACH announced

the 10th Five-Year Plan and the Outline of Long-Term Goals on Cultural Relics Enterprises, which emphasized that all historical cultural sites, precious artifacts preserved in museums, and contemporary revolutionary sites were “cultural heritage” that should be honored and appreciated by the Chinese people. Regarding the accomplishments of China’s cultural preservation enterprise, the announcement characterized the ratification of four international conventions¹ as an important breakthrough. And it promised to

keep nominating and managing World Cultural Heritage sites; keep adding more important Chinese cultural relics and historical sites into the World Cultural Heritage List; actively participate in activities of international cultural heritage organizations; and enhance international communications on cultural relics. All are expected to promote China, as a country of a great ancient civilization, to be a great nation in the world’s cultural heritage preservation. (SACH 2009 [2001]: 414)

This plan was revealing, as it explicitly associated China’s cultural heritage conservation with the UNESCO World Heritage program and other related international bodies and activities. World Heritage became more prevalent and influential for the discursive reformulation of China’s old cultural relics system. In 2002, Suggestions on Strengthening and Improving World Heritage Management was enacted as the first state-level directive for World Heritage management. Cultural conservation in China became “cultural heritage conservation” instead of “cultural relics conservation” in the same year (Ministry of Construction 2009 [2002]: 448). In 2003, two consecutive documents were issued by SACH, asserting that China’s World Heritage management was highly critical to the nation’s image status and cultural promotion in the world (SACH 2009 [2003]b: 473; 2009 [2003]a: 474–76). “World Heritage,” associated with the more precisely used and defined concept “cultural heritage,” started proliferating.

Other concepts directly embedded in World Heritage discourse also started to influence the Chinese system. One example is the rhetoric of “outstanding universal value,” referring to sites that have “cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity” (UNESCO 2008c: 14). The World Heritage Convention and its Operational Guidelines explicitly articulate that all World Heritage Sites should be evaluated based on this overarching standard (UNESCO 1972; 2008c). In spite of the challenges caused by the ambiguity of this term’s true meaning, China has actively incorporated it into its domestic narratives.

In 2003, the “Circular on Making Further Efforts on the Protection and Management of the Great Wall” reiterated the universal value of the Great

Wall, which “not only represents Chinese fine culture, . . . but it also constitutes an important part of the cultural heritage of all human beings” (SACH 2009 [2003]: 477). Another example of the World Heritage’s discursive impact lies in the categorizations it imposes, namely the distinction between natural and cultural heritage. This rhetorical distinction has appeared in a Chinese official document as the state endeavored to “protect the nation’s outstanding cultural and natural heritage” (Ministry of Construction 2009 [2002]: 448).

These new (uses of) concepts were more precisely articulated step-by-step, and they were eventually institutionalized as the state moved forward to develop high-level regulations. It was during the year 2004 that World Heritage acquired remarkable popularity in the country. In February, nine ministries collaboratively promulgated the Suggestions on Strengthening World Cultural Heritage Preservation and Management (Ministry of Culture et al. 2009 [2004]: 509). In the same year, Suzhou hosted the twenty-eighth session of the World Heritage Committee, where “cultural heritage” started to become a regular part of the Chinese language.

In 2005, the “Circular on Strengthening the Protection for Cultural Heritage” was issued. Since then, “cultural heritage” has obtained official status, replacing “cultural relics” as the primary term for cultural conservation. The term “cultural relics” is still in use now, but it is largely limited to denoting the movable artifacts preserved in museums. Revealing evidence of the completion of the discursive transition is found in three nationwide surveys of cultural relics. While the first two surveys, respectively launched in 1956 and 1981, used “cultural relics” as the guiding term, the third one, launched in 2007, was articulated to promote “cultural heritage management” (State Council of PRC 2009 [2007]: 615).

However, the relics-heritage transition is not a simple terminological switch. Instead, it entails a series of discursive transformations. The use of cultural heritage reframes and expands the old cultural conservation system into a more domestically complex and exogenously associated form. The following analysis will reveal how the relics-heritage transition is entangled with and representative of a large-scale reformulation in discursive categories and practical measurements.

New Categories

As mentioned above, the categorical distinction between natural and cultural heritage emerged with the proliferation of World Heritage. In addition, a number of new categories were also developed during the relics-heritage transition. These new categories are a joint result of embed-

ded domestic traditions and international associational and institutional processes.

Since the early 1960s, China has established a detailed categorical system for cultural relics. In 1961, the State Council promulgated the Temporary Regulations on Cultural Relics Protection and Management, the first state regulation on cultural relics conservation, which set out that cultural relics included (1) architecture, archeological sites, and artifacts that are associated with historical events, revolutionary activities, and personalities; (2) archeological sites, tombs, ancient buildings, and rock caves that are of historical, aesthetic, and scientific value; (3) valuable artifacts; (4) revolutionary and ancient documents that are of historical, aesthetic, and scientific value; and (5) materials that represent different social systems and economic and social activities (2009 [1961]: 30).

Obviously, the order of these categories reflected how the state defined the importance of them. Thus, any change of the order would reveal the changed value ascribed to the relics. For example, the order was modified in the first edition of the Law on Protection of Cultural Relics, promulgated in 1982. Type 1 was switched with type 2, with revolutionary activities being rearticulated as “important revolutionary activities,” indicating that the revolutionary discourse was weakened as the whole nation moved its focus from class conflict toward economic development. Twenty years later, the first amendment of the 1982 law added murals, contemporary historical sites, handicraft articles, and typical material objects to the list (National People’s Congress Standing Committee 2002). It also removed the term “revolution” from the list of historical documents.

On the one hand, the dissolution of the revolutionary narrative’s dominant role in categorizing cultural relics represents an internal structural and discursive transition. On the other hand, external forces, although relatively softly constituted, have promoted, if not produced, China’s re-categorization of its heritage system. After 2005, new concepts emerged, including industrial heritage (SACH 2009 [2006]b: 568), time-honored brand cultural heritage, cultural routes heritage, twentieth-century heritage, and intangible cultural heritage (General Office of the State Council of PRC 2009 [2005]: 521). Except for time-honored brand cultural heritage, the “new” types of heritage were deeply associated with international discourse.

To be specific, in 2001, ICOMOS launched the one-year Montreal Action Plan Focusing on Twentieth-Century Heritage; the Chinese “Circular on Strengthening the Protection of Twentieth-Century Heritage” accordingly came out in 2008. The ICOMOS Charter on the Built Vernacular Heritage was issued in 1999; its Chinese imitation—“Circular on Strengthening the Protection of Vernacular Architecture”—was issued in 2007. Also, “under-

water cultural relics” (1989) was retitled to “underwater cultural heritage” in 2009,² as a result of the implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (2001a).

Moreover, in 1994, UNESCO published a report titled “Routes as Part of Our Cultural Heritage,” since which the concept of cultural routes has remarkably reshaped the Chinese understanding of its various sites and artifacts along significant historical cultural exchange routes. Especially after 2008, when ICOMOS issued the Charter on Cultural Routes, cultural routes has become one of the hottest concepts in China’s cultural heritage documents, culminating in “Wuxi Recommendations on the Protection of Cultural Routes Heritage” in 2009.

In fact, some Chinese documents explicitly acknowledge that the new concept has external roots. For example, the Russian Nizhny Tagil Charter for the Industrial Heritage was issued in 2003 (TICCIH 2003); the Chinese imitation—“Wuxi Recommendation on Protecting Industrial Heritage during Fast Economic Development”—came out in 2006. The text of this recommendation reflected how the concept of industrial heritage and the production of this document were influenced by the Nizhny Tagil Charter for the Industrial Heritage. It stated, “We agree with the Nizhny Tagil Charter, especially its definition and value judgment for industrial heritage, as well as the proposed principles and methods for industrial heritage’s legitimization, protection, education, and dissemination” (ICOMOS China 2006).

Table 1.1. New Heritage Categories and Dates of Official Sanction

Category	World	China
Vernacular Heritage	1999	2007
Twentieth-Century Heritage	2001	2008
Underwater Heritage	2001	2009 (renamed from Underwater Relics)
Industrial Heritage	2003	2006
Intangible Heritage	2003	2005
Cultural Routes Heritage	2008	2009

Table 1.1, above, illustrates the emergence of six new categories of cultural heritage in global organizations and China. China’s official adoption of the new terms has been quicker in recent years. It took China eight years to officially acknowledge the concept of vernacular heritage, but there was only a one-year gap for the cultural routes heritage.

Some new categories are a different way of expressing and defining previous types of heritage. For example, many twentieth-century heritage sites used to be categorized as revolutionary heritage sites. Therefore, although the categories are discursively imitations of the world cultural models, they are deeply embedded in particular national foundations. Rather than imposing a hegemonic discourse, as the following section shows, they are described and articulated as a representation of a more advanced set of conservation principles with a scientific theorization.

"More Scientific, More Progressive"

Protective principles, measurements, and guidelines have also witnessed a significant shift since the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. In its early period, the central purpose of cultural preservation was overwhelmingly instrumental, that is, "utilizing the past for the present." The usage of cultural relics was explicitly addressed as a way to articulate the legitimacy of the Communist regime. Cultural relics constituted "the most specific source for the education of patriotism in the people" (Administrative Council of PRC 2009 [1953]: 11). In the State Council's "Circular on Strengthening the Protection of Cultural Relics" in 1974, "to make the past serve the present" was formalized as the central principle for cultural relics protection, which persisted until 1979 (State Bureau of Cultural Relics Management 2009 [1979]: 89).

After the Cultural Revolution, cultural relics were described as beneficial primarily for economic development and secondarily for cultural conservation (State Council of PRC 2009 [1977]: 72). Economic development was characterized as more crucial than cultural conservation during the early period of the Economic Reform. Also, cultural relics were considered a good resource to sell to get foreign exchange, in order to foster modernization for the country (State Council of PRC 2009 [1979]: 97).

In the meantime, the original revolutionary discourse that emphasized the meaning of cultural relics for the Chinese revolution gave way to a new discourse to "improve people's cultural life, promote national self-esteem and develop tourism," although the goals of development were still listed prior to preservation. For example, it was articulated explicitly that old city structures were less important than urban and social modernization. By reorganizing or even destroying the old structures, "historical and cultural cities will be enriched and ensured with new vitality, which is the inevitable trend of social development" (Ministry of Construction 2009 [1983]: 152). Accordingly, the original principle of "making the past serve the present" was revised as "to fully develop the functions of na-

tional cultural relics for both spiritual and material constructions" (State Council of PRC 2009 [1987]: 221).

This "use first" principle gave way to "protection first" discourse in 1997 in the "Circular on Strengthening and Promoting the Protection of Cultural Relics." In this circular, cultural relics conservation for the first time acquired priority over economic construction (State Council of PRC 2009 [1997]: 316–17). A further consolidation of this discourse is found in a later circular issued by both the General Office of the Communist Party of China's Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council in 1998, which stated that the general guideline for cultural conservation was "giving priority to the protection of cultural relics, attaching primary importance to their rescue" and the central principle was "effective protection, rational use, and tightening control" (2009 [1998]: 335).

These were then simplified as "giving priority to the protection of, attaching primary importance to the rescue of, making rational use of, and tightening control over the cultural relics" in the revised Law on Protection of Cultural Relics in 2002. The state also reflected on the original "make the past serve the present" principle, criticizing it as a mistake (SACH 2009 [2003]a: 474). This self-reflection on earlier principles was plainly expressed as being based on the World Heritage Convention. Given this new principle, the state at first reviewed and reflected on current World Heritage Site projects, stating that they were not fully abiding by the World Heritage Convention. As a solution, the central government required that cultural relics agencies at all levels study and promote the convention and, secondarily, the national law and regulations. The convention was given priority over national law. The transition from "use first" to "protection first" was supported and legitimized, if not directly determined, by the world cultural frame.

In addition to the "protection first" principle, international organizations, namely UNESCO and ICOMOS, have reshaped China's cultural conservation system by renarrating the implicit definition of the meanings and values of cultural heritage. The introduction and implementation of the themes of "authenticity and integrity" comprise a critical discursive transformation. Authenticity refers to the degree of truthfulness and credibility of the background information regarding the heritage, and "integrity is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes" (UNESCO 2008: 22–23). Authenticity and integrity constitute both the internal value and the external intactness of a heritage site. The introduction and use of these two terms expand the original scope of cultural conservation in China. Although the old principle of keeping the cultural relics in their original state was still used as

the principal guideline on occasion, “authenticity” and “integrity” soon became dominant terms in official documents.

Before 1985, the most frequently used phrase for the measurement of protection was “maintaining the cultural relics’ original state” (Administrative Council of PRC 2009 [1950]: 7; State Council of PRC 2009 [1961]: 28; 2009 [1974]a: 66; State Bureau of Cultural Relics 2009 [1983]: 156). This principle was changed to “keeping the authenticity and integrity of the heritage” (UNESCO 2008c). In addition, domestic laws and regulations have been strongly influenced by this discourse. Article 9 of the Regulations on the Implementation of the Law on Protection of Cultural Relics demands that cultural relic units be protected in terms of their authenticity and integrity (State Council of PRC 2009 [2003]: 480). These terms were incorporated into Chinese official language very quickly. In the “Circular on Strengthening the Protection for Cultural Heritage,” authenticity and integrity were a key emphasis (State Council of PRC 2009 [2005]: 544).

In the “Circular on Making Further Efforts on the Protection and Management of the Great Wall,” authenticity and integrity were highlighted as central principles for protecting the Great Wall and its surroundings (SACH 2009 [2006]c: 562). Authenticity and integrity were also attached to revolutionary heritage that has particular Chinese characteristics. The Inventory of Famous Historical and Cultural Cities also used these concepts as the principal protective guideline.

Nevertheless, authenticity is a rhetorically problematic concept. First, as Labadi suggests, the inner nature of authenticity is itself widely challenged. She argues that the widespread promotion of authenticity ignores the fact that any form of heritage is always in motion. The overemphasis on authenticity may cause heritage to be characterized as frozen. Second, the concept of authenticity is not so “new” or antithetical in comparison to China’s traditional principles of cultural conservation—maintaining the cultural relics’ original state. Thus it seems that the introduction of authenticity has contributed less than thought to the in-depth formulation of China’s conservation principles.

Yet, why were the new terms so quickly and widely adopted and incorporated into China’s cultural conservation system? I argue that, regardless of their real rhetorical precision and scope of application, they were widely and quickly adopted and incorporated because they constitute and represent the very idea of scientific rationalization and theorization, which could hardly be found in Chinese tradition (Luo 2004: 71).

Meyer argues that the diffusion of world cultural models is accelerated by theorization (2009a: 140–41). “Theoretical formulations,” Meyer sug-

gests, “range from simple concepts and typologies to highly abstract, complex, and rich models” (2009a: 141). Furthermore, theorization promotes the emergence of professional groups as agents of the state. “Diffusion becomes more rapid and more universal as cultural categories are informed by theories at higher levels of complexity and abstraction” (ibid.). This unequivocally shows why “authenticity” is articulated as more ideologically advanced and more quickly adopted in the Chinese context.

Compared to the old lengthy Chinese principle, authenticity uses a simpler term to crystalize a series of complexly constituted concepts, ideas, and principles. Authenticity and integrity offer a more systematically theorized, although still blurred, discursive frame. Moreover, they entail a rhetorical abstraction. In this sense, the power of the imposition of new terms is not derived directly from the West’s symbolic hegemony. Instead, it entails a rhetorical constitution of Western civilization’s theory-oriented logicity.

The concept of cultural heritage and the related new categories and terms are officially legitimized, as they are both Chinese oriented, and universally theorized and standardized. The reason the government gave for the adoption of foreign principles and terms, however, lies not in their universality but in their “advancement and progressiveness.” As stated in the *Blue Book of Cultural Heritage*, an official publication that reviews cultural heritage issues in China, the transition from cultural relics to cultural heritage not only adapts to the increasing needs of cultural heritage preservation but also represents an innovation of conceptual and administrative structures: “Cultural heritage emphasizes culture’s function in cross-generational transmission. The concept of cultural heritage promotes the traditional usage of cultural relics to an upper-level platform for culture’s sustainable development. This in turn facilitates the smooth transition from cultural relics preservation to cultural heritage preservation” (Liu 2008: 97–98).

This statement about the advancement of cultural heritage over cultural relics is more explicit in a 2007 publication, *Overview of the Achievements of China’s Cultural Heritage Preservation*, in which cultural heritage is expounded as an advanced concept for cultural conservation, compared to such older terms as “antiques” and “cultural relics.” Heritage is conceptually advanced because it is more “scientific and rational,” representing “the enhancement of human knowledge and cultural inclusiveness” (Cao 2007: 4–5).

World Heritage management was seen as the model for cultural heritage conservation in China. “World Cultural Heritage preservation is the foremost area of cultural heritage conservation in China. We should create world-class management to protect particular world-class heritage sites,

thereby promoting general cultural heritage management in China" (Y. Li 2007: 40). Official documents have made it explicit that the implementation and practices of World Heritage criteria, regulations, techniques, and measures have not only improved and promoted China's World Heritage system *per se* but also generated external impacts on other social issues, such as environmental protection (*ibid.*: 42).

The articulation of the conceptual advancement of cultural heritage also shapes the narrative of particular heritage sites, such as the Mogao Caves, as well as official charters. The establishment of Chinese Principles for the Conservation of Chinese Cultural Heritage Sites, strongly influenced by the Burra Charter (the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance), is characterized as an important accomplishment, with which China's cultural preservation was geared to international standards (*ibid.*: 42). In addition, a number of official circulars have consolidated the advancement narrative. "Properly protecting and preserving World Heritage . . . is a symbol for an advanced civilization" (SACH 2009l [2002]: 440); "the Convention reflects the advanced idea of cultural and natural protection in the global society" (*ibid.*: 441). Similar statements were widespread in official documents and addresses SACH 2009 [2006]a: 550; 2009 [2006]d: 584; G. Guo 2007].

Since 1978, the discourse of modernism has replaced the socialist discourse in China. Within this modernist discourse, progressive development and scientific theories are characterized as unquestionable guiding devices for social regulation and cultural management. Most Chinese people feel that being scientific means being scholarly well established and theoretically well framed. In this respect, the introduction of models from outside is regarded as a movement for scientific and theoretical systemization, rather than for Westernization. Therefore, global standards derived from international organizations are given privileged status over the state's earlier standards. In addition, explanations based on scientism and advancement are generally more acceptable to the public.

Similarly, in the case of world acceptance of the overarching World Heritage program, scientism and rationalism have played an important role in legitimizing particular discursive constitutions. As Meyer suggests, even though World Heritage seems to be formed with a traditionalistic discourse, it tends to be legitimized with more rationalistic discourses (Meyer 2009c: 59). Likewise, Askew suggests that the World Heritage List represents a scientific scheme of classification with support from specialists, who are supposedly ascribed a "neutral" role in the selection process (Askew 2010: 39–40). World Heritage's scientific and rationalistic characteristics, according to this logic, serve to reconcile China's potential dilemma between nationalistic and cosmopolitan critics.

Reframing Cultural Conservation Institutions

The discursive transition is accompanied by a series of institutional transformations. In other words, discursive transition is also an institutionalization of new concepts, terms, and principles. Three major types of institutional change are examined below: (1) reorganization of the bureaucratic system, (2) promulgation of regulations and laws on heritage, and (3) establishment of new educational and research institutions, as well as national inventory lists. The analysis shows that new structures, regulations, institutions, and inventories, embedded in a previously existing and well-run national cultural conservation system, are institutionally constituted as the discourse of World Heritage proliferates.

Bureaucratic Transformation

Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Bureau of Cultural Relics, the official agency for cultural conservation, has had a complicated relationship with the Ministry of Culture. Established in November 1949 by the Ministry of Culture, the Bureau of Cultural Relics was designed to direct and manage the enterprise of cultural relics, museums, and libraries under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture. In subsequent years, a series of local agencies for cultural relic management was established (SACH 2009e: 622). In October 1952, the Bureau of Cultural Relics was changed to the Bureau of Social and Cultural Enterprises Management, expanding its range of management. In January 1955, it once again changed its title to the Bureau of Cultural Relics Management Enterprises, and it no longer managed the libraries, which were, however, once again incorporated into the cultural relics system in 1965, when the central bureau's title was renamed the Bureau of Library, Museum, and Cultural Relics Management (*ibid.*: 642).

During the Cultural Revolution, considering the disastrous damage to cultural relics and the organizational disorder, Prime Minister Zhou Enlai directed the establishment of a committee of library and museum management under the direct supervision of the State Council. This committee was transformed into the State Bureau of Cultural Relics Enterprises Management in 1973, separating it from the Ministry of Culture and putting it directly under the management and supervision of the State Council. In 1982, the State Bureau of Cultural Relics Enterprises Management was incorporated into the Ministry of Culture with the other four agencies. Later, in June 1987, its name was changed back to the State Bureau of Cultural Relics Enterprises Management. Still under the jurisdiction of the

Ministry of Culture, the new bureau had gained more independence over its own agenda, budget, and resource distribution (*ibid.*: 664).

In June 1988, the State Bureau of Cultural Relics Management was renamed the State Bureau of Cultural Relics, a title still in use today, ending its fluctuating history of name change (although its official English title changed one last time to become the State Administration of Cultural Heritage in 2000). It is now the overall state-level agency for cultural heritage preservation in China. Table 1.2, below, illustrates the title changes mentioned above.

Table 1.2. History of the Central Cultural Conservation Agency in China

Year	Title	Relationship with the Ministry of Culture
1949	Bureau of Cultural Relics	A subordinate unit
1952	Bureau of Social and Cultural Enterprises Management	A subordinate unit
1955	Bureau of Cultural Relics Management Enterprises	A subordinate unit
1965	Bureau of Library, Museum, and Cultural Relics Management	A subordinate unit
1973	State Bureau of Cultural Relics Enterprises Management	Separated
1982	Bureau of Cultural Relics Enterprises Management in the Ministry of Culture	A subordinate unit
1987	State Bureau of Cultural Relics Enterprises Management	Separated and supervised
1988	State Bureau of Cultural Relics	Separated and supervised
2000	(English name changed to) State Administration of Cultural Heritage	Separated and supervised

The use of “cultural heritage” instead of “cultural relics” reveals the blurring and complex discursive relationship between these two terms. As Table 1.3 shows, in 1999, in the nomination file for Dazu Rock Caves for World Heritage, the representative body behind the nomination was the State Bureau of Cultural Relics. However, one year later, the nomination file of Ancient Villages in Southern Anhui—Xidi and Hongcun listed the National Administration of Cultural Heritage (National Administration of Cultural Heritage 2000). A similar example appears in two evaluation files for one site. In the original dossier for the Classical Gardens of Suzhou in 1997, the agency was mentioned in the text as the State Bureau of Cultural

Relics (UNESCO 1997: 15). Yet on the evaluation file for the site's extension in 2000, its name was changed to the National Administration for Cultural Heritage (UNESCO 2000: 169). Also in the same year, the files for the Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties and Mount Qingcheng and the Dujiangyan Irrigation System indicated that the representative agency was the State Administration of Cultural Heritage.

On the Chinese records, however, there was no official change of the agency's name. Ma Yansheng, then director of the Division of Culture and Communication of the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, suggested the English name change in order to make the nominations more parallel with the UNESCO language. But as we read further official announcements, documents, regulations, and circulars, we see that this name change was not coincidental, but deeply framed within the transitioning system of cultural conservation of the time. Moreover, in 2002, SACH created the Division of World Heritage, a subunit of the Department of Cultural Relics Protection and Archeology. In 2010, the Department of Cultural Relics Protection and Archaeology was cotitled as the Department of World Heritage.

Table 1.3. Changes in China's Central Cultural Conservation Agency's English Title on World Heritage Nominations

Year of Nomination	Heritage	Title of the State Agency
1997	Classical Gardens of Suzhou (original nomination)	State Bureau of Cultural Relics
1998	The Summer Palace	State Bureau of Cultural Relics
1999	Dazu Rock Caves	State Bureau of Cultural Relics
2000	Ancient Villages in Southern Anhui—Xidi and Hongcun	National Administration of Cultural Heritage
2000	Classical Gardens of Suzhou (extension nomination)	National Administration of Cultural Heritage
2000	Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties	State Administration of Cultural Heritage
2000	Mount Qingcheng and the Dujiangyan Irrigation System	State Administration of Cultural Heritage

Legal Transition

In 1982, the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics was enacted. It was the first national law on the protection

of cultural heritage. In 2002, the revision of this law added forty-seven new articles. A significant change was in the more detailed categorizations of cultural relics. Movable cultural relics and immovable cultural relics were conceptually separated. The former included “important material objects, works of art, documents, manuscripts, books, materials, and typical material objects dating from various historical periods,” while the latter referred to “sites of ancient culture, ancient tombs, ancient architectural structures, cave temples, stone carvings and murals as well as important modern and contemporary historic sites and typical buildings” (National People’s Congress Standing Committee 2002). This conceptual division reflects the cognitive and structural reorganization of cultural relics in the twenty years, insofar as immovable cultural relics are closely parallel with the constitution of cultural heritage in accordance with UNESCO’s definition.

The first national document with “cultural heritage” in the title was issued in 2000, the “Beijing Consensus of the International Conference on Cultural Heritage Conservation and Urban Development of China” (SACH 2009 [2000]b: 370). This was also the year the name of the State Bureau of Cultural Relics was changed to the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, representing an important transition in the national discourse of cultural relics. In 2006, Regulations on the Protection of the Great Wall was promulgated, being the first state-level regulation on the protection of a specific cultural heritage.

China hosted several international conferences that developed a number of charters (e.g., the Xi’an Charter). By imitating these charters, domestic cross-provincial conferences developed similar consensual documents, in terms of not only the protective principles but also the textual structures. For example, the beginning paragraph of the “Xi’an Consensus on Large-Scale Heritage Protection,” imitates international charters by starting with terms such as “considering,” followed by a statement about a critical background. A similar textual frame was found in “Wuxi Recommendations on the Protection of Cultural Routes Heritage,” which adopted such terms as “considering,” “noting,” and “realizing” (SACH 2009c: 699). These were all domestic charters. Using the same textual structure, they highly mirrored the ICOMOS and UNESCO charters. As a result, not only did the notion of cultural heritage prevail, but also the way and the discursive framework of the articulation of cultural heritage had been shaped by external organizational forces.

A more important example of the legal transition is the promulgation of the Law on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2011. On the surface, this law appears to be a direct product of the introduction of the idea of intangible heritage. In fact, except the use of a seemingly new term “intangible heritage,” the law is developed and narrated largely

within historically embedded and purposively framed Chinese discourse. I will analyze the introduction and practice of intangible heritage in Chapter 2.

Research, Education, Publication, Inventory

As UNESCO recommends that States Parties establish research agencies to conduct investigation and research on cultural heritage, China's pre-existing research and education system on cultural relics has been somewhat reoriented toward that of cultural heritage. In 1980, the division of education was established in the State Bureau of Cultural Relics Enterprises Management. A series of educational centers regarding cultural relics and museums emerged. SACH cooperated with Peking University to create the Institute of Archeology, Cultural Relics, and Museums. Since 2005, many new institutes with "cultural heritage" in the title have been established. A number of existing organizations dealing with cultural relics have either established a new division with "cultural heritage" in the title or changed their own titles to include "cultural heritage."

The Chinese Academy of Sciences founded the Natural and Cultural Heritage Research Center on 10 June 2006. Six months later, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences created a similar unit within its Institute of Archaeology, titled the Conservation and Research Center of Cultural Heritage. This institution focuses on archeological excavation, heritage preservation and management, and interdisciplinary research. In addition, in August 2007, the Institute for Cultural Relics was reorganized and retitled the Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage; it is directly supervised by SACH.

To fulfill the requirement of the WHC regarding World Heritage monitoring, the Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage also established a subunit—the China World Cultural Heritage Monitoring Center—in 2012 to be responsible for the monitoring of all World Cultural Heritage Sites in China. The subunit was later renamed China World Cultural Heritage Center in 2015; it publishes annual monitoring reports on China World Cultural Heritage. This effort is to establish a nationwide monitoring system for safeguarding the outstanding universal value (OUV) of World Heritage Sites (Wang and Zhao 2016).

In universities, new research centers of cultural heritage include the Research Center for World Heritage at Peking University (established 1998), the Institute for Cultural and Natural Heritage at Nanjing University (established 2002), the Research Center for Cultural Heritage at Fudan University (established 2003), the Cultural Heritage Research Center of South China at Sun Yat-sen University (established 2003), China's World

Heritage Protection Research Center at Beijing Industrial University (established 2004), and the Cultural Heritage Protection Research Center at Tsinghua University (established 2005). In May, 2006, Northwestern University of China cooperated with Shaanxi's Provincial Bureau of Cultural Relics to establish the School of Cultural Heritage.

The relics-heritage transition is also reflected in academic journals and magazines. In 1950, *Reference Sources of Cultural Relics* came out; it was renamed *Cultural Relics* in 1959. In 1951, *Journal of Archeology* was launched. In 1957, Cultural Relics Press was established. Since 1985, the number of public-oriented magazines have increased. In 1985, the newspaper *Cultural Relics* was published; it was later renamed *China Cultural Relics* in 1987. On 1 November 2002, *Heritage Weekly* was created as a subsection of *China Cultural Relics*. The date was intentionally selected because it was the thirtieth anniversary of the World Heritage Convention. The publication of *Heritage Weekly* and the selection of its publication date both reveal that the UNESCO World Heritage program has strongly influenced the formulation of the system of cultural preservation in China.

In addition to the newspaper, SACH launched a periodical, *China Cultural Heritage*, in March 2004. Similarly, other popular magazines under state management came out at around the same time, such as *Chinese Heritage* in 2004, which is supervised by China Publishing Group, and *Culture Monthly*, which was renamed *Culture Heritage* in 2010 and is supervised by the Ministry of Culture. World Heritage's most direct influence on magazine publication is the founding of the magazine *World Heritage*, which is dedicated to introducing World Heritage issues and stories to the public. Founded in 2007, the magazine has been increasingly popular among heritage professionals. Starting in 2013, the magazine has cooperated with the National Heritage Center at Tsinghua University to publish annual observation reports on World Heritage Committee Sessions, the first and only publication specifically about the committee sessions.

In the preface of the issue for 2013/2014, director of the National Heritage Center at Tsinghua University Lyu Zhou remarks that World Heritage is a mirror, reflecting the recognition of heritage values, the conservation and management systems established by different States Parties, as well as pressures and challenges encountered by today's global heritage (Lyu 2016). Lyu's discussion on the meaning of World Heritage represents how Chinese professionals have started to envision World Heritage beyond its national boarder.

In addition, China has established a comprehensive system of heritage categorization by making heritage inventories at state, provincial, and local levels. In spite of the existence of an old system of cultural relics pres-

ervation, the new lists, such as “Historical and Cultural Famous Cities, Towns, and Villages,” reflect the undeniable imprint of the World Heritage List. Highly striking is the introduction and implementation of the “List of Endangered Sites,” with the state suggesting that any designated city, town, or village in the inventory should be put on this list if it did not meet the standards of preservation (SACH 2009 [2008]d: 666). This was initiated in February 2011, when the Ministry of Construction and SACH launched the first round of inspections of these cities, towns, and villages on the lists. The idea of a list of endangered sites is vividly imitative of WHC’s own inventory. Unlike the other organizational changes, which are mostly local reforms rather than being directly introduced from WHC, the endangered list is unequivocally a direct result of the contact between the state and UNESCO.

A review of the series of organizational transformations prompts several questions: What are the in-depth mechanisms by which China’s cultural conservation has been actively engaging in imitating world cultural models? Why, in spite of its well-run and sophisticated preexisting cultural relics system, does China copy the new titles and terminology? Is it just because the concept of cultural heritage is “advanced?” A more crucial question is that in spite of the ostensibly constitutive and powerful influences of the UNESCO model upon China, what are the in-depth motives and actual mechanisms of the influences and contacts? The following sections in this chapter will illustrate how the relationship between China and the world cultural model is dynamically negotiated as well as how and why China adopts or resists particular models.

Engagement with World Cultural Models: The Game for International Status

As Meyer suggests, “Nations celebrate their unique heritages while moving into standardized models” (2009b: 166). Indeed, participation in world cultural models ranges from simple ratification and adaptation to critical evaluation and even resistance. Chinese participation is a reflection and reinforcement of the state’s self-esteem and self-confidence in world society. The Chinese perform as what Meyer calls “nation-state actors,” that enter world society, eagerly acquiring proper identity and obtaining approved forms.

From the World: The Ratification of WHC

The term “World Heritage” is itself an example of the Western diffusion of its standardized model. In July 1984, a preeminent Chinese scholar of

historical geography, Hou Renzhi, then visiting the United States, was invited to meet a colleague from George Washington University. During the meeting, they exchanged ideas about the restoration and protection of China's architecture and archeological sites. Hou was then introduced to some other colleagues, including one from the University of California at Berkeley, who said to Hou, "The Great Wall of China is an unparalleled human construction, and does not only belong to the Chinese people, but also belongs to the world." With that said, the American scholars introduced the WHC to Hou. Hearing about it for the first time, Hou immediately expressed his interest in the convention. He wrote two letters to the Chinese representative of UNESCO, Zhang Wei, to inquire about China's status in the convention and became concerned when informed that China had not ratified it.

As a delegate of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), Hou proposed at the next year's annual conference that the Chinese government ratify the convention. In the proposal, Hou stated that the absence of China from the convention "will inhibit the promotion of this international cultural cooperation that is beneficial for all mankind" (W. Wang 2010: 87). In addition, Hou suggested that participation in international cultural programs would be beneficial for China. He invited a few other influential scholars from ecology, architecture, and archeology to cosign this proposal.

Some of the cosigners had known of the convention before. Eventually, the proposal was submitted with four signatures, those of Hou Renzhi, Yang Hanxi, Zheng Xiaoxie, and Luo Zhewen, all of whom are now considered the pioneers of China's World Heritage conservation. As this demonstrates, at the very beginning, China's World Heritage conservation was partially a result of the collaboration between Chinese intellectuals and their international colleagues. With the hope of better preserving its own cultural heritage, the Chinese scholars sought international encouragement and models. The contact between them and the world, rather than a hegemonic relationship, should be understood as a cooperative and dynamic process.

The talks between Hou and the American scholars, and the subsequent proposal, marked the commencement of a new phase of China's cultural conservation. Since then, international concepts, principles, charters, regulations, and so forth have played an increasingly important role in the shaping and reshaping of the Chinese discourse on and practices of cultural conservation. It is evident that particular professional groups play a vital role in the "model diffusion" mechanism in this case. New heritage programs, particularly embedded in a Western root, are "softly" introduced and practiced, instead of directly or coercively superimposed by either the state government or UNESCO.



Figure 1.1. Wish notes for success of the Grand Canal's World Heritage application, written by visitors in Hangzhou Grand Canal Museum



Figure 1.2 Local World Heritage enthusiasts visit the Huiluo Granary of the Grand Canal in 2015, one year after its designation as World Heritage

For the World: World Heritage for International Status

In 2000, ICOMOS China, rhetorically shaped by the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (commonly known as the Burra Charter), promulgated the Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China, which commented that “China’s magnificent sites are the heritage not only of the various ethnic groups of China but are also the common wealth of all humanity” (ICOMOS China 2002 [2000]: 3). Indeed, as international cooperation on cultural preservation surges, the narrative of commitment to world society has proliferated in Chinese circulars on World Heritage and has frequently appeared in relation to independent domestic initiatives. For example, in both the “Circular on Making Further Efforts on the Protection and Management of the Great Wall” (SACH 2003) and the “Circular on Strengthening the Protection for Cultural Heritage” (State Council of PRC 2009 [2005]), Chinese cultural heritage is characterized as the treasure of all of human civilization.

In 2006, SACH issued the “Circular on Strengthening Industrial Heritage Protection,” suggesting that the solidification of the heritage preservation, management, and utilization is a meaningful inheritance of the “advanced culture of humanity” (2009 [2006]b: 568). The government also treated ancient Chinese books and records as treasures of human civilization (General Office of the State Council of PRC 2009 [2007]: 605). In 2008, SACH issued a document on the protection of twentieth-century heritage. The document started with an overarching statement of the importance of twentieth-century heritage from a global perspective: “The protection of heritage of the twentieth century is important for recording human’s history of progression” (2009 [2008]b: 673).

The discourse of cultural heritage is used by the Chinese government to proclaim its international status. By participating in global activities of cultural conservation, the communication between China and the world simultaneously enhances the congruency and the boundary between these two entities. The increase and proliferation of World Heritage in China have given the state a useful standard for their claim to be an important and powerful civilization in the twenty-first century. China has adopted many principles and frames that are derived from UNESCO and ICOMOS, while also resisting certain preservation measures and values to maintain its independence in terms of cultural management and national pride.

The quantity of World Heritage Sites is seen by the Chinese as a representation of their cultural status in the world. A better image in the world for China is believed to be derived from the increase in World

Heritage Sites. Therefore, to increase World Heritage Sites is one of the most important tasks of cultural conservation (SACH 2009 [2001]: 414). "We are undoubtedly a big heritage nation, in terms of both quantity and variety," says an official overview of China's cultural preservation. "However, as an ancient country that has abundant natural and cultural heritage, the current quantity of our World Heritage Sites still does not match our actual resources" (Y. Li 2007: 38). The quality of heritage management is closely tied to the issue of world image and prestige, and problems of cultural heritage management are regarded as detrimental factors for China's image in the international community (SACH 2009 [2003]a: 474).

Image is even articulated as one of the appealing social benefits derived from World Heritage management. "Well managed World Heritage will build a responsible image of the government, which in turn creates a precious 'name card' for the country in international affairs" (Y. Li 2007: 42). In addition, not only are the designation and management of World Heritage seen as constitutive factors for China's global image, but also the quality of nomination files are considered to build national pride and honor. It has been constantly reiterated that UNESCO officers thought that Mount Taishan's nomination file, written in 1987, was at that time the best example of a nomination file for third world countries (Cong 2004: 21; Cao 2010: 63). Two decades later, the writers of Chinese nomination files claim them to be exemplary models for all countries (Cong 2004: 21).

China's integral role in world cultural conservation lies not only in its historic sites per se but also in its institutional participation and contribution. The state insists that its engagement in the activities of world cultural conservation has enhanced its position in the system. The nomination and election of Chinese representatives to be managerial members of important international organizations such as the World Heritage Committee and ICOMOS, the active participation in the drafting process of the Nara Document, and the successful organization for world conferences are said to all reflect world recognition of China's cultural conservation achievements (Y. Li 2007: 42–43).

A well-established World Heritage conservation system in China has been portrayed as a contribution to all human civilizations, which is "an act of a king that is unstoppable" (Guo 2004: 10). One milestone of China's international engagement in cultural conservation was the Twenty-eighth Session of World Heritage Committee, held in Suzhou in 2004. This event, costing six billion RMB, "reflected China's active posture of participating in international affairs on heritage protection, and indicated the world so-

ciety's acknowledgement to China's accomplishments on World Heritage conservation" (Y. Li 2007: 43).

World Heritage also provides the state with a platform from which to culturally influence other countries. Since the late 1990s, China has been actively engaged in conservation projects overseas, especially Cambodia. It has become one of the leading countries for heritage restoration among the participants of International Cooperation Cambodia. The Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage has undertaken restoration projects at Chau Say Temple and Ta Keo Temple in Angkor Wat. This produces fruitful outcomes for the Chinese government, which sees overseas heritage projects as conveyers of China's positive image in the world. As the academy states on its official website, "China's engagement in the international action to aid Angkor is a manifestation of the Chinese responsibility and senses of mission for the protection of World Cultural Heritage. Additionally, the projects have provided opportunities for an extended cooperation between China and the international community of cultural preservation."³



Figure 1.3. Temple of Heaven, an imperial sacrificial altar in Beijing, designated in 1998



Figure 1.4. Kaiping Diaolou, designated in 2007 for its “flamboyant fusion of Chinese and Western structural and decorative forms”

Echoing the World: China's Burra Charter

The cooperative and interactive relationship between the international heritage system and China is manifested in the “Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China” (the China Principles), which is believed to be a “landmark achievement” to “bring China’s heritage conservation up to world standards of good practice” (Qian 2007: 255). This document is highly influenced by the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (known as the Burra Charter). Therefore, it is often called China’s Burra Charter.

The writing process, an international collaboration between China, Australia, and the United States, produced the main document and its supplementary documents. For example, the subsequently released “Illustrated Principles for the Conservation of Heritage in China” is an imitation of the Illustrated Burra Charter (*ibid.*: 257).

Because China Principles was internationally shaped, it has many parallels with the principles rooted in the Western tradition. As Qian Fengqi illustrates, the affinity between China Principles and the Burra Charter resides in the “insistence on following a planning methodology and a rigorous assessment procedure.” In addition, the principle “minimal intervention”⁴ is highly emphasized in the China Principles, similar to the Venice Charter and the Burra Charter (*ibid.*).

However, the emphasis on minimal intervention seems to contradict the Asian tradition of cultural conservation, such as reconstruction and repainting. Qian indicates that this contradiction actually shows that the China Principles, rather than being rooted in general public knowledge of cultural conservation, is a representation of the state's endeavor to integrate a particular rhetoric with the official discourse of modernization, by catching up with world models (*ibid.*: 257–58). In a more skeptical interpretation, the Burra Charter itself is challenged. Smith criticizes the Venice Charter and the Burra Charter as examples of the “authorized heritage discourse.” As Waterton et al. maintain, the Burra Charter is intrinsically contradictory.

Contemporary calls for community participation and the inclusion of diverse associative values and meanings do not sit comfortably within the overall tone of the document when placed together with traditional notions of authority and expertise. Indeed, the distinctive styling of semantics works to construct an objective, factual, and thus seemingly natural, account of the conservation process, when it is in reality privileging a particular perspective. (Waterton et al. 2006: 347)

Another criticism resides in the political status of China Principles. It was launched by ICOMOS China, which although nominally a non-governmental organization affiliated with ICOMOS, is in fact a government-run organization in China. Therefore, the writing and promulgation of the China Principles reflect the lack of independence of China's heritage profession. Local conservationists and officials simply perceive the implementation of the principles as an administrative imposition rather than a professional guideline. China Principles is, then, conceived of more as a dissemination of a particular state discourse. The only Chinese characteristic of the principles is the strong role of the government in claiming the “special cases” in which the principles can be abandoned, such as the construction of the Three Gorges Dam that has resulted in the demolition of many historical sites and even whole towns (Qian 2007: 259).

Regardless of the challenges mentioned above, the true rhetorical reputation of the China Principles is neither the role of the Burra Charter nor the political status of the China Principles. Rather, it is officially claimed an important accomplishment that China's cultural conservation is geared to international standards (Y. Li 2007: 42). It is valuable because it manifests the state's attempt to establish an international level of reputation of cultural conservation. As stated in the principles, “As a signatory to the UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and as a member of ICOMOS, China should also make a contribution to international conservation theory” (ICOMOS China 2002

[2000]: 14). In 2007, the Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage organized a national workshop for the implementation of the China Principles. In the concluding speech, the deputy director-general of SACH Tong Mingkang expressed a very high tone on China Principles, characterizing China Principles as an indication that China has been playing a leading role in East Asia's and even the world's cultural heritage conservation, being a powerful nation in this field (Luo 2007). Qian notes that the principles "show a tendency towards Western conservation philosophy," which reflects a common paradox in Asia that the "drawing up and the implementation of national charters and regional protocols are more or less dependent on expertise from abroad" (Qian 2007: 263). This dependence does not lie in the conservation philosophy but instead predominantly resides in discursive processes. It is obvious that the idea and practice of writing and implementing charters for cultural conservation as well as the narrative frame of these charters are imitations of the West.

In 2015, the China Principles were revised, with some new provisions emphasizing community engagement, cultural diversity, social values, and so on. In recent years, community engagement and cultural diversity have become key issues for heritage conservation. The revised China Principles acknowledges this trend by adding similar content. The new contents further reflect the dynamic relationship between international heritage conservation movements and the Chinese response to them.

Copying the World: Cultural Heritage Day

In 2005, the second Saturday of June was designated as China's Cultural Heritage Day, making public heritage education an annual event. The designation of Cultural Heritage Day is an integral part of the official agenda for fostering societal participation and heritage engagement. Government propaganda and the mass media have increasingly facilitated wide public involvement for this event. The designation is thought to accelerate the development of "China's good traditional culture, and to evoke public passions for the protection and promotion of cultural heritage" (C. Li 2010). It has drawn remarkable public recognition and appreciation and bears witness to the development and solidification of China's cultural preservation in its "cultural heritage phase."

Calendars and holidays have a special function for community cohesion. As Durkheim writes, "A calendar expresses the rhythm of the collective activities, while at the same time its function is to assure their regularity" (1965: 23). A calendar also expresses how a community attaches meanings to its sense of temporality (Zerubavel 1981: 82). Framed with a particular calendar, a holiday embodies and highlights the significant

sites of the “temporal map” and reproduces what Pierre Nora calls sites of memory (*lieux de memoire*). “The holiday cycle itself constitutes a traditional site of memory, anchored in a centuries-old tradition” (Zerubavel 1995: 216). And they ensure the “mnemonic synchronization” for communities. In a particular sense, holidays themselves can become heritage. A holiday that functions in heritage conservation to some extent reinforces and intensifies its rhetorical value for transmitting traditions and memories.

Cultural Heritage Day vividly reflects this value reproduction mechanism. On 10 June 2006, the first Cultural Heritage Day, CCTV Channel 10 produced a live program named “Chinese Memory” to celebrate the festival. One of the hosts started the live broadcast with a quote that is widespread in China, “Chinese civilization is the only continuous one amongst the four great ancient civilizations in the world” (Yan 2007: 159). The designation of Cultural Heritage Day, according to another host, represented “a huge step for China’s cultural heritage conservation” (Yan 2007: 160). In this sense, the holiday should be celebrated as a vehicle that keeps the Chinese people preserving their integrated and continuous cultural memory. Since its designation, it has been discursively entangled with nationalist sentiments. Director-general of SACH Shan Jixiang indicates that the designation of Cultural Heritage Day manifests a high degree of China’s perception of its own civilization as well as the civilization’s “cultural self-consciousness” (Shan 2008: 153).

However, on the same page, Shan also suggests that this self-consciousness and perception of civilization “was acknowledged by the world society” (2008: 153). China’s Cultural Heritage Day, in spite of its goal of educating people about and protecting Chinese heritage, is unequivocally a product of Western cultural dissemination. The designation was largely influenced by similar holidays in Europe since the 1980s. In September 1984, France became the first country that initiated a Cultural Heritage Day, which encouraged citizens to take responsibility for heritage conservation and protection. Other countries imitated France in the following years. It has become a joint European annual activity—European Heritage Days. So far, fifty signatory states of the European Cultural Convention have ratified it (Council of Europe 2010).

The director-general of SACH Shan Jixiang said that the Chinese designation was based on, and learned from, “the successful cases of other countries” (Q. Liu 2006). In fact, this learning process began as early as the 1990s, when Feng Jicai, a writer famous for his endeavor to protect folklore and local traditional cultures, suggested that China should learn from the experience of European countries in creating their own Cultural Heritage Days. In 2004, Feng formally submitted a proposal to the National

Committee of the CPPCC to call for a National Cultural Heritage Day. In this proposal, he reviewed the history of Cultural Heritage Day in France and other European countries:

During the 1960s, French government launched a large-scale “culture investigation” amid the heyday of modernization. This investigation aimed to comprehensively examine, organize and protect the historic and cultural properties of France. After the completion of this project, the French government designated the second Sunday in June as “Heritage Day.”⁵ Commemorations and cultural heritage festivals were to be held annually from metropolitan centers to rural towns and villages. This event, jointly organized with government programs and engaged social agents, has successfully promoted and solidified French people’s self-confidence and self-esteem in their nation and homeland. In recent years, a number of European countries have imitated France to designate the same day as their own “Heritage Day,” commemorating national cultural heritage. (Feng 2004: 61)

In 2005, Feng and Shan, respectively, submitted proposals for designating China’s Cultural Heritage Day to the National Committee of the CPPCC. In an article recalling the submission, Shan wrote that the idea and practice of Cultural Heritage Day, adopted from Europe, was a “stone from other hills,” acknowledging the isomorphic nature of this new holiday (Shan 2010). As illustrated in the beginning of this chapter, a stone from other hills rhetorically indicates positive rather than negative aspects of an interaction. In 2006, right before the first Cultural Heritage Day, an article in *Hebei Daily* explained, “Confucius says, ‘Among any three people walking, I will find something to learn for sure.’ Similarly, there is a shortcut for cultural heritage conservation that is to study and borrow experiences from other countries. Therefore, the designation of Cultural Heritage Day reflects this principle of learning from others” (H. Liu 2006).

The establishment of Cultural Heritage Day in China illustrates how a universal model is diffused by domestic professionals.⁶ The official narrative has done well in articulating its Western roots in a positive way. But international collaboration on cultural conservation is not always harmonious. The following example shows that conflict and resistance are also integral parts of China’s engagement in the world cultural system.

Cooperation with Rejection: The Beijing Document

The following example of China-world connection on cultural conservation does not display the same cooperative progression as the previous examples; rather, it is an apparent consequence of resistance against UNESCO’s pressure. However, as we examine the negotiating process

and related documents, it becomes evident that even this resistance was a kind of cooperation. Resistance, in some ways, shows China's engagement in world society.

Because China had a long history of historic conservation before the implementation of World Heritage, newly introduced concepts and principles not only were reform inducing but also brought new ideas that were incompatible with traditional Chinese methods. One instance of the tension was related to the renovation of historic structures. In the Chinese tradition, periodic renovation and repainting are acceptable as long as structures are maintained in their original likeness. However, according to the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (the Venice Charter; ICOMOS 1964), new elements should be given a contemporary mark to distinguish those elements from the older, original elements. Also, many Chinese intellectuals and preservationists, although they found some new frames and notions of cultural conservation derived from the West acceptable, stubbornly defended Chinese standards of authenticity. This tension turned into a worldwide debate over the meaning and nature of authenticity in 2007.

Before the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, three World Heritage Sites in the city, the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, and the Temple of Heaven, were renovated to appear as they did during the mid-Qing period (fifteenth–sixteenth centuries). Certain buildings were reconstructed according to historical records. However, although the Chinese government insisted that the renovations strictly abided by the universal principles of authenticity and integrity, UNESCO contended that some projects violated the principles, especially certain exterior structures that had been newly painted in multiple colors (*China Cultural Heritage* 2007: 8). In July 2006, the World Heritage Committee held its thirtieth session to evaluate a number of World Heritage Sites currently on the list, including these three sites in Beijing. They were especially interested in the restoration of their polychromy. The committee raised concerns that the restoration projects were conducted in a hasty manner and lacked documentary evidence. The report said:

The World Heritage Committee,

Having examined Document WHC-06/30.COM/7B,

Recalling Decision 29 COM 7B.49, adopted at its 29th session (Durban, 2005),

Commends the State Party of China for its continued commitment to address the conservation concerns of the cultural heritage properties in Beijing and for providing an updated management plan for the Imperial Palace of Beijing;

Notes with great concern, however, that current restoration works at the Imperial Palace, the Temple of Heaven and the Summer Palace in Beijing

are carried out in a hasty manner, lack of documentary evidence and clearly formulated principles to guide the conservation works;

Requests the State Party to provide to the World Heritage Centre with a report clarifying what documentary evidence is being used for the restoration of the polychromy within the three World Heritage properties;

Encourages the State Party to make explicit the philosophical framework being used for conservation decisions on the property, whether this be "Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites" promoted by ICOMOS China or another vehicle;

Further requests the State Party to integrate risk-preparedness and tourism management within the Conservation Master Plan for the Imperial Palace and to develop appropriate Conservation Master Plans for the World Heritage properties of the Summer Palace and the Temple of Heaven in Beijing;

Encourages the State Party to initiate a collaborative study on the restoration of polychromy and ways to ensure its authenticity with other East Asian countries such as Japan, Korea and Vietnam;

Further encourages the State Party to organize, in collaboration with ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre, a Regional Symposium on the Outstanding Universal Value, Authenticity and Integrity of Cultural Heritage Properties in Asia, in 2007 or 2008, to assess the relevance of conservation principles developed at the international level within the region;

Requests the State Party to provide the World Heritage Centre, by 1 February 2007, with a report on the progress made in the implementation of the above recommendations, for examination by the Committee at its 31st session in 2007. (UNESCO 2006c)

This evaluation quickly received responses from the Chinese government. In May 2007, the International Symposium on the Concepts and Practices of Conservation and Restoration of Historic Buildings in East Asia was held in Beijing, cooperatively organized by the UNESCO World Heritage Center, International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), ICOMOS, and SACH. The symposium acknowledged the concerns and suggestions voiced by UNESCO concerning the maintenance of authenticity during the large-scale restoration projects, yet also raised the point that concepts and practices of conserving cultural heritage varied across traditions and cultures. In spite of the original criticisms, in this forum, China successfully controlled the negotiation agendas. As a consequence, the "Beijing Document on Historic Building Preservation and Restoration in East Asia" (the Beijing Document) was promulgated, and a general compromise on cultural diversity of historic conservation techniques was reached.

The Beijing Document has a specific section that explains China's principles on surface (re)painting of historic architecture:

Architectural surfaces and their finishing layers, with their historic, aesthetic and technical qualities, represent an essential component of the visible part

of monuments. Architectural surfaces also form the protective layers of an historic building. The best way to care for these surfaces is through regular maintenance. Nevertheless, the surfaces are subject to weathering and wear and tear, often necessitating repair. At the same time, the richness of such surfaces is founded in the variety of cultural expressions, aesthetic achievements, and the diversity of materials and techniques used from ancient times until the present. In many cases, the craft techniques and materials may have remained nearly the same for centuries. Even so, each period has also its own specific cultural context and values, reflected in the work of the master craftsmen. This is the case of painted surfaces on wood. It should therefore be the primary concern in conservation to retain as much of the material authenticity of the surfaces as possible, and decisions regarding repainting should be based on proper professional consultation. (SACH 2007a)

Rather than a simple explanation and a defensive response to UNESCO's concerns, the Beijing Document took further steps to reflect on the extent to which a universal conservation standard could be applied in specific regions with particular cultural traditions of conservation. To some extent, it resists UNESCO's universal discursive power by insisting that "any restoration must fully recognize the specificity of a heritage resource and guarantee that its historical, tangible and intangible aspects be retained in the process of conservation and restoration." It also maintains that "considering the cultural and historical specificity of each place, restoration cannot be based on the uniform application of recipes or standard solutions without proper verification and recognition."

In response to the criticism that repainting the structures' surfaces violates the principle of authenticity, the document argues that traditional knowledge and conservation technology should be regarded as integral parts of any heritage site's authenticity. "When feasible, due respect should be placed on the continuity of traditional practices, for example when repainting of surfaces has become necessary. These principles are highly relevant for monuments in the East-Asian context."

In fact, the debate over the nature of authenticity is not new. The concept of authenticity as closely attached to "outstanding universal value" was challenged as early as the promulgation of the Venice Charter. Especially since the establishment of the WHC, non-Western countries have increasingly complained about the Western-centric nature of this concept, and there have emerged non-Western resistance and dissonance. As a result, common agreement was eventually reached that each cultural system would have its own view of authenticity. This agreement is manifested in the Nara Document, in which the notion that restoration is an integral part of authenticity is, for the first time, legitimately acknowledged by world society (see Labadi 2010).

Given this, the Beijing Document should be seen only as a supportive effort rather than a creative achievement. But the significance of this document lies not in its creativeness but in its contribution to China's image enhancement as a world cultural participant. It is praised by the Chinese as the first international document on cultural heritage conservation that is initiated by the cooperation between China and authoritative international organizations (*China Cultural Relics* 2007). It reminds the world (as well as the Chinese people) that China is a crucial constitutive part of world culture and of world cultural diversity.

Rather than simply proclaiming China's independence, the Beijing Document represents the endeavors that China has made to generate its own influence upon world society. One report claims that the Beijing Document is a positive result of China's endeavor to compete for discursive power for East Asian societies against the dominating Western standards (Sun 2009). As stated by Shan Jixiang, the Beijing Document reveals dual principles. On the one hand, it maintains East Asia's specific tradition of architectural protection. On the other hand, it is highly parallel to the central principles of the Venice Charter on the issue of minimum intervention. Shan remarks,

The Beijing Document represents the scientific and rational attitudes of the international community of cultural conservation, which collaboratively study, reflect on, and promote cultural heritage conservation. This document will serve as principles and measures for the protection and restoration of historic architectures in East Asian countries . . . Therefore, the Beijing Document is "originated in China, associated with East Asia, and applicable in the world." (Shan 2009: 73)

Shan's article, especially the last sentence, seems to say that the Chinese response to UNESCO's criticisms was actively initiated from the domestic side. However, although the Chinese government interprets the symposium and the Beijing Document as a successful example of China's cultural independence and participation in world society, few have mentioned that it was UNESCO's evaluation report that originally "requested and encouraged" China to organize international collaboration. From this angle, the Beijing Document reveals acceptance of rather than resistance to UNESCO's "soft power" (Long and Labadi 2010: 6).

The document constantly repeats text from earlier documents, such as the Nara Document on Authenticity, the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, and the Xi'an Declaration, all of which are regarded as sources of discursive principles for this document. The emphasis on terms such as "authenticity" and "integrity" are largely associated with, rather than independent of, the prior documents. The Beijing Document never rejects the universality of the current conservation principles. In-

stead, by agreeing on UNESCO's authoritative position on world-level cultural conservation, and by engaging in reinforcing this authoritative position, China acquires a higher and more secured status within the geopolitical system.

In the following year's session, the World Heritage Committee evaluated the symposium and the Beijing Document. The committee acknowledged China's efforts in organizing the symposium and hoped that the Beijing Document would "contribute to strengthening the theoretical framework on which are based conservation decisions, notably as regards issues of authenticity, at the World Heritage properties." In addition, it reiterated its request that China should develop appropriate conservation master plans for the three heritage sites and "carry out a comparative study on the restoration of polychromy and ways to ensure its authenticity within East Asia in collaboration with countries such as Japan, Korea and Vietnam" (UNESCO 2007b: 99).

This request for comparative study again reflected UNESCO's "soft power," which China, as a strong political power, could easily dismiss. But China diligently responded in late 2008 by hosting another forum—the International Seminar on Conservation of Painted Surfaces on Wooden Structures in East Asia—co-organized with the SACH of China, the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS, ICCROM, the Beijing Municipality, the Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage, and ICOMOS China. Designed to fortify the Beijing Document through the inclusion of explicit technical instructions, the seminar reconsidered the core concepts of authenticity and integrity for color painting in Asian cultural tradition.

Fifty participants from eleven countries attended. One fruit of the seminar was the promulgation of the "Beijing Memorandum on the Conservation and Restoration of Painted Surfaces on Wooden Structures in East Asia," which extended the Beijing Document to an in-depth level with detailed accounts of preservation principles, restoration techniques, research and annotations, specialty qualification and training, continuation of traditional techniques, and international cooperation (SACH 2008a: 35). Like the Beijing Document, the Beijing Memorandum was also described officially as a successful instance of China's world engagement and status (Sun 2009). China followed up the seminar by inviting Asian countries such as Vietnam and Cambodia to communicate their lessons from the seminar, thus extending the state's cultural significance and influence on Asian regions.

In 2009, the World Heritage Committee expressed its appreciation of and satisfaction with the organization of the seminar. The seminar, according to the World Heritage Committee,

contributes greatly, as requested by the World Heritage Committee at its 31st session, to strengthening the theoretical framework on which are based conservation decisions, notably as regards issues of authenticity, for World Heritage properties. Rather than fully agreeing on the seminar's conclusion on the issue of restoration, the committee "notes" the efforts of the state. (UNESCO 2009c: 165–66)

The Beijing Document and the Beijing Memorandum, regardless of their real contributions to global heritage conservation, reveal China's endeavor to become more engaged in discursive construction, in addition to active participation, in world cultural society. These documents are remembered in China as honorable actions in resistance to the authoritative and hegemonic Western cultural standard and as a nationalist accomplishment by which China's global status and identity are developed and strengthened (Sun 2009). But other than this functional consequence, the processes of generation of these two documents are still exogenously situated and "encouraged," if not actually imposed. The vocabulary, procedure, and, above all, initial idea of symposium are all Western based.

This, however, should not be condemned as a hegemonic strategy in that neither UNESCO nor other related bodies forced China to hold the conferences. Instead, in Meyer's terms, it is primarily an institutional and associational process in which the actors of heritage conservation, including experts, global organizations, and the state, collaboratively generate the isomorphic "structure" of heritage conservation in China. This structure not only is found in the seminars and the documents but also is represented in Cultural Heritage Day and the China Principles. By adapting and imitating the institutional discourse and frame, China is reframing itself to be an integral part of world culture.

The Soft Power of Cultural Scripts

The UNESCO World Heritage program supplies a set of concepts and practical guidelines for the institutionalization of world culture (Drori 2005). Institutionalization, defined by Meyer et al., "is the process by which a given set of units and a pattern of activities come to be normatively and cognitively held in place, and partially taken for granted as lawful (whether as a matter of formal law, custom, or knowledge)" (Meyer, Boli, and Thomas 1987: 13). WHC and its affiliated programs and documents are the normatively and cognitively patterned activities that are consequently diffused to its member states.

Deeply embedded in these routinized activities are some principles, norms, and values of cultural conservation that are consensually held by

today's world society. These norms, as Drori suggests, are codified to be iconic as a unitary global moral order (Drori 2005: 190). As this chapter reveals, China has simultaneously incorporated the norms and principles of heritage conservation, remodeled its bureaucratic system in this area, and engaged in the institutionalization of the world model of cultural heritage. Some activities have a stronger connection to the UNESCO model than others, but all are discursively involved and negotiated within the world culture initiative.

There are two major features of this isomorphic process. First, most new heritage concepts, principles, and programs are not as new as they are ostensibly viewed. "Cultural heritage" has its original emergence as early as the 1950s in China. "Authenticity" has its earlier Chinese version as "maintaining the original state." China's national law on cultural protection was enacted a few years prior to China's ratification of the WHC. These original preexisting concepts are still largely embedded in China's heritage discourse today. Therefore, the institutionalization of the World Heritage cultural model is contextually and textually conditioned by the endogenous Chinese discursive foundation.

Second, the institutionalization of the World Heritage model in China reveals the complex dynamics of international professional cooperation. As suggested by Meyer et al., professionals with scientific knowledge have become prestigious players in the making of world society because they are seen as powerful actors who assimilate and develop scientific knowledge. Groups constituted by such professionals become increasingly important for the diffusion of the cultural models generated in scientific and theoretical patterns of language. The theorization and utilization of guiding terms like "authenticity," "integrity," and "minimum intervention" are good examples of this. In fact, the way that the Chinese government legitimizes these new terms is to highlight their advantage as part of scientific theorization.

What is the role of UNESCO or, more precisely, of the World Heritage Center and its affiliated organizations, such as ICOMOS? Is institutionalization a hegemonic superimposition or something else? As this chapter has shown, the world cultural model entails anything but straight imposition. Drori has observed that even the United Nations' legalized dedication to the virtues of world cultures has explicitly excluded any narrative associated with the hegemony of Western civilization, capitalism, and democracy (2005: 190). Thus the power attained by the World Heritage program is a soft power that is derived from rhetorical scripts.

Meyer contends that cultural scripts play a more important role than bureaucratic authority and that cultural models are complied with and used for the development of state policies. Common global models are

scripted, “and national policies change with changes in world scripts” (Meyer 2009b: 157). The nation-state is more like an actor performing on the stage, following the lines and regulated gestures, with its own voices and languages. In this sense, UNESCO has created a model of cultural scripts that each State Party can use in its own language, highly framed and associated with its own historical and political contexts.

Rather than purposive or coercive, the institutionalization process is both discursive and structural. World Heritage is an arena in which social institutions are scripted and cultural scripts are institutionalized. Certain social institutions like SACH and participating university departments and their norms and structures are scripted. Meanwhile, the scripts are adopted to serve the state to reinstitutionalize its existing discourse and knowledge of heritage preservation, such as the expansion of protective measurements, the development of national research agencies and university departments, the creation of a cultural heritage day, the expansion of national relics surveys, and the promulgation of new national laws and regulations.

To fully understand the discursive and institutional transition of cultural conservation in China, we need to take into consideration the intertwined forces of external and internal processes. Neither force has the full power to shape the whole system. Rather, it is through the negotiation and reconciliation between the two sides that a particularly defined and practiced cultural heritage is scripted and institutionalized. Nevertheless, scripting the institutions is only half of the process. In addition to the strategic identity-pursuing engagement in world society, the Chinese government has also created a discursive agenda in order to claim domestic solidarity and national sovereignty.

The process can be regarded as “rescripting,” in which major components of the master script remain but with particular manipulations on the supporting scripts. The exogenously scripted heritage institutions and normative frames are further rescripted based on particular national contexts. Smith’s assertion of the hegemony of exogenous heritage models does not appear to be a central factor in China’s world interactions, and this hegemonic nature is more evident in the domestic space. The next chapter will elaborate on and explore the characteristics of this rescripting and domestic hegemonic process.

Notes

1. These include the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 1972/1985; Convention on the Means of Prohibiting

and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, 1970/1989; Convention on the Illicit Movement of Art Treasures, 1970/1997; and Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague Convention), 1954/1999.

2. In 2009, the National Center for Underwater Cultural Heritage Conservation was established under the supervision of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage.
3. <http://english.cach.org.cn/col/col1582/index.html>.
4. According to the Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China (2015 revision), “minimal intervention” refers to the following requirements: “Intervention to a heritage site should be restricted to the minimum necessary to ensure its preservation. Preventive conservation measures should be undertaken to reduce the need for interventions” (ICOMOS China 2015: 68).
5. Actually, Feng’s statement is in error on this point. French Heritage Day and the later European Heritage Day are in September, not June.
6. This new holiday has not yet received wide recognition in spite of the original call for full public participation in cultural heritage conservation. According to a recent report on public knowledge of Cultural Heritage Day, data collected in 2010 surprisingly showed that only 29.9 percent of the respondents have heard about this holiday, and only 6.1 percent have observed it. The former statistic is in fact 2.9 percent lower than that of 2009 (Horizon Research Consultancy 2010: 8).

2



From World Heritage to National Solidarity

In any case, there is a tendency for World Heritage Sites to be used as instruments of national aggrandizement.

—J. Tunbridge and G. Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*

The National and the International

When Lu Xun, perhaps the most influential Chinese writer of the last century, wrote about Chinese wooden carvings, he remarked, “Those with local styles are more likely to draw attention from other countries, thereby being global” (Lu Xun 2005: 81). Written in 1934, Lu Xun’s statement reveals the dialectic link between the nation-state and the world: a regional folk tradition can be transnationally appreciated and practiced. This phrase is ubiquitous in today’s China as well; however, now the statement is abbreviated and renarrated as “The more national, the more global.” To some extent, this narrative seems to be consistent with World Heritage’s claim to the universalistic ownership of all human heritage. However, the real power manifested in this new saying is the replacement of the “local” with the “national.” This reveals a rhetorical effort by the party-state—through a deeply operated discursive construction that articulates the unity and integration of a multicultural and multiethnic nation-state—to

show that, beyond cultural differences, there lies an integral, totalizing, and culturally unified and harmonious China.

Heritage, especially World Heritage, is operated as a discursive device for the legitimization of this nationalistic discourse, in which genuine local voices—and the local variation they express—are overshadowed and universalistic agendas are strategically maneuvered. This discursive device has been woven into China's nation-building process. The quantity of World Heritage Sites is said to represent both the nation's splendid history and its present level of civilization, public civility, and comprehensive national power. World Heritage in China "is the spiritual foundation and cultural skeleton for the Chinese nation" (Tong, Gu, and Lu 2008: 53). This nationalistic discourse places World Heritage firmly within the boundary of the nation-state, a fact that is largely antithetical to the World Heritage Convention's attempt at universalism. This narrative disjunction is more vividly manifested through a comprehensive comparison of the value justifications regarding China's World Heritage Sites between UNESCO's official documents and those of China.¹

Table 2.1 illustrates three major differences between the Chinese and UNESCO narratives. First, heritage sites pertaining to ethnic minorities are more likely to be articulated by China as the representation of the Chinese nation's unity and ethnic integration. For example, the UNESCO description merely describes the Historic Ensemble of the Potala Palace's role as a center for the Tibetan administrative system. The Chinese description, on the other hand, emphasizes that its construction originated with King Sontsan Gambo, who built it for his bride, the ethnic Han princess Wen Cheng, and that the Potala's reconstruction was carried out when the fifth Dalai Lama was made political and religious leader of Tibet by the Qing Dynasty's central government (Luo 2008: 83).

Similarly, UNESCO portrays the Imperial Tombs of the Qing Dynasty as a combination of traditions inherited from previous dynasties and new features of Manchu, while the Chinese value justification explicitly underlines the role of the Imperial Tombs as an embodiment of the cultural exchanges between the Han and Manchu peoples (*ibid.*: 131).

Second, those sites with compelling scientific or aesthetic values were seen by UNESCO within a technological or artistic scope, while China tended to portray them as sites of national sentiment. An obvious example is the Great Wall. While UNESCO described it as the world's largest military structure, the Chinese saw it as a symbol of the wisdom, creativeness, and spirit of the Chinese nation as a whole (*ibid.*: 25). In the case of the Mogao Caves, UNESCO characterized it primarily as an outstanding example of Buddhist art. The Chinese description stated that

it reflected “the social activities of different Chinese nationalities and strata” (ibid.: 38).

Third, China was more interested in, and focused on, the antiquity of the sites, to the extent of creating historical facts obviously different from those in the UNESCO description. For example, the Ancient City of Pingyao was recognized by UNESCO as being founded in the fourteenth century. However, the Chinese narrative indicated that its original construction was “during the reign of King Xuan” (827–782 BCE) of the Western Zhou Dynasty, dating its history much farther back, to 2,000 years earlier.

Table 2.1. Comparison between Chinese and UNESCO Descriptions of China’s World Cultural Heritage Designated Prior to 2008

World Heritage Site	UNESCO description	Chinese description
The Great Wall	The world’s largest military structure	A symbol of wisdom and creativeness and spirit of the Chinese nation as a whole (Luo 2008: 25)
Peking Man Site at Zhoukoudian	Exceptional reminder of the prehistorical human societies of the Asian continent	Richest remains of paleo-anthropology with fossils of <i>Homo erectus</i> (Luo 2008: 48)
Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor	(Terracotta figures) masterpieces of realism and of great historical interest	First imperial mausoleum of great dimensions in Chinese history (Luo 2008: 42)
Imperial Palaces of the Ming and Qing Dynasties in Beijing and Shenyang	Priceless testimony to Chinese civilization	The highest level of Chinese civilization (Luo 2008: 36)
Mogao Caves	Buddhist art	Reflects the social activities of different Chinese ethnic groups and classes
Temple and Cemetery of Confucius and the Kong Family Mansion in Qufu	Outstanding artistic and historic character	An architectural complex on the largest scale in China (Luo 2008: 74)

World Heritage Site	UNESCO description	Chinese description
Historic Ensemble of the Potala Palace	Symbolizes Tibetan Buddhism and its central role in the traditional administration of Tibet	[Constructed] by King Sontsan Gambo for his bride, the ethnic Han princess Wen Cheng . . . [reconstruction was carried out] when the fifth Dalai Lama was made political and religious leader of Tibet by the Qing government. (Luo 2008: 83)
Mountain Resort and Its Outlying Temples, Chengde	A rare vestige of the final development of feudal society in China	The Manchu rulers aimed at enhancing the supervision of its border areas, uniting ethnic peoples and fortifying its frontier in the north . . . recorded the historical process of unifying this multinational country (Luo 2008: 73)
Ancient Building Complex in the Wudang Mountains	Represents the highest standards of Chinese art and architecture over a period of nearly 1,000 years	The holy land of the Chinese Daoist religion (Luo 2008: 81)
Lushan National Park	Spiritual center of Chinese civilization	[A complex of] 600 villas . . . display the cultural background of nineteen other countries and nations (Luo 2008: 89)
Ancient City of Ping Yao	Well-preserved example of a traditional Han Chinese city, founded in the fourteenth century	First built during the reign of King Xuan (827–782 BC) of the Western Zhou Dynasty. In 221 BC, when China adopted an administrative system of prefectures and countries, it was made a county seat and has remained one ever since (Luo 2008: 98)
Classical Gardens of Suzhou	Profound metaphysical importance of natural beauty in Chinese culture	Carry a wealth of traditional Chinese culture and thought (Luo 2008: 97)

(continued)

Table 2.1 *continued*

World Heritage Site	UNESCO description	Chinese description
Old Town of Lijiang	Perfectly adapted to the uneven topography	Harmonious life in a water city (Luo 2008: 103)
Summer Palace	A masterpiece of Chinese landscape	A masterpiece of classic Chinese garden and design (Luo 2008: 109)
Temple of Heaven	Dignified complex of fine cult buildings	Biggest and the best, both in shapes and structures, ancient sacrificial altar complex ever in China, as well as the biggest in the world (Luo 2008: 111–13)
Dazu Rock Carvings	Remarkable for aesthetic quality, rich diversity of subject matter, and the light that they shed on everyday life in China	Distinctive representative of the later period stone cave art in China (Luo 2008: 117)
Ancient Villages in Southern Anhui	Nonurban settlements	Of historical, artistic, and scientific value (Luo 2008: 136)
Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties	Combine traditions inherited from previous dynasties and new features of Manchu civilization	An example of the cultural exchanges between the Han and Man ethnic groups (Luo 2008: 131)
Mount Qingcheng and the Dujiangyan Irrigation System	The irrigation system distributes the river into the fertile farmland	A monument to the history of China's science and technology (Luo 2008: 124)
Longmen Grottoes	Represent the high point of Chinese stone carving	[One of] the three gigantic ancient Buddhist rock grottoes in China (Luo 2008: 134)
Yungang Grottoes	Outstanding achievement of Buddhist cave art in China	Embodiment of early rock grotto art in China (Luo 2008: 140)
Capital Cities and Tombs of the Ancient Koguryo Kingdom	Koguryo, named after the dynasty that ruled over parts of northern China and the northern half of the Korean Peninsula from 277 BC to AD 668	The Koguryo is an ethnic minority who lived in north-east China, and the appellation of a local government in ancient times (Luo 2008: 150)

World Heritage Site	UNESCO description	Chinese description
Historic Center of Macao	Unique testimony to the meeting of aesthetic, cultural, architectural, and technological influences from East and West	Strikingly reflects the exchanges and coexistence of Chinese and Western cultures during the past 400 years or more (Luo 2008: 155)
Yin Xu	Testifies to the golden age of early Chinese culture, crafts, and sciences	The capital ruins of the late period of the Shang Dynasty (Luo 2008: 158)
Kaiping Diaolou and Villages	Display a complex and flamboyant fusion of Chinese and Western structural and decorative forms	Model works of overseas Chinese culture (Luo 2008: 165)
Fujian Tulou	Exceptional examples of building tradition and function exemplifying a particular type of communal living and defensive organization	A wonderful flower of China's historical buildings (Luo 2008: 176)

Defining a Unified China: Time, Space, Ethnicity

The help of World Heritage enables the state to define a unified nation, to manipulate the meaning of cultural diversity, to maintain a state-controlled heritage sector, and to stress behavioral civility. A unified nation is made possible in World Heritage-related reports and articles. In 2007, SACH published an edited volume that summarized the accomplishments of China's cultural heritage preservation efforts. In the introduction, it wrote,

Among all world civilizations, the Chinese civilization is the only one that has never ceased over a history of five thousand years, which is a miracle. Along the course of Chinese history, our ancestors have created numerous splendid cultures with their wisdom, leaving us a rich cultural heritage. China is one of the countries with the richest cultural heritage. (Zhang 2007)

A chapter of the same volume, similarly, praised the World Heritage efforts of China for its historical representation. It explicitly stated that, ranging from the Peking Man site, dating back to half a million years, to the modern architecture of the historic town of Macao, World Heritage Sites in China jointly "reflect the continuity and durability of the Chinese

nation's cultural tradition" (Y. Li. 2007: 38). In addition to temporal continuity, the article acclaimed China's cultural multiplicity embodied in its World Heritage Sites, including "archeological sites, ancient architecture, Buddhist caves, natural landscapes, imperial tombs, and military defensive structures" (ibid.).

The rhetoric of historical continuity and spatial solidarity is one of the most important discursive devices through which the communist regime claims its legitimacy. As Presenjit Duara says, a linear grand historical narrative has been established in China, which has silenced "different and non-narrative modes" (Duara 1997: 19). World Heritage nomination stimulates the Chinese government to maintain the narrative of historical linearity. Always, this linearity is intertwined with spatial integrity.

One example is China's Grand Canal. According to the nomination file of the Grand Canal, this cultural property's outstanding universal value lies in both its temporal and spatial significance:

The Grand Canal is the only gigantic project system in the world which was invested, dug, and managed by the government in order to ensure the safety of the grain transportation (Caoyun) and to maintain a unified empire. This project was an important measure to balance the social and natural resources between the south and north. With unique time and spatial scale, it exhibits the long history of an artificial canal in an agricultural civilization, and represents the great achievements of water conservancy and transport before the Industrial Revolution. It re-allocated the resources and products within a vast territory, connected the political and economic centers, promoted economic and cultural exchanges between different regions, and played an irreplaceable role in national unity, political stability, economic prosperity, cultural exchanges, and technological development. The Grand Canal, with large time and spatial span, great achievement, and far-reaching influence, is a cradle of human civilization and has a large and far-reaching impact on the history of China and even the world. (SACH 2013: 44)

The statement emphasizes the "large time and spatial span" of the Grand Canal, indicating its representation of temporal and spatial significance. SACH's statement appears relatively neutral, however, when compared to the ones with overt nationalistic sentiments. For example, at one national symposium on World Heritage management, a presenter remarked, "The Grand Canal has been flowing for more than two thousand years. Its value is embedded in its historical antiquity" (Ye 2010: 207). Furthermore, representing the collective memory of the nation, the Grand Canal's historical continuity lies in the very fact that it is still "alive," rhetoric that emphasized the integral and constitutive element of the canal's historical continuity. The Grand Canal was added to the World Heritage List in June 2014. It is believed that the inscription of the Grand Canal on

the World Heritage List will help promote and maintain its historical continuity and spatial integrity.²

Interestingly, the name “China’s Grand Canal” is an invention emerging in the nomination process.³ In fact, there was not a single Grand Canal when it was originally built. The construction and reconstruction of the Grand Canal was not continuous in history. It was sporadically constructed, and these various construction events were implicitly inconsistent. The first part of the Grand Canal, the Han Gou (Han Country Conduit), was almost surely built in the Spring and Autumn Period (771–476 BCE) and was by no means intentionally designed as a large-scale canal. Moreover, the “reconstruction” during the Sui and Yuan dynasties should be understood as a series of independent projects that had little historical connection with Han Gou. Hence the Grand Canal should be more precisely defined as a series of canals that were constructed in sporadic historical periods and eventually connected.

Therefore, until 2008, the year the nomination was launched, the name used for the nomination materials had been Jing-Hang Grand Canal, referring to the canals that connected Beijing and Hangzhou. The name was later changed to China’s Grand Canal by incorporating the canal lengths in Henan province into the nomination (Ye 2010: 205). Clearly, the concept of China’s Grand Canal is almost in its infancy now. The renaming process was partially supported by the introduction of the concept of “cultural routes,” which provided the discursive formation for the preservation of the Grand Canal with theoretical and terminological legitimacy. With the new concept, it became possible for various historical towns, villages, bridges, and related sites to be packaged in the World Heritage nomination.

The Grand Canal’s symbolism of a unified nation lies in its temporal and territorial scale. Yet another, equally important spiritual-oriented dimension for national solidarity should be noted: the projected political loyalty of ethnic minorities. Long before the introduction of World Heritage, the preservation of cultural relics was employed to enhance the narrative of ethnic harmony and political stability. In earlier official documents, cultural relics in the custody of ethnic minorities were treated specially and categorized separately (Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Foreign Trade 2009 [1960]: 17). Ethnic solidarity and national unity were concepts that often appeared concomitantly (State Bureau of Cultural Relics 2009 [1978]: 81; the Central Propaganda Department of CCP, Ministry of Culture, and SACH 2009 [1989]: 243). The relationship between cultural preservation of ethnic minorities and national solidarity was narrated as follows:

China has endured as a multiethnic unified country since the ancient times. The long history and splendid culture of the Chinese nation are created and owned by all 56 ethnic groups. Each ethnic group uses its historical cultural relics to understand its own culture; it also uses the historical cultural relics of other groups to understand the others. That there is such a great quantity of historical cultural relics is the demonstration of ethnic solidarity, representing tremendous emotional appeal and cohesiveness that serve to maintain ethnic and national unification. (ibid.: 242)

Given the importance of ethnic and national solidarity stated above, in 1998, SACH and the State Ethnic Affairs Commission jointly issued a document that emphasized cultural preservation in ethnic areas, which admitted that the preservation of cultural relics of ethnic minorities was relatively weak (SACH and State Ethnic Affairs Commission of PRC 2009 [1998]: 352). The document reiterated that cultural relics of ethnic minorities were integral to China's outstanding overall historical and cultural heritage. "Because it has a special political status, we must seriously pay attention to the protection of cultural relics of ethnic minorities, with an overarching perspective of national unity and ethnic solidarity" (ibid.: 353).

World Heritage serves as a catalyst for the consolidation of this assertion: "Properly protecting and preserving World Cultural Heritage is a symbol of a nation's . . . ethnic solidarity" (SACH 2009 [2002]: 440). To implement this narrative, when nominating World Heritage Sites, ethnic heritage that contributes to national unity is often given priority. For example, in 2004, the nomination of Capital Cities and Tombs of the Ancient Koguryo Kingdom was a strategic response to North Korea's nomination of a similar archeological site (Li and Zhang 2010: 183).

A number of World Heritage nominations in China were also partially a result of political considerations. For instance, as Hevia suggests, the designation of the Mountain Resort and Its Outlying Temples at Chengde for World Heritage largely marked China's endeavor to claim its ethnic integrity. Located near Beijing but far away from Tibet, Chengde's architecture was in Tibetan style, with one center building being modeled after the Potala Palace of Tibet. This architectural imitation was thought to be a representation of the Manchu Empire's power and its religious and symbolic dynamics with the Tibetan power; it was "not designed to proclaim multiethnic unity but to awe the peoples of Inner and Central Asia to submission" (Hevia 2001: 233–34).

However, it is now said to have been built to "appease and unite the minority peoples living in China's border regions and to consolidate national unity," says Hevia, providing "historic evidence of the final formation of a unitary, multicultural China" (ibid.: 224). The dominant Han ethnic group is characterized as sharing harmonies of culture with the

minorities in this particular site. Therefore, symbolizing “the unity of the Han, Manchu, Hui, Tibetan, and Uighur peoples,” Chengde is an exemplar in which national solidarity is forged and the role of minority groups in the nation is accepted.

The original Potala in Tibet, the Historic Ensemble of the Potala Palace,⁴ is a more compelling intertwining of ethnic essences and nationalistic discourse. Between 2002 and 2008, the Potala Palace site underwent its most extensive renovation yet, which elicited sharp criticism from the Tibetan poet Woenser (2007):

The renovation project of the Potala was left to Chinese construction workers who know nothing about the delicate and complex nature of traditional Tibetan architecture and technology. It treated the renovation of the world-famous cultural heritage as a children’s game. For instance, according to Tibetans’ traditional architectural technology, a special wooden beam must be inserted into the wall; but, to make things easier, the Chinese used concrete and steel instead . . . This kind of renovation destroys the cohesiveness of the traditional Tibetan architecture of the Potala. However, state authorities were fully confident that the renovation respected Tibetan architectural and technological traditions.⁵

Li Zuixiong, an expert from Duanhuang Academy, claimed that the techniques used for the renovation of the wall paintings were authentically Tibetan (Yan 2007: 189). More explicitly, a number of Tibetan craftsmen were invited to visit the site and validate that authenticity was maintained in the work undertaken. One craftsman is reported as saying, “The renovation kept the authentic features of the structure.” Another Tibetan, who worked doing ritual ceremony at the Potala Palace, commented that the renovation was highly successful, so that the party and the government were strongly supported by most Tibetans, especially those who are religious (*ibid.*). Local praise for the preservation of authenticity was characterized in official pronouncements as an embodiment of ethnic cooperation and solidarity. A state-run magazine, *China Cultural Heritage*, commented on the highly positive role of the communist government in the restoration:

The renovation is a vivid embodiment and splendid example of the [Communist] Party’s and the government’s cultural preservation of ethnic heritage. During the project, Tibetan and Han craftsmen worked cooperatively, composing a hymn of praise to ethnic solidarity . . . The designers, technicians and managers respected Tibetan tradition, ethnic style and science, combining Tibetan traditions with modern techniques for cultural conservation . . . which manifested the wisdom of ethnic solidarity. (Zhang 2009: 74)

“The Potala Palace is not only an outstanding representation of Tibetan architecture,” wrote Nima Tsering, vice-chair of the Standing Committee

of the People's Congress of the Tibet Autonomous Region, "but also that of China and the world" (Tsering 2009: 34). With this logic, it is not surprising that all cultural heritage in Tibet is articulated as material evidence of the Tibetan people's defense of Chinese national unity. Therefore, Tibetan heritage "undoubtedly functions in demonstrating the fact that 'Tibet is an inseparable part of the nation'" (Tibet Cultural Relics Bureau 2009: 67).

In addition, China's political solidarity is marked by its reunification with special political regions, namely Hong Kong and Macao. World Heritage nomination plays a pivotal role in creating a sense of belonging for the newly reunified regions. In 2001, two years after Macao's reunification with mainland China, the Historic Center of Macao launched its application process for World Heritage. The nomination was highly supported by the central government. Many other sites preceding Macao on the tentative list were postponed. Thus, it quickly gained its official candidacy and was designated in 2005. This "support from the center" is consistently remembered in official files now. According to a state-produced documentary about Macao's progress after the reunification, the World Heritage status "was a golden key given by the central government to Macao" (CCTV 2009).

The central government's strong support is rhetorically linked to the development of Macao's national identity. After the release of the documentary mentioned above, the film's director, Xun Bo, said in an interview that only with World Heritage designation could people in Macao recognize the splendor of Chinese culture. "The roots of its Chinese cultural essences endure. Any change with the Chinese-Western cultural assimilation is on the surface. The real foundation is Chinese, which cannot be altered" (Sina.com 2009).

This verbalized affinity between Macao and the central government does not resonate with Macao's heritage preservationists. As Lee and du Cros observe, the cultural heritage managers in Macao remain in close cooperation with UNESCO and affiliated advisory bodies, rather than with the central government of the People's Republic of China (PRC). "The Macau government still prefers to seek advice from UNESCO-sanctioned regional experts than to engage PRC-based professionals" (Lee and du Cros 2007: 140). It seems that the assumed affinity between Macao and mainland China is somehow still in the process of discursive construction.

By creating a set of temporal and spatial narratives of World Heritage, the party-state has endeavored to represent China as a vast nation imbued with national and ethnic cohesion, stability, and solidarity. Furthermore, not only does the enforcement of state-oriented heritage discourse rely on the narratives of particular sites, but it is also profoundly manifested in processes of conceptual construction. As I will show in the next section,



Figure 2.1. Zhejiang section of the Grand Canal



Figure 2.2. A museum simulation of people's lifestyle at Liangzhu archaeological site, a Neolithic site aiming for designation in 2019

the hegemonic efforts and approaches to the construction of ethnic unity I have illustrated are largely associated with, and enabled by, the state's rescripting and reinterpretation of the concept of "cultural diversity," a concept that displays its use of rhetoric by the state as a technology of rule and control.

Rescripting Cultural Diversity

The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention [ICHC]) was passed by UNESCO in 2003 as an attempt to acknowledge and privilege non-Western cultural elements and to promote cultural diversity in local communities. However, the ICHC may find its relationship with the government of the State Parties challenging. Kurin points out that as the ICHC is being implemented, any governmental involvement in the preservation process may create problems that eliminate cultural diversity in local communities (2007: 13). He maintains that it is the cultural community that should be granted priority for the implementation of this treaty. Kurin worries that the ICHC "could be misused as a means of government control and regulation of community-based culture in the guise of actually supporting it" (*ibid.*: 18).

The implementation of this new convention in China to a large extent echoes Kurin's concern. China is one of the earliest states to ratify the ICHC (in 2004). Since then, it has enthusiastically developed and implemented a series of policies and directives regarding the preservation of intangible cultural heritage (General Office of the State Council of PRC 2009 [2005]; State Council of PRC 2009 [2005]). The Ministry of Culture launched the National Intangible Cultural Heritage Survey to establish a database for intangible heritage across the country. Meanwhile, a series of directives and policies were promulgated at provincial and local levels. The series of acts culminated in the Law on Intangible Cultural Heritage, which marked a significant breakthrough for the preservation of intangible cultural heritage in China.

However, although the ICHC is ideally meant to use the concept of intangible cultural heritage to maintain and promote local cultural diversity, it is instrumentally utilized by the Chinese authorities as a rhetorical tool and a new term to firmly legitimize its cultural control over ethnic minorities. The disjunction is first apparent in state definitions of intangible cultural heritage. According to the ICHC, intangible cultural heritage consists of "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts, and cultural spaces associated

therewith—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage” (UNESCO 2003: 2).

By contrast, Article 2 in China’s Law on Intangible Cultural Heritage defines intangible cultural heritage as “various forms of traditional cultural representations—as well as the artifacts and spaces associated therewith—that people of all ethnic groups⁶ transmit from generation to generation, and recognize as part of their cultural heritage” (National People’s Congress Standing Committee 2011). Whereas the ICHC definition treats intangible heritage primarily as community oriented, the Chinese definition tends to underline the ethnic associations of intangible heritage.

The ICHC definition is followed by a statement that intangible cultural heritage provides communities, groups, and individuals “with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity” (UNESCO 2003: 2). This statement characterizes local groups as those who “recognize a particular form of cultural expression as a symbol of their communal identity” (Kurin 2007: 12). The ICHC maintains that cultural diversity transcends national boundaries and should be recognized as part of and within a national culture. As stated by Kurin, nations are not the important unit of the stated cultural diversity.

The point of the whole treaty is, one might argue, the preservation of grass-roots cultural diversity around the world, and particularly, within the contemporary nation-state. Cultural diversity in the ICH Convention means the diversity of cultural communities—hence their foregrounding as both the subject and object of safeguarding efforts. (ibid.)

In contrast, the Chinese usage of this concept insists on its significance for the promotion of national cultural identity, ethnic solidarity, and social harmony (National People’s Congress Standing Committee 2011: Article 4). Although the Chinese government mentions the role of intangible heritage in fostering cultural diversity, it defines “cultural diversity” by totalizing and reifying China’s intangible heritage as a nationwide collective representation of the cultural diversity of the “world,” instead of that of local communities. China’s intangible cultural heritage, therefore, is characterized as an implicitly homogenous and totalizing unit, contributing to cross-cultural dialogue in world society (General Office of the State Council of PRC 2009 [2005]: 521). An exhibition at UNESCO headquarters presented by the Ministry of Culture of China explicitly and extensively presented this discourse of intangible cultural heritage’s function in unifying ethnic groups.

China’s intangible cultural heritage is the symbol of the Chinese nation, the precious source for fostering the self-identity of the Chinese nation, the solid basis for promoting unity of nationalities and safeguarding the unification of the country as well as the important force of unifying all peoples.

This modification of the definition is antithetical to ICHC's original efforts. With this narrative, China has been able to reorganize and reformulate varied local cultural practices into a unified national body of knowledge. Everything becomes categorized as generically national, as Munjeri demonstrates, with "Chinese folk songs, Chinese opera, Chinese folk dance, Chinese Quyi⁷ amongst others" (Munjeri 2009: 146). As a result, at the level of the central government, the UNESCO concept of cultural diversity has come to legitimize the Chinese government's acts of cultural involvement, organization, and even penetration in local communities.

This discursive hegemony is empowered by the establishment of a national inventory of intangible cultural heritage and the particular criteria for its designation. The criteria developed by the ICHC are focused on the presentation of the value of the designated intangible cultural heritage items in regards to cultural diversity, human creativity, and local participation (UNESCO 2006a). However, the ICHC allows each State Party to develop particular inventories "in a manner geared to its own situation" — flexibility that enables China to establish its own inventories and criteria. The selection criteria for China's National Intangible Cultural Heritage allow little room for cultural diversity and local involvement. Among the six criteria, only Criterion 2 refers to local characteristics.

Criterion 4 relates to the value of the heritage from a technological perspective. The other four criteria revolve around the discourse of national unity, including the heritage's representation of the cultural creativity of the Chinese nation (Criterion 1), its promotion of Chinese national identity (Criterion 3), its justification of the cultural tradition of the Chinese nation (Criterion 5), and its role in the continuity of the cultural traditions of the Chinese nation (Criterion 6). The purpose of this inventory, as explicitly articulated, is to strengthen and foster the cultural consciousness and identity of the Chinese nation and to enhance people's recognition of the nation's cultural integrity and historical continuity (General Office of the State Council of PRC 2009 [2005]: 524).

The employment of the discourse of national unification is evident not only in the criteria for the inventory but also in its components. By 2013, out of the 1,219 items that have been designated as National Intangible Cultural Heritage, 433 (35.5%) are items from ethnic minorities. Considering that ethnic minorities make up only 8.49% of the entire population of China,⁸ ethnic groups are disproportionally represented in intangible cultural heritage. In fact, intangible cultural heritage in ethnic minorities receives exceptionally high official and public attention. According to the Circular on the Application for the 3rd National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, intangible cultural heritage items from ethnic minorities should



Figure 2.3. Restoration of a temple with a slogan for World Heritage preservation at Mount Qingcheng, designated in 2000



Figure 2.4. Honghe Hani Terraces, a cultural landscape site of an ethnic minority group designated in 2013

be given priority (Ministry of Culture 2009). Ten ethnic minorities were not included in the first list, but news about the inclusion of their items on the second list was featured prominently and highlighted in official announcements and media reports (the Central People's Government of PRC 2009).

Hence, cultural diversity, one of the overriding concepts that constitute World Heritage's discourse of universalism, is strategically redefined and rescripted by China in accordance with its own ideological and sovereign legitimacy. This very discursive power, as illustrated in the next section, is derived from the state's solid appropriation of cultural heritage and its preservation projects, as well as its soft mechanism by which heritage preservation is incorporated into the rhetoric of patriotism and self-discipline. On the one hand, the nationalistic and hegemonic discourse is largely embedded in, and empowered by, legally justified government control. On the other hand, this legalization is associated with the politics of the body and moral civility.

State Control of Heritage

As Smith observes, control is heavily embedded in the uses of heritage. By controlling the knowledge and practice of heritage, powerful authorities acquire dominant discursive hegemony. Also, the control itself is articulated in a process of discourse formation, through legal instruments and national policies (Smith 2006: 276–98). In China, the issue of control is made explicit via official regulations and documents, which consistently assert that the state and local governments have the sole power to define and determine cultural preservation affairs. The foremost issue is ownership, and state ownership is the most dominant type of ownership of cultural relics (S. Liu 2008: 12). According to the Law on Protection of Cultural Relics,

All cultural relics remaining underground or in the inland waters or territorial seas within the boundaries of the People's Republic of China are owned by the State.

Sites of ancient culture, ancient tombs, and cave temples are owned by the State. Immovable cultural relics, such as memorial buildings, ancient architectural structures, stone carvings, murals, and typical architectural structures of the modern and contemporary times, are designated for protection by the State, except where otherwise provided for by regulations of the State, are owned by the State.

The ownership of State-owned immovable cultural relics shall remain unchanged when ownership or the right to use of the land to which such relics are attached changes.

Early official documents proclaimed the state's control over cultural relics (Administrative Council of PRC 2009 [1950]b: 3; State Council of PRC 2009 [1961]a: 30). Individuals and organizations were not allowed to conduct archeological research or excavation (State Council of PRC 2009 [1964]: 58). In 1987, the State Council reiterated that "the fundamental guarantee for cultural relics preservation relied on the intensification of governmental control" (State Council of PRC 2009 [1987]: 225). The ownership system has to a large extent persisted until today. The central government serves to manage cultural heritage preservation at the national level, and local governments are enabled to organize local systems of cultural heritage preservation (SACH 2009 [2006]a: 549).

Government control over cultural preservation is also manifested in the government's strict management and supervision of religious sites, such as Buddhist and Taoist temples, historic tombs, and churches. The state has full power over these religious sites as well as their activities (Ministry of Culture 2009 [1984]a: 157; State Council of PRC 2009 [1987]: 223). All the religious heritage sites that were previously supervised by the cultural relics bureau were transferred and put under the custody of the State Administration of Religious Affairs during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Given the fact that the domain of religious affairs is highly politically oriented and sensitive in contemporary China, this custody transition marked the state's intensifying efforts to tighten its appropriation and control of the religious heritage sites.

In addition, national surveys of cultural relics are of equal importance for state control. The state has conducted three national surveys, in 1956, 1981, 2007, respectively. During these national surveys, cultural remains and artifacts were to be fully and comprehensively investigated by state-sanctioned examiners and representatives. Through this process, state control over cultural resources is not only constituted in state documents and propaganda but also made explicit in the everyday lives of common people.

Another significant feature of China's cultural preservation system is represented in governmentalized and state-sanctioned nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Unlike most nations, whose ICOMOS representatives are not affiliated with their governments, ICOMOS China has a close relationship with SACH. The chair of ICOMOS China is normally a deputy director of SACH. Lee and du Cros (2007) show that even the Chinese papers presented at ICOMOS must be selected and approved by the government. This provides the state with power and resources to maintain the organizational and administrative coherence of its cultural preservation policies, enabling it to maintain a consistent domestic hegemonic discourse throughout the whole country.⁹

Concerning intangible heritage, Chinese directives, policies, and the Law on Intangible Cultural Heritage all maintain that the government has substantial authority and priority in terms of heritage management. Official documents constantly reinforce the idea that the government plays a central and dominant role in establishing the preservation system through administrative processes (General Office of the State Council of PRC 2009 [2005]: 522–23; Ministry of Culture 2009 [2006]; National People's Congress Standing Committee 2011: Articles 3, 6, 7). According to the Law on Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Ministry of Culture is in charge of the preservation system throughout the country, and governments above the county level are in charge of the tasks within their own administrative areas (National People's Congress Standing Committee 2011: Article 7).

Individuals or groups that intend to apply for the inclusion of particular items on any Intangible Cultural Heritage List should first nominate that item at the local culture bureau, which has the authority to decide whether the nomination should be recommended to authorities at a higher level. The whole nomination and designation system is bureaucratically operated and directed by the Inter-ministerial Working Commission (National People's Congress Standing Committee 2011: Articles 16–29).

Only after being officially approved and sanctioned by a selection commission, directed by the Ministry of Culture, can an item be called intangible cultural heritage (General Office of the State Council of PRC 2009 [2005]: 525; National People's Congress Standing Committee 2011: Articles 16, 17, 22). However, this top-down governmental selection of cultural heritage is problematic. Although the ICHC emphasizes the high-level participation of communities, groups, and relevant NGOs, Chinese principles for intangible heritage preservation characterize individuals, groups, and organizations merely as “supporters” of government-run activities, who are “encouraged” to participate and lack the autonomy to carry out independent heritage preservation projects.

Although the ICHC and China agree that relevant scientific, technical, and artistic research should be fostered, China insists that the research conducted by various cultural administrations, research institutes, universities, and individual experts be operated and organized by the government. Documents and materials related to intangible heritage are to be collected and protected by state-sanctioned agencies (General Office of the State Council of PRC 2009 [2005]: 522).

Local governments must incorporate the protection of intangible cultural heritage into their own plans for economic and social development and include expenses for protection in their own budgets (National People's Congress Standing Committee 2011: Article 7). The Law on Intangi-

ble Cultural Heritage allows and encourages NGOs and individuals to propose museums and exhibitions to the government to be established (Article 39). However, these NGOs and individuals are not considered the core part of the management system. Furthermore, any foreign organization or individual that intends to carry out fieldwork in China must seek written approval from the government.

Bortolotto has voiced the criticism that “the concrete empowerment of grassroots communities is considerably weakened by the national validation process necessary for heritage authorization” (2010: 98). Specifically, government control and management of cultural heritage has two problems. First, this top-down system for heritage preservation has ignored a widely adopted preservation principle: stakeholder involvement in preservation planning. “[Government control] offers limited opportunities for [cultural heritage] managers to engage directly with their overseas counterparts in such international organizations as ICOMOS and ICOM” (Lee and du Cros 2007: 140). Second, as Kurin has said, government control endangers freedom and human rights in local communities, especially minority cultural communities. Rather, “States Parties are able to manipulate heritage to meet their own ideologies and memory constructions while at the same time disempowering and subjugating the memories and heritages of minority groups” (Beazley 2010: 63).

In addition to Kurin’s and Beazley’s points, I find that the disempowerment of the locals is not simply an outcome of state control but also an intentional strategic process and approach to control. Specifically, in addition to the creation of a legal foundation that legitimates state control, the state manages discursive power by claiming that the Chinese public is incapable of protecting heritage without the state’s support.

On 2 June 2010, the State Council held a press conference for the Protection and Promotion of China’s Intangible Cultural Heritage. Vice-Minister of Culture Wang Wenzhang addressed several crucial challenges encountered by intangible cultural heritage in China. The primary challenge, according to Wang, was the “drastic change of economy and society rendered by globalization and modernization”; this transformed the basic cultural ecology in which intangible cultural heritage was generated and maintained. The changes were said to generate considerable impacts upon the traditional person-to-person transmission of traditional techniques and skills. In addition, Wang devalued the heritage preservation acts undertaken by the local communities:

Some locals have no scientific sense of protection. They have paid disproportional attention to the nomination of heritage items for official inventories, being focused on the commodification of such heritage for economic returns. However, they haven’t put equal emphasis on protection and man-

agement. Many protection measures have not been implemented, and some heritage items were even overexploited by the locals (Wenyun Wang, 2010b).

Because of these difficulties, along with local incapability, the implication is that the government should retain the sole role to resist the negative impacts of the recent drastic social transformation and to educate inexperienced locals.

By highlighting the negative impacts of social change on cultural heritage, the state even devalues the local capability of communities to recognize and appreciate the aesthetics of their own heritage. For example, a “representative Transmitter,” a craftsman designated by the state as a representative of a particular intangible heritage, only becomes legitimate through state selection and approval (Ministry of Culture 2009 [2006]: 594–96).

Implicit here is the premise that local transmitters may not be able to realize their own responsibility and role in heritage preservation. Therefore, it is only the state that has the recourse and ability to recognize and safeguard the value and practice of heritage. The Law on Intangible Cultural Heritage maintains that during the creation and the extension of the inventories, experts sponsored by the government shall play a decisive role. Local residents and the owners of the heritage should be “respected” by the researchers, but they play little role in the nomination and designation processes.

Through rhetorically emphasizing the negative effects of globalization and social transformation, and by ignoring local communities’ ability to adapt to changing contexts, the government portrays itself as the only candidate that has the power and authority to engage in acts of preservation. The message is essentially the following: you are in danger; you are not capable of protecting your own culture, so let the government protect it for you. By and large, the narrative of “we are protecting you” reveals an articulation of power with which the state can both “protect” its citizens and legitimize the articulation and practice of state control over cultural heritage.

Heritage Enlightenment

Insofar as the state attempts to discursively and substantively claim complete control over cultural heritage, it articulates its control not only with legal terms but also with ethical and moral terms. The state has employed World Heritage as an approach to the rhetorical constitution of patriotism and morality. Preserving heritage thus entails behavioral discipline and

civility for the Chinese masses, who are characterized as “uncivilized,” whereby the state acquires legitimacy to “disseminate” the knowledge of heritage and preservation. The process of the dissemination of heritage knowledge, and its patriotic and disciplinary function, which successfully combines the issue of heritage preservation with social discipline and morality education, is what I call “Heritage Enlightenment.”

In China, that heritage should be used for educational ends, especially to promote patriotism, is not doubted. The implementation of World Heritage has given the state a new language to maintain and reinforce the link between history and national pride. Before 1985, cultural relics were used to establish patriotism among the people in terms of revolutionary achievements (Administrative Council of PRC 2009 [1953]: 11; the Central Propaganda Department of CCP et al. 2009 [1991]: 283; State Council of PRC 2009 [1956]: 14; 2009 [1961]b: 28; 2009 [1974]a) and as a tool to fight against class enemies (State Bureau of Cultural Relics Management 2009 [1978]: 83).

It was sometimes characterized as stimulation or national self-esteem during the early period of the Reform and Opening in the early 1980s (State Council of PRC 2009 [1980]b: 105; 2009 [1980]a: 108). According to the first edition of the Law on Protection of Cultural Relics, the law was enacted in order to promote patriotism and education on revolutionary tradition. Later, the implementation of World Heritage inherited this rhetorical strategy, and preserving World Heritage in China became an imperative for the nation because it “teaches the people to be patriotic,” thereby raising national spirits” (Ministry of Culture et al. 2009 [2004]: 509).

The Chinese people, however, are characterized as ignorant about heritage. For example, the state asserts that the rural population lacks knowledge about and the desire for cultural preservation. And it maintains that local governments should encourage and guide the populace to be aware of the importance of protecting vernacular architecture (SACH 2009 [2007] a: 622). In this sense, cultural heritage preservation is reformulated as a public standard for high morality and good citizenship: “Any behavior that damages and devastates cultural relics is ignorant and backward, and it must be condemned by future generations and the whole human race” (the Central Propaganda Department of CCP, Ministry of Culture, and SACH 2009 [1989]: 244). Protecting cultural heritage is associated with the development of mental-moral and scientific-cultural qualities (State Council of PRC 2009 [2005]: 544). World Heritage’s social value lies primarily in its function in “constructing civilized society, [and] promoting citizen’s quality of character” (Li Y. 2007: 41).

Education on cultural heritage and its preservation is an important aspect of the World Heritage Convention’s central principles, which call

for the mobilization of public participation. However, the Chinese government narratively constrains civic engagement in cultural preservation to a very low level. Since 2008, SACH has been collaborating with Horizon Research Consultancy to create annual reports on China's public awareness and participation in cultural preservation. The reports consistently indicate that, in spite of slight improvements, public awareness of cultural preservation has remained at a relatively low level.

For example, the 2010 report concludes with four suggestions; the first and second suggestions both call for the strengthening of education pertaining to heritage knowledge, especially among youths. However, even though the report repeatedly emphasizes the importance of public participation, it characterizes the government as the only facilitator for increasing this participation. By accounting for the lack of public participation in heritage preservation mainly as a lack of government action, the report asserts that it is the public that needs to be "educated" and that the government is the sole educator.

Because heritage preservation is articulated as a manifestation of patriotism, public participation in preservation can readily be characterized as a civic duty, rather than as a basic human right. "Everybody [in the nation] is responsible for cultural relics protection" (State Council of PRC 2009 [1981]: 112). According to this discourse, every citizen has the responsibility to be actively engaged in cultural preservation with a higher sense of nationhood, whereas their basic rights to culture and heritage are to a large extent neglected. In 2006, the state required local governments to "strengthen the senses of mission and responsibility of the people, in order to incorporate the idea of cultural heritage appreciation, caring, protection, preservation, and rescue into people's minds" (SACH 2009 [2006] a: 550). The UNESCO principle of local rights and ownership of heritage has been rescripted and replaced with that of citizen responsibility. The community groups who supposedly own the heritage "become 'invited' to 'learn,' 'share' or become 'educated' about authorized heritage values and meanings" (Smith 2006: 44).

This process fits with Elias's contention that human behaviors are normalized and "civilized" by the social production of a sense of shame (2000). This civilizing mission, in the case of World Heritage in China, is particularly configured by the rhetorical proclamations of the state. Heritage Enlightenment is thus born of the intertwining of nationalist ethics and individual compliance and civility. By endowing cultural preservation with the significance of civility and discipline, the state lays down a model for social action. Consequently, meaning in an individual's life is interwoven with the hegemonic power of defining discipline. This biopower is incorporated into the politics and constitution of heritage; heri-

tage preservation is utilized as “a technology of power centered on life” (Foucault 1979: 44).

Remapping the Silk Road: A Heritage “Battle” in Kashgar

The state apparatus, being engaged in a series of discursive constructions of cultural preservation, faces an implicit paradox. Often it finds itself constrained by an overriding framework that is simultaneously a discursive means to impose domestic hegemony and a way to challenge that hegemony. For instance, the concept of cultural routes offers the state a discursive means of exercising historical and territorial control over an array of scattered sites. One example is the World Heritage nomination of the Silk Road, a flexible collection of loosely scattered and varying related sites spread over thousands of miles. Yet the Silk Road’s nomination has turned out to be the most controversial and challenging case for the state-controlled heritage apparatus since China’s ratification of the World Heritage Convention.

The Silk Road was initially considered as a candidate for World Heritage status in August 2003, when UNESCO organized a visit of heritage experts to the Chinese sections of the Silk Road to investigate the concept of “cultural routes”; cultural routes had just been adopted as a category of cultural heritage. The mission was expanded to a transnational cooperative initiative in August 2006, when a UNESCO workshop on the Silk Road’s World Heritage nomination was held in Turpan, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China, with participants also including China’s neighboring countries in Central Asia.

At the workshop, China, working with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, developed and consolidated initiatives for World Heritage nomination cooperation, commencing with the Silk Road’s formal World Heritage nomination. During the workshop, the Chinese experts outlined major Chinese sites for consideration, including the city of Kashgar in Xinjiang (*China Cultural Relics* 2006). The Old Town of Kashgar was described as having a recorded history stretching back 2,100 years. Its streets and historical architecture marked its uniqueness as the most important trade hub along the Silk Road. Its historic and cultural significance endowed it with very high value, and both Chinese and international experts felt it to be a crucial heritage site that should be considered for high-level heritage preservation.

Although many official and media documents unequivocally acknowledged that Kashgar was one of the most important towns along the Silk Road, it was eventually excluded from the selected World Heritage nom-

ination dossier, which included eleven sites in five regions¹⁰ (Guo M. 2007a). The omission, according to a *Guardian* commentator, was a deliberate action by the state government (Jenkins 2009). More provocatively, not only was it omitted from the list, but it also faced demolition as part of a state-supported “reconstruction project.”

In February 2009, the local government of Kashgar, with the approval and sponsorship of the central government, launched large-scale reconstruction in Kashgar’s Old Town, taking in an area as wide as 5 million square meters and affecting as many as 49,000 households. The reconstruction initiative was officially justified as being intended to improve the town’s infrastructure and reinforce old buildings to withstand earthquakes. However, it provoked vociferous protest among domestic and international media. A survey showed that local residents generally disapproved of the whole project, and the project was criticized for neither generating nor making known a detailed plan for the protection and preservation of the historic city.

An active NGO, the Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center, launched a campaign to call the public’s attention to the reconstruction project. It was concerned that the project violated China’s cultural heritage laws and policies, especially as Kashgar was a national-level “historical and cultural famous city” (Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center 2009a). In addition, ICOMOS commented that “recent efforts by local Chinese authorities to modernize the settlement and address concerns for seismic vulnerability and risk preparedness access have resulted in large-scale loss” (ICOMOS 2010b: 48). Accordingly, the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Earthen Architectural Heritage wrote an open letter to the Chinese government in June 2009, maintaining that the Kashgar Old Town was “an important point of cultural, social, economic, and commercial exchange along the Silk Road for centuries” and should be respected and protected by local and national authorities.

At the same time, an array of international press articles appeared that openly questioned China’s stated reasons for the reconstruction project. Some explicitly asserted that its purpose was politically motivated, claiming that the project was undertaken to break down potential ethnic tensions between Han and Uighur peoples by eradicating the cultural manifestation of the latter embedded in the old buildings and neighborhoods. The plans involved moving almost half of the town’s residents, according to an article published on the website of the US magazine *Time*, which indicated that the removal of the local population had been “executed with little to no consultation with those to be displaced” (Tharoor 2009). The article also claimed, “The demolition of the city’s historic core fits lockstep with what many consider a concerted effort on Beijing’s

part to bring Xinjiang firmly under its grasp and dilute Uighur identity" (ibid.).

To put this in a broader perspective, the concerns of the international press were raised against the backdrop of the violent riots that took place in Kashgar and many other places in Xinjiang in July 2009.¹¹ Thus, the state authorities were believed to have reevaluated the Old Town's buildings as potential havens for terrorists and a potential threat to the region's stability (Jacobs 2009). This, however, produced a dilemma, given that the state had previously acknowledged that Kashgar was an important site along the Silk Road. Confronted with this, the central government was determined to place the issue of political stability before cultural heritage. Despite international criticism, the reconstruction plan "had unusually strong backing high in the government" (Wines 2009).

Consequently, there emerged a series of appeals for the inclusion of Kashgar's Old Town on the World Heritage List. Accompanying the open letter to Chinese authorities, mentioned above, ICOMOS also sent a letter to the president of ICOMOS China, Tong Mingkang, who was also deputy director of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage. The letter, written by the president of ICOMOS, Gustavo Araoz, praised Kashgar's historic value as a strategic trade center along the Silk Road, stating, "Kashgar's inclusion in the proposed nomination would seem to merit serious consideration" and "its destruction could be seen as a contradiction or even a major stain in the extraordinarily positive record of China in conserving and protecting the vastness of its cultural heritage" (ICOMOS 2010b: 50–51).

In addition to the efforts of ICOMOS, a number of international and domestic NGOs participated in the appeal. In 2009, the international website Save Kashgar¹² was created, which hosted an online petition in 2009 in favor of Kashgar's World Heritage nomination and received a great deal of attention around the world (Thompson 2009); and Radio Free Asia made multimedia resources available to protect Kashgar's vanishing memory in the same year.¹³

In response to the international petitions and outcry over Kashgar's World Heritage status, Tong Mingkang wrote to the president of ICOMOS, stating:

Strict criteria and conditions are set for World Heritage nomination in accordance with the UNESCO World Heritage Convention and its Operational Guidelines. As numerous historic sites and monuments have been left over along the Silk Roads, the study, protection and nomination work pertaining to the Silk Roads will be a long and arduous task. According to the decision coordinated by UNESCO, nominated sites of the Silk Roads will be determined through consultations by countries involved. (ICOMOS 2010b: 51)

The letter used a diplomatic tone, avoiding direct explanation for the exclusion of Kashgar from the World Heritage nomination. Although it stressed that China did not intend to withdraw from cooperation with international advisory bodies, it insisted that the involved States Parties be given the final decision over nomination, implying that international forces should not intrude on the rights of States Parties.

Ironically, although the Chinese government dismissed the international petition for Kashgar's World Heritage status, it attempted to use World Heritage as a pivotal concept in support of its widely criticized reconstruction project. As the Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center revealed, a government notice that appeared in Kashgar's streets alleged that the reconstruction plan was strongly supported by UNESCO: "UNESCO appraised that the reconstruction of the Old Town of Kashgar was human oriented" (Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center 2009b). The center claimed that the government had obviously made up the UNESCO endorsement to deliberately discourage protests by preservationists. Even more ironic was the fact that a local official claimed that the reconstruction project would be carried out in accordance with World Heritage standards (Ma 2009).

How can a project that contradicted the core principles of World Heritage be claimed to adhere to these principles? This notice on the streets of Kashgar revealed the state's ambivalent attitude regarding the issue of Kashgar, as well as other World Heritage Sites. That is, although the state ostensibly controls and manipulates World Heritage with its nationalist rhetoric, the rhetoric itself draws on the very logic and power of World Heritage.

Heritage is inevitably a political product. As Cuneo (2011) has claimed, China's intention of nominating the Silk Road for World Heritage status was meant to champion its national ethnic multiplicity and identity. The ultimate political purpose of this, however, goes against the idea of multiculturalism, for its aim is to secure the state's totalizing rule over its border areas. As Li and Zhang, two scholars from Turpan's Cultural Relics Bureau, put it, the strengthening of World Heritage nomination and management in border areas has more than cultural implications. They maintain that World Heritage in national border areas is about the official proclamation of national unity and, more critically, the state's attempts to undermine separatist claims (Li and Zhang 2010: 183). Insofar as both acts—preservation and reconstruction—are carried out to maintain the power of the state, the demolition of an ethnic heritage site can be seen as not necessarily being at odds with the state's traditional endeavors to champion ethnic multiplicity.

The politicization of heritage is precisely derived from the rhetorical emphasis on the ethical sphere of heritage issues. While the state, and various international actors, both underline the ethical narratives of heritage such as industrialization and the threats of modernization, among others, the true aesthetic values of the heritage sites are overlooked, consciously or unconsciously. In this sense, China's heritage sites are increasingly de-aestheticized; doing so better enables the state through the ethical and moral expectations of Heritage Enlightenment, and opposing voices are simultaneously empowered via universalized human rights discourses.

Therefore, the discursive construction of identity and solidarity, through heritage, is potentially paradoxical and challenged by the ethical logic itself, not because it was the antithesis of universalism but because of the particularism it has created. As the case of Kashgar's preservation and reconstruction illustrates, the lack of aesthetic narrative in heritage preservation has undermined World Heritage's rhetoric of political innocence. The deaestheticization of heritage has alienated World Heritage from its original initiative of universalism and expanded the ambivalence and tension surrounding the very usage of heritage at the regional level.

World Heritage as an Ethical, not Aesthetic, Issue

As Askew puts it, "Despite the laudable universalist ideals of many dedicated intellectuals and practitioners involved in UNESCO's array of heritage preservation programs today, the globalized and institutionalized heritage system has not overcome nation-state-based power structures and nationalist agendas but has rather enhanced them" (2010: 20). Characterizing World Heritage as a system that is technical and normative rather than institutional, Askew continues, "Member states use the nomination process and promotion of world heritage sites for their own domestic agendas of cultural hegemony and state nationalism" (ibid.: 23).

Askew is right, at least about the heritage system of China. The difference between UNESCO's endeavors and China's discursive control of World Heritage is evident in two realms. First, while UNESCO consistently underlines the rhetorical universality of World Heritage, China primarily regards it as an embodiment of national solidarity. Second, for UNESCO, World Heritage is integral to the constitution of cultural diversity and the multiplicity of human societies, while for China, articulated cultural diversity is profoundly embedded in ethnic unity and integrity. Therefore, the term "World Heritage" itself is ambivalent, as it is precisely employed by the Chinese government as "world-level national heritage."

Whereas the UNESCO definition emphasizes the uniqueness of each particular site, the Chinese usage underpins a sense of collectivity. That is, only by being part of the World Heritage system can individual Chinese sites become meaningful. "World heritage is a national strategy" (SACH 2009 [2002]: 439). It is not a particular heritage, but World Heritage as a whole that promotes this strategy.

This strategy is heavily associated with the state's rhetoric of history writing, which, as Duara contends, aims to create a linear narrative that integrates multiple voices into a cohesive and integrated frame. History writing in the heritage narrative is consistent with what Nora names the construction of "sites of memory." The real environments of memory have been replaced by physical embodiments that are highly malleable and at odds with real memories. World Heritage is a kind of "site of memory." The state-sanctioned memory articulated in World Heritage has to be framed within the discourse of national solidarity. In this sense, the collective memories embedded in each particular World Heritage Site will eventually be standardized by an overriding discursive scheme of the collective, within which World Heritage as a whole generates the collectivity of collective memories.

The strategies involved in meaning making and meaning control over history and heritage have been discussed by many scholars. But the real question is how these strategies are employed. This chapter answers this question by revealing that China incorporates its heritage policy into its national discourse of patriotic morality and behavioral discipline. In other words, heritage preservation has been characterized as an act that fulfills the development and advancement of behavioral and spiritual virtues. World Heritage provides a linguistic and rhetorical juxtaposition between the discourse of patriotism/nationalism and that of behavioral civility and citizen quality. As a result, the state not only uses cultural heritage as a means for national solidarity but also articulates it with the politics of the body.

Moreover, the state provides a set of cultural scripts, by adhering to which its people acquire national identity. This process is largely consistent with the state's own enactment of mimic isomorphism with the world cultural scripts discussed in the previous chapter. Meyer's neo-institutional theory argues that modern actors (nation-states, organizations, individuals) become isomorphic to the world model because they pursue identity. Actorhood, either as the nation-state or individual, is constructed (Meyer 2009c: 50). Only by behaving according to given scripts can a modern actor acquire and secure a legitimate identity. Hence, the juxtaposition of heritage preservation scripts, individual civility, and national patriotism enables the state to deploy the resources of cultural heritage to

create a technique of ruling in terms of political, social, and even spiritual management.

So far it seems that the state has gained irreversible discursive power to employ World Heritage for domestic political hegemonic control and regulation. Nevertheless, the underlying logic used by the state and that used by the World Heritage Convention are largely consistent. Two dimensions constitute cultural heritage: the aesthetic value and the ethic value. However, both China and UNESCO have been primarily focused on a discourse of ethics that stresses the issue of threats and preservation, but the aesthetic dimension is almost neglected, deliberately or not.

To some extent, aesthetics are ethicized, in both official justifications and public resonances and dissonances. As Barthel-Bouchier puts it, the disproportionate emphasis on preservation has privileged ethics over aesthetics because preservation is based more on the public concerns of external threats than on the professional logic of aesthetic knowledge. This ethical claim for heritage preservation, though part of UNESCO's overarching principles, has shifted the role of World Heritage sites from a representation of aesthetic cosmopolitanism to that of ethical cosmopolitanism (Barthel-Bouchier and Hui 2007).

I elaborate on this argument by adding that the very concept of aesthetics is implicitly problematic in the first place. It has been ethicized, pushed by World Heritage expertise, the state, and even dissidents. The true aesthetic value of the heritage sites has been heavily formulated and articulated within an overriding ethical frame. The ethicization of the aesthetics, at the same time, enables authoritative heritage agencies to maintain legitimacy for their political interests.

In fact, as Hans-Georg Gadamer has observed, our aesthetic consciousness and feelings have been alienated from the artistic object's real aesthetic value since the emergence of aesthetic terms and language. Any claim of aesthetic appreciation has to be schematized with particular grammatical frames, which further separate the original artistic value from the aesthetic judgment and response. So we are no longer free, by using our own terms, to accept or reject artistic objects on the basis of their true aesthetic claim (Bernstein 2000). Indeed, insofar as professional and schematic terms are adopted to assess the arts, the aesthetics cannot avoid being configured within the grammatical and linguistic rhetoric, which is apparently under the control of those in power. Thus, from the very beginning, any aesthetic work is heavily discursively constrained by and engaged in the production of power. Aesthetics itself became less meaningful than its deliberate political usage.

By the same token, the aesthetic value and significance of a heritage site is impossible to conclusively explicate and enunciate. Any narrative

employed to enunciate heritage entails a set of narratives derived not from its artistic constitution but from a nonaesthetic vocabulary. For example, even in the World Heritage Site the Classic Gardens of Suzhou, whose value should be centrally based on its aesthetic value, the core value justification claiming its “profound metaphysical importance of natural beauty in Chinese culture” contains such ethic-oriented terms as “importance,” “natural,” and “Chinese culture.”

This rhetorical paradox embedded in the World Heritage Convention's very origins has engendered a series of instrumental discrepancies between the UNESCO principle of universalism and the States Parties' strategy of nationalism. If the universality of World Heritage is derived from its aesthetic and ethical values, the impossible mission to enunciate the former will inevitably lead to the empowerment of the latter in very potent forms. In this sense, UNESCO's claim of universalism and China's concentration on nationalism share their underlying logic of ethics. As a result, the ostensible discrepancy between UNESCO's principle of cultural diversity and China's interpretation of ethnical solidarity simultaneously represents and reveals the profoundly anchored discourse that ethicizes the aesthetics.

Given this, the power of the state's discursive construction for heritage preservation is largely derived from the rhetorical paradox embedded in the concept of World Heritage *per se*. The deaestheticization of heritage is interwoven with the production of discursive hegemony of the state apparatus. The ethical discourse on the one hand empowers state hegemonic authority; on the other hand, it constrains and challenges the state, as the same ethical discourse is widely and strategically employed by the state's opponents. As the case of Kashgar reveals, the real challenge for China in Kashgar's heritage nomination and preservation is not that the state attempts too much to control a hegemonic discourse over heritage, but rather that the underlying ethical logic of the discourse is so powerful. Heritage has been a battlefield for identity politics. In this sense, the dissident's accusation of the reconstruction project's role as memory destroyer and the state's endeavor to forge ethnic unity with the project, to some extent, have the same purpose of identity construction.

Who has more power in discursive constitution, the World Heritage Convention or the States Parties? My finding suggests that neither has gained complete power. The state is simultaneously employing the concepts provided by the convention for nationalistic purposes and being constrained by the same concepts. The World Heritage Convention is thus a scriptwriter that allows the “director” to rescript and produce the performance based on the modified scripts. However, the power of the convention lies not in its original ideal claim for universalism but in a

discourse of ethics that is rhetorically antithetical to the universalistic claim.

Smith contends that it is the Western aesthetics in heritage preservation that engages in the construction of authorized heritage discourse. By contrast, the aesthetics embedded in World Heritage has been ethicized since the very beginning. It is instead the “authorized ethical discourse” that acquires relatively powerful control over heritage preservation at both global and national levels. In this sense, World Heritage is by no means politically innocent, but it is rhetorically supported and legitimized within its own politics of ethics.

Notes

1. I will compare the UNESCO official descriptions and the state-sanctioned publication *The World Heritage Collections* in Table 2.1, illustrating the differences between the term. I focus on cultural heritage sites.
2. G. Guo and Z. Wang (2014), Shiwu Qianli de Wenhua Yichan Baohu Guojia Xingdong [Unprecedented National Cultural Heritage Conservation], *China Cultural Relics*, 25 June, 1.
3. In 2005, three experts, Zheng Xiaoxie, Luo Zhewen, and Zhu Bingren, proposed to nominate the Grand Canal for World Heritage designation. One year later, SACH added the Grand Canal to the tentative list for World Heritage. In March 2008, Yangzhou, a city located along the Grand Canal and playing a leading role in the World Heritage nomination, held a national conference related to the Grand Canal's World Heritage nomination. Thirty-two cities participated in the conference, which culminated in the Yangzhou Consensus, which addressed the importance of cross-regional alliance for the nomination (Ye 2010: 204–5). By April 2011, it had been decided that the Grand Canal would be a 2014 Chinese nomination for World Heritage, and the total number of jointly participating cities has risen to thirty-five cities, in eight provinces.
4. The Potala Palace is the building that hosted the Dalai Lama for hundreds of years.
5. It was reported that the renovation received high attention from the center, which spent more than two billion RMB, receiving positive feedback from the society (190).
6. Many official English translations use “nationalities” instead of “ethnic groups” to underline this term's political implication.
7. Quyi refers to a group of Chinese folk art forms, including ballad singing, storytelling, comic dialogues, clapper talks, and cross talks.
8. The data are based on the National Population Survey 2010, released by the State Bureau of Statistics: http://www.stats.gov.cn/zjtj/zdtjgz/zgrkpc/dlcrkpc/dcrkpcyw/201104/t20110428_69407.htm.

9. In recent years, an increasing number of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have emerged and actively participated in cultural preservation, such as the Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center. But the process for registering NGOs is still strictly and administratively controlled by the state.
10. Later the nomination expanded to twelve sites.
11. The incident had a deeper historical context. In the 1990s, Kashgar witnessed a series of bombings and terrorist attacks against the Han people, culminating in the incident in which sixteen policemen were killed right before the Beijing Olympic Games.
12. <http://www.savekashgar.com/>.
13. <http://www.rfa.org/english/multimedia/kashgardemolition-03232010120925.html>.

3



Fujian Tulou

From Harmony to Hegemony

Without the World Heritage title, our life would be much better.
—A Tianluokeng resident

On 7 July 2008, China's Fujian Tulou (earthen buildings of Fujian province) were added to the World Heritage List by UNESCO.¹ According to UNESCO's official description, which derives from the Chinese-authored nomination documents (SACH 2008c), the Fujian Tulou are, "in terms of their harmonious relationship with their environment, an outstanding example of human settlement." Reading the text, one might imagine a beautiful picturesque landscape with intriguing earthen buildings and inhabitants living happily in association with their heritage. However, an event that occurred a month after the UNESCO listing provides a very different picture. On 9 August 2008, residents of a Tulou village, Tianluokeng, protested at an adjacent sightseeing platform set up by the local tourist bureau. One villager shouted to government officials, "Increase the share of ticket revenue! Otherwise, we will burn down the platform!" Another elder added, "Solve our problems, or I'll burn down my Tulou house!" (Chen 2009: 58).

In this chapter I examine this compelling paradox: proposed theoretically as a model community in harmony, why and how is Fujian Tulou so full of disharmony? Where does the rage of the local people come from? Is the rage simply because of monetary issues, or is it associated with larger contexts? Finally, does it relate fundamentally to the rhetorical emphasis on "harmony" between humans and their environment?²



Figure 3.1. Exterior of Yude Lou, a designated building

I argue that the discourse about the “harmonious relationship between humans and nature,” which I call the “harmony discourse,” is similar to Laurajane Smith’s notion of “authorized heritage discourse.” Harmony discourse offers a singular value justification for Fujian Tulou and its community, while it also forcefully imposes and manages this value in the local community’s daily life and frames, articulates, and constitutes social norms and discipline. In theory, the discourse seems to incorporate the local community into heritage processes, whereas in practice heritage processes are largely imposed hegemonically from the outside. Moreover, to maintain a “harmonious relationship,” local residents have been forced to give up a number of economic activities and social habits, resulting in a sense of deprivation and alienation. In response, the local community has organized protests, interpreted the site’s value in a distinctive way, and redefined the heritage nomination process within the context of their own memories of the heritage application process.

Authorized Heritage Discourse

Laurajane Smith developed the term “authorized heritage discourse” to describe a discourse “that works to naturalize a range of assumptions about the nature and meaning of heritage” (2006: 4). The authorized heri-

tage discourse has its historical origin in elitist Western aesthetic philosophy that emphasizes the supposedly innate values of historical materials created in the past. Thus, it focuses on the materiality of heritage, and it defines and values heritage primarily for its static representation of aesthetics and monumentality. In addition, the discourse maintains that current generations are responsible for the protection of heritage for future generations (ibid.: 29).

Authorized heritage discourse does not simply generate a language and set of concepts about heritage but is also practiced socially. This understanding derives from a theoretical and methodological framework drawn from critical discourse analysis, which is distinct from the Foucauldian concept of discourse. While the latter mostly revolves around the idea of discourse, the former moves “beyond paraphrasing the content of text and speech towards understanding what it is ‘that it is doing’ in operation” (Waterton, Smith, and Campbell 2006: 342). Using critical discourse analysis, Smith (2006) has observed that there is a hegemonic process whereby the authorized heritage discourse is disseminated and put into place in international conservation practices.

Being institutionalized in global cultural activities, primarily through UNESCO and relevant advisory bodies such as ICOMOS and ICCROM, authorized heritage discourse has been elevated from a set of Western elite cultural values to universally standardized conservation principles. This discourse has led to the creation of a set of documents, principles, and consensuses, such as the Venice Charter and the World Heritage Convention, which are used to assimilate and educate those who are not familiar with the discourse, namely non-Western nations, nonexpert groups, and indigenous populations (Smith 2006: 27–28).

Consequently, heritage conservation is entangled with the knowledge/power nexus. As Michel Foucault (1991) argues, knowledge is a technique of power. By manipulating particular forms of knowledge, authorities are able to claim legitimacy for their rule. Foucault’s thesis on knowledge/power is evident in heritage conservation (Smith 2006). With the knowledge of heritage defined by authorized heritage discourse, technical experts and governmental agencies are empowered to assert their superiority in identifying and defining innate values of heritage. In addition, the knowledge/power nexus is strongly associated with governmentality. The concept, introduced by Foucault, reveals the way in which governments produce organized practices through which subjects are governed.

The messages produced and conveyed by authorities help them govern and manage the social behaviors of the citizenship. In *The Birth of the Museum*, Tony Bennett (1995) reveals that in the nineteenth century, modern museums in Western countries were managed and used by their

governments and bureaucracies to define the relation between cultural activities and civilizing values in order to regulate the social behaviors and social discipline of an emerging middle-class population. Consistent with Bennett's thesis, authorized heritage discourse creates a range of rules and principles for cultural activities and claims that only a small group of experts are intellectually able to define and diffuse these rules and principles.

Managing heritage in such a hegemonic way, in addition, represents the affinity between heritage and nationalism. By creating a singular narrative of heritage, senses of belonging and attachment to nation are provided and authorized (Smith 2006). Moreover, heritage-based nationalism has gained global momentum. While it emerged from and is still prevalent in the West, it has spread remarkably in Asian countries (Daly and Winter 2011).

Given its character as a singular narrative, authorized heritage discourse often generates struggle and contestation. Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) observe that lack of agreement on and consistency in the meaning of heritage is intrinsic to the very nature of heritage, which leads to inevitable conflicts. While some people are included in and benefit from the appreciation of cultural objects, others are excluded from and deprived by this process. However, the excluded and deprived populations do not remain silent. Knowledge and practices excluded by the authorized framework survive and act to contest the authorized discourse (Robertson 2012). Also, practices aimed at correcting the authorized heritage discourse have become well elaborated at the international level.

Non-Western experiences, indigenous groups, and local communities have increasingly been characterized as integral to heritage interpretation, conservation, and management. A remarkable example is the Kyoto Vision announced at the fortieth anniversary of the World Heritage Convention in 2012, which explicitly stresses the crucial role of community: "Only through strengthened relationships between people and heritage, based on respect for cultural and biological diversity as a whole, integrating both tangible and intangible aspects and geared toward sustainable development, will the 'future we want' become attainable" (UNESCO 2012).

Ostensibly, authorized heritage discourse has been gradually undermined by the increase in emphasis on cultural diversity and the inclusion of community groups and indigenous people in the management process. However, although this people-oriented principle seems more humanistic and less hegemonic, we need to examine the actual practices of the principle of heritage management and the extent to which the communities affected are integrated into the heritage process. In this sense, Fujian Tulou provides a useful example, as its discourse of harmony appears to be in

sharp contrast to the authorized heritage discourse because it prioritizes community over materials.

A Discourse of Harmony

The Fujian Tulou buildings, literally “earthen buildings,” are a type of vernacular residential building in southeast China constructed with rammed earth and wooden frameworks. According to UNESCO’s official description (2008a), Fujian Tulou buildings are “exceptional examples of a building tradition and function exemplifying a particular type of communal living and defensive organization, and, in terms of their harmonious relationship with their environment, an outstanding example of human settlement.”³ In this understanding, it is the human dimension—communal living, defensive organization, human settlement—that constitutes Fujian Tulou’s outstanding value. The buildings themselves are not valuable without these intangible humanistic associations. The idea of “harmony” used here was imported directly from the Chinese nomination documents.

In addition, throughout the file prepared for the nomination of Fujian Tulou as a World Heritage Site, edited by Chinese authorities, harmony between nature and human life is a central concept. For example, the file characterizes the Tulou as standing “for the harmonious co-existence between man [*sic*] and nature, maintaining the traditional building style, particular village pattern, household compact communities and local folk-customs” (SACH 2008c: 279–80). In this text, harmony not only exists abstractly in the relationship between communal living and the environment but is also a representation of the dynamic and interactive relation between physical structures and social and cultural elements.

The word “harmony” both points to the relationship *between* human society and nature and entails the coherent social fabric *within* society. The nomination file states that “the architectural form and internal layout of Tulou well embodies the ethical concepts of Confucianism, such as reverence for ancestors [and] staying in harmony with other family members” (ibid.: 83). Because of this embodiment of harmonious human relationships, the government regards Fujian Tulou as a symbol of the construction of a “harmonious society.” The Chinese government’s official website, quoting an expert’s statement, describes Fujian Tulou as “most useful for the constitution of harmonious society” (Wu and Meng 2008). Therefore, the official discourse of Fujian Tulou can be called “the harmony discourse.”

Compared to the authorized heritage discourse, the harmony discourse has certain specific Chinese characteristics, which is a manifestation of

Asian traditions in heritage conservation. As Denis Byrne (2011) observes, in China in particular and in Asia in general, attitudes and values dynamically sustained by culture play a more important role in heritage conservation than material forms of the heritage site. Local people “have been acting as conservationists since long before the conservation concept appeared in the West” (Byrne 2011: 8). Similar to Byrne’s observation, the emphasis on local community and folk customs in the value justification of Tulou provided by the Chinese government establishes a clear distinction from the Western-centric authorized heritage discourse. The harmony discourse of Fujian Tulou is non-Western or, more specifically, Asian derived. According to this discourse, it is the people—as well as their values, settlements, traditions and customs, lifestyle, and other factors—that enable a heritage site to be identified as culturally significant for the purposes of protection.

However, the Fujian Tulou harmony discourse is also to some extent similar to the authorized heritage discourse. First, the harmony discourse is still a narrow singular narrative claim on the value of heritage, instead of an open space for multiple narratives, and heritage designation is still a top-down imposition with a universal framework. Second, harmony discourse is embedded in a grand nation-building narrative. Constructing a harmonious society is an official line of propaganda initiated in 2004 by Hu Jintao, China’s president between 2003 and 2012. The harmonious society initiative marked Hu’s acquisition of political power and is remembered as a significant legacy of his term in office. Situated in this context, a heritage site claiming to represent harmony inevitably entails many political implications.

The preceding comparison between harmony discourse and authorized heritage discourse is based on textual materials. In the next section I will explore the actual practices of harmony discourse in conservation and management. As we will see, harmony discourse, like authorized heritage discourse, is a hegemonic discourse that is forcefully imposed by authorities. As a result, the harmonious human factors, which are supposedly integral to the heritage site, are ultimately removed from it.

Discourse Imposition and Moral Regulation

Once heritage knowledge is created by elites, the access to the knowledge is controlled by them (Lowenthal 1998: 90). This knowledge, as a result, provides epistemological frameworks to sanction and disseminate the authorized meanings of heritage sites to locals (Smith 2006: 51). With Fujian Tulou, by articulating heritage values through expert discourse about

harmony the authorities, first, constrain what forms of social and cultural life can be considered heritage and, second, associate harmony discourse with nonheritage social acts, such as behavioral norms, moral codes, and civic responsibility.

Imposition of the Harmony Discourse

According to harmony discourse, the main principle for Tulou's conservation is to maintain the harmony between the site's physical environment and human activities. SACH says, "Historic sites under protection at all levels should maintain the initial residential nature as much as possible" (SACH 2008c: 291). A series of regulations has been promulgated to restrict local Tulou residents' heritage-related activities, and there are strict rules for Tulou owners, including their responsibility for the protection and maintenance of the buildings. For instance, it is forbidden to make adjustments to the structure of Tulou (ibid.), and "Raising of domestic fowls is forbidden inside Tulou, as is the act of dumping wastewater and trash inside Tulou" (ibid.: 116). Further, "Construction of new buildings, cutting into the mountains, quarry works, deforestation and pasturing in the protection scope" are prohibited (ibid.: 75).

To some extent, these regulations are reasonable. What makes them hegemonic, however, is the procedure through which they are developed and implemented. The authorities control the power of making and defining the principles for locals, whereas the locals are only "educated" and "encouraged" to live in such a manner (SACH 2009 [2007]a: 622).

The authorities' attitudes characterize the locals as ignorant about their heritage's aesthetic value. Although it was the residents' architectural and communal practices that contributed to Tulou's "outstanding universal value," they have become the immediate target of the harmony discourse. As an official document claims, "Every year, around the 'Cultural Heritage Day' in June, government servants are sent to towns and villages where Tulou are located to promote the idea of protecting Fujian Tulou . . . The idea that it is every citizen's obligation to protect cultural heritage has become popular" (SACH 2008c: 124).

This statement about behavioral norms reflects the Foucauldian concept of governmentality. Local people in towns and villages are governed by the idea of heritage conservation, which is "promoted" by government servants as expert knowledge. However, as my interviews reveal, before the World Heritage nomination, Tianluokeng villagers voluntarily carried out renovations and maintenance of the buildings. Since the buildings were officially designated as being historically and culturally significant, the act of maintenance has been defined as a type of obligation for the

inhabitants. Once it becomes an obligation, the “conduct of conduct” has been framed with a set of normative regulations (Foucault 1991). Moreover, the local inhabitants, with a routinized mode of conduct articulated by the authorities, are characterized as “citizens,” a term that makes them closely involved in the nation-building process.

The restrictions and official statements show how expert knowledge maintains its power over the local community. It first creates an impression that local people are unable to preserve their own heritage; then it characterizes the authorities as the only party able to provide this knowledge for the local community. The idealized “harmonious lifestyle,” as a result, is underscored by the state authorities to create a fossilized tradition for the local communities. The residents, under this discursive frame, are forced to perform an “authentic” mode of living, without being heard.

Heritage Conservation and Social Discipline

Heritage conservation is also rhetorically characterized as a manifestation of public responsibility and social discipline. According to the Central Propaganda Department of the CCP, “Any behavior that damages and devastates cultural heritage is ignorant and backward, and it must be condemned by future generations and by all mankind” (Central Propaganda Department of the CCP, Ministry of Culture, and SACH 2009 [1989]: 244). In addition, the protection of cultural heritage is associated with developments in scientific knowledge and rationality (State Council of PRC 2009 [2005]: 544).

Heritage practices are further articulated as being interwoven with issues of personal morality and society’s level of civilization. Heritage sites’ social value, according to an official publication, lies primarily in their function in “constructing civilized society, [and] promoting the quality of citizens” (Y. Li 2007: 41). Moreover, in Regulations on the Protection of Hakka Tulou in Yongding County (SACH 2008c: 320–22), Fujian Tulou’s conservation is explicitly expressed as being integral to the construction of a normative system of public hygiene and neighborhood safety, and it is suggested that residents should “foster a good habit of hygiene” and “should abide by social ethics.”

Even the requirement to “respect the aged and cherish the young” is mentioned in the regulations. Moral regulations are included to “help mediate disputes among the residents, resolve conflicts and bring about a harmonious neighborhood relationship” (SACH 2008c: 321). At the end of the document, there is a section titled “Residents’ Pledges on Civilization,” in which the residents agree to be “civilized and polite; to receive guests with warmth and keep good neighborly relations,” and to “pay attention

to public hygiene" (ibid.). In a documentary about Fujian Tulou, the party secretary of Nanjing County, Chen Zhonghou, says, "We must make the local government and local people realize how urgent it is to preserve the Tulou's World Heritage value. Only if the Tulou is maintained properly, will tourism develop and grow. When this agreement is reached, we can better protect the Tulou."

By associating heritage conservation with morality and social discipline, the state creates a model of social action. At a broader level, the moral regulation is essential to the state-making process. The modern Chinese state has been shaped from the outset by normative agendas with moralist discourses (Thornton 2007). The state aims to create a specific moral vocabulary about virtue and deviance in order to construct and maintain social discipline and political order. Measures on public health, for instance, are linked to state-building efforts on the part of the authorities (Lupton 1995). As these regulations and documents reveal, heritage conservation is tightly associated with issues of public health in China, by which the authorities legitimize and consolidate the state-building process.

Along with the state-building process, civic responsibility is underscored in heritage conservation practices, as well exemplified by the slogan, "Everybody is responsible for cultural relics protection" (State Council of PRC 2009 [1981]: 112). This is the most widely used slogan about cultural conservation in China, and every interviewee was familiar with it. Moreover, the "responsibility" must be disseminated to and imposed on the local communities from the top down. For instance, in 2006, the state required local governments to "strengthen the senses of mission and responsibility of the people, in order to incorporate the idea of cultural heritage appreciation, caring, protection, conservation, and rescue into people's minds" (SACH 2009 [2006]a: 550).

In comparison to responsibility, however, the basic rights to culture and heritage clearly rank second. There are very few mentions of local rights in official documents about Fujian Tulou. The overwhelming emphasis on responsibility reveals that, in spite of the human-centric harmony narrative, the local community has not yet been incorporated into the process of heritage management.

These nonheritage issues—behavioral norms, moral codes, public health, civic responsibility—are associated with the harmony discourse because they are believed to be integral to the constitution of the national initiative of a harmonious society. With this logic, Fujian Tulou's harmony not only resides in the relationship between humans and nature but also entails social and political dimensions. In order to reach this harmony, the locals should conform to the regulations imposed on their lives. Although the discourse of harmony implies something different from the

authorized heritage discourse advanced in the textual materials, it is still an authorized and hegemonic heritage discourse.⁴

Alternative Discourse

The accounts of local people of the inner value and meaning of the harmony discourse usually differ from the Fujian Tulou harmony discourse.⁵

The Fujian Tulou harmony discourse, among other things, explains the selection of the forty-six nominated Tulou buildings from among more than three thousand. Two sites, Tianluokeng Tulou Cluster in Nanjing County and Shengwu Lou in Pinghe County, ten kilometers away from Tianluokeng, exemplify this. Whereas Tianluokeng is a World Heritage Site, Shengwu Lou was excluded from the nomination process. Nature-human harmony is used as an essential concept to underpin the selection.

During my visits, Shengwu Lou had only two households and ten residents remaining, with most of its rooms being vacant. Most inhabitants had moved to cities for economic reasons. What was left, however, was a highly aesthetically compelling building. Aesthetically, Shengwu Lou's material elements have unique intrinsic value. The interior decoration is exceptional, containing more than six hundred carved wood elements, most having unique individual designs. It is described as "the most exquisite Tulou for its decorative arts" by Chinese Tulou scholar Huang Hanmin (Global Heritage Fund 2009). Interestingly, public appreciation of Shengwu Lou was originally equivalent to, or even higher than, that of Tianluokeng. In 2001, *Fujian Daily*, in an in-depth report on Shengwu Lou, said that a number of Fujian Tulou buildings were designated as State Priority Protected Sites and described Shengwu Lou as aesthetically more significant than Tianluokeng (Lin 2001).

Shengwu Lou was, however, excluded from World Heritage nomination because, according to the authorities, it did not fit the harmony discourse. Because there were only two households living at the site, according to the harmony discourse, Shengwu Lou lacked the human factor, which prevented the site from being recognized as a harmonious site. Experts see Shengwu Lou's lack of human activity as the main factor for its exclusion from World Heritage nomination. According to a provincial expert I interviewed, the lack of human activity reflects the absence of nature-human harmony. He suggested that despite the aesthetically pleasing interior decoration, Shengwu Lou does not qualify culturally for World Heritage because it does not meet the UNESCO justification that underscores harmony between nature and human activities. In comparison, he suggests that Tianluokeng, which has 111 households and 464

people living in the nominated properties,⁶ has human activities that are considered to contribute to the idea of harmony.

However, local accounts regarding World Heritage nomination differ from the official discourse. Harmony is not a key consideration; instead many locals explain the nomination decision as a result of bureaucratic processes. Residents in Shengwu Lou and its neighborhood believe that Shengwu Lou should have been included in the nomination. As a local elder states, “Shengwu Lou is one of the most valuable Tulou properties in China because of its excellently preserved earthen structure and wooden frame.”

Most of the locals do not mention the term “harmony” in their personal accounts. They insist that Fujian Tulou’s nomination was overly bureaucratically managed and that decisions were made solely by a small number of county officials based on their personal understanding (often misunderstanding) of World Heritage. As some recall, during the first wave of nominations, the decision was not about which Tulou buildings should be selected but about which counties would participate. Pinghe County, where Shengwu Lou is located, was originally considered as a candidate. However, having estimated that the basic expenses to draft and translate the nomination files might cost RMB500,000 (USD60,000), the Pinghe County government decided it was not worth spending that much on the project, and the county eventually withdrew the nomination.

As a resident recalled, while other counties were busy making nomination files, a county official of Pinghe said, “Tulou can’t feed you!” (*Tulou buneng dang fan chi!*). This is a Chinese expression that in English would be equivalent to “Tulou can’t make money.” Because of this opinion, a number of Tulou buildings in Pinghe County were replaced with banana or orange trees, which the government thought would “feed” people (Ma 2011).

Some locals do agree that Shengwu Lou’s limited number of residents and lack of human activity is a reason for its exclusion. However, this account does not involve the term “harmony” but comes rather from a practical perspective. For example, a local inhabitant maintains that lack of human activity means less maintenance and care for the buildings. He suggests that smoke kills worms and insects that eat the wooden frames of the buildings, and thus the lack of human activities, such as making fires for cooking, will lead to the deterioration of the wooden structure. In addition, a larger community size means more frequent protective checking and monitoring. In this sense, the exterior appearance and surroundings of Shengwu Lou have suffered from various kinds of damage and pollution.

Local accounts of the reason for Tianluokeng’s designation also differ from those proposed by the harmony discourse. The most dominant ex-

planation is that Tianluokeng's buildings are more "beautiful" than the excluded ones. As one stated, "Tianluokeng is of course much better than Shengwu Lou, because the buildings here are more historic and aesthetically pleasing than Shengwu Lou." Asked to explain how they are more aesthetically pleasing, the respondent answered, "Shengwu Lou is just not as beautiful as ours!" Among the inhabitants, very few mentioned the term "harmony" in their personal accounts.

Table 3.1 shows a comparison between the harmony and local discourses. In spite of the distinctions, the local inhabitants' knowledge and voices are largely ignored by the authorized narratives, which merely stress the significance of harmony.

Table 3.1. Authorized Harmony Discourse versus Local Discourse

Harmony Discourse		Local Discourse	
		Shengwu Lou	Tianluokeng
Why is Tianluokeng included?	The traditional layout of the village maintains a harmonious relationship with the natural environment	Bureaucratic process	Just beautiful
	Human activity is still vital, which maintains harmony	More residents means more daily care of the building	
Why is Shengwu Lou excluded?	Lack of human activity fails to achieve harmony	Lack of residents means lack of daily maintenance	Not as beautiful as Tianluokeng

The Construction of Authenticity

Authenticity and Heritage Tourism

The stress on harmony discourse reveals an official endeavor to create authenticity. Authenticity is essential for heritage, in part because of our constant search for a sense of grounding origin from which industrialization alienates us. As Dean MacCannell convincingly demonstrates in his seminal work *The Tourist*, tourism is a major part of modernity in that it reflects modern people's search for "authenticity," which no longer exists. By the same token, if heritage represents our cultural DNA, it has to be maintained in an "authentic" form that distinguishes itself from modern forms of social life.

However, as MacCannell argues, authenticity is not frozen in time; it is dynamically constructed by the interaction between tourists and hosts. MacCannell sees the authenticity of touristic sites as a negotiation. He observes that although tourists wish to experience an “authentic life” in tourist sites, the sites have created a tourist stage on which the tourists’ acts are being experienced, observed, and mediated by local residents simultaneously. In this context, the original authenticity of routine life in the tourist area is redefined and reconfigured by both tourists and local residents (1999: 91–107). Similarly, David Grazian’s (2003) study of Chicago’s blues clubs reveals that the ostensible “authenticity” of blues club experiences sought by tourists is actually defined, transformed, and sold by musicians, club owners and city boosters to the tourists. The authenticity is manufactured in the negotiated process of interaction between native Chicagoans and travelers.

Therefore, authenticity in heritage is a social construction rather than a fact. But this dynamic nature cannot prevent the government and authorities from controlling the definition of authenticity. Local or indigenous residents have been repeatedly “asked” or even “forced” to live in a manner modeling the “authentic.” For example, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has shown a case in which Burmese authorities attempted to relocate “long-necked” women to live in a model village in order to attract tourists (1998: 162). The case resembles the Fujian Tulou case in that both show a governmental endeavor to create what the authorities articulate as a “traditional way of life,” which was imagined to be “static and frozen in history.” By making the local tradition and people static, the local cultural fabrics are fossilized, thereby being more culturally and politically controllable. This constructed tradition is then legitimized through cultural tourism and heritage management by essentializing the local culture (Smith 2006: 294).

Similarly, concerning World Heritage, the authenticity defined as “frozen in time” is seen by Labadi as a political strategy for control. Labadi discusses the case of the Yungang Grottoes, which was narrated as a stable site with imagined authenticity in its nomination dossiers. As Labadi argues, “Providing such images of heritage based on continuity, uniformity and stability helps to construct stable, solid and homogeneous nations and collective identities and to consolidate an imagined community” (2010: 74–75).

However, heritage tourists do not automatically accept whatever is presented to them. They can be aware of the highly problematic nature of authenticity, and sometimes approach sites with what Bruner calls a “questioning gaze” (2010). Also, tourists with different ethnic and national backgrounds may have distinct ways of perceiving authenticity. Henderson et al. (2009) illustrate this in a discussion of research on domes-

tic and international tourists who had sharply distinct perceptions of the degree of authenticity of two Miao villages in southern China. Conducting fieldwork in the villages of Nanhua and Langde, the authors found that whereas the former was a well-established and commercialized tourist site, the latter remained generally less involved in the tourist industry. While 80 percent of domestic visitors questioned the authenticity of the more commercialized and staged Nanhua village, over 85 percent of international tourists believed that it was authentic.

I observed an almost identical contrast in the two Fujian Tulou villages. I interviewed both international and domestic tourists and found that the international visitors preferred to take Tianluokeng as authentic, but domestic visitors were always suspicious that life in Tianluokeng was “staged.” Over 70 percent of the domestic tourists declared that they thought the local residents were “not living naturally.” About the staged performance of local rituals one tourist said, “I doubt if they really know what the meaning of the play is. They [the performers] are just imitating the gestures.” In contrast, in the less popular Shengwu Lou, most visitors believed that what they observed there was authentic. One who had visited both Tianluokeng and Shengwu Lou said to me, “Shengwu Lou is much better than Tianluokeng. Shengwu Lou is about life. Tianluokeng is business.”

Barthel-Bouchier and Bond have suggested that the tourists’ belief in the authenticity of a heritage site may be supported by the designation of the site as World Heritage (2009). The case of Fujian Tulou reveals an alternative aspect of the perception of authenticity: the more familiar the tourists are with the host community, the less likely they will be influenced by the site’s World Heritage designation and accept the subsequent narrative of authenticity.

Being Fossilized = Being Evolved

If, as discussed above, the harmonious discourse is about fossilization of Fujian Tulou, the authenticity of the site should be largely associated with a “conservative ethic” created by heritage experts on the “non-educated locals” (Byrne 1991). It is ironic, however, to see that this conservative ethic of authenticity has been largely embedded in, and legitimized with, a discourse of progression. One official surprisingly used Darwin’s evolutionary theory to justify the decision, describing a kind of competitive natural selection, saying, “Any historic resource must be eliminated if it does not keep up with world trends.” He suggested that in spite of its aesthetic significance, Shengwu Lou was not culturally qualified for World Heritage because it did not meet the universal criteria that underscored the harmony between nature and human activities.

The employment of evolutionary theory seems paradoxical but also revealing and reasonable if we see it from the perspective of Heritage Enlightenment. In fact, the nature and underlying principle of Heritage Enlightenment is its rhetoric of progression and development. In this sense, the seemingly conservative ethics for Fujian Tulou have to be incorporated into the state's overarching efforts to create a narrative of the state's history with the discourse of historical linearity. The discourse of conservation is involved in the overarching discourse of progression, which legitimizes and locates the role of heritage preservation within the epic discourse of national development. This dominance or the permeation of the progressive ethic into the conservative ethic explicitly reveals the realistic role of heritage preservation in contemporary China's political context. In this sense, the only way to discern "good heritage" from "bad heritage" is to assess the extent to which each is aligned with the state-sanctioned discourse of historical linearity.

With the hegemonic imposition of both the conservative ethics of authenticity and the progressive discourse of evolution, residents of Fujian Tulou are politically and culturally less independent even in regards to remembering and interpreting their own heritage. As a result, Fujian Tulou has become a site of controversial memories, thereby making it a dissonant heritage site.

Dissonance

As demonstrated by Di Giovine (2009: 142), once a site is designated as World Heritage, it no longer belongs exclusively to locals, and the truth of this is evident in the case of Fujian Tulou. Although the lands on which the Tulou sites are situated are legally owned by the peasant collectives (SACH 2008c: 97), since World Heritage designation, practical ownership and control have become issues of great contention. This is what Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) would term a "dissonant heritage" and is largely associated with local politics and with power relations between the official discourse and the local community.

In Tianluokeng, most residents are now unhappy about heritage management. A villager in Tianluokeng insisted that the buildings, even the "inharmonious" ones, should be their own property:

But the government doesn't think so. They think it is their property. They say that human lives are an integral part of the heritage. But we are treated just as objects, not as humans. Everyone has forgotten that these are our own properties. The culture and heritage are made by us, not them. Now they sell it to the world. And we have been forgotten.

In 1999, the year when Nanjing County decided to nominate Tianluokeng for World Heritage, the residents' lives began to change. Their livelihood was heavily based on the cultivation of tea, but this was at stake because the formerly used tea processing buildings outside the Tulou buildings were seen to be "inharmonious" and were thus dismantled. The prohibition on raising domestic fowl further compounded difficulties. The originally rich fields have gradually deteriorated. As a result, dissent has become widespread: "They [the government] think we are resources," says a respondent. "They just invest money and extract profits from us. But they never care about our lives and feelings!"

Before 2008, the local community would collect 20 percent of the ticket revenue, which they thought too little. In 2008, believing the buildings to be their own property, they organized themselves to make a claim for 70 percent of the ticket revenue from the county's bureau of tourism (Chen 2008). After their claim was rejected by the government, as the quotation at the beginning of this chapter illustrates, some residents (supported by most residents) went to the official entrance of the village and charged tourists an additional entrance fee, refusing entry to those who failed to pay. Soon, eighteen villagers were arrested and charged with "disrupting social order." Consequently, most families of the community have turned their backs on visitors. Although the eighteen arrested activists were eventually released, deeply anchored tensions remain. As a result, the locals do not follow any government orders, especially its requirements about commercial activities. In 2012, four years after the designation, Tianluokeng was still filled with disorganized commercial stands.

"The key point is not ticket share," said a villager to me. "It's about life." Life is strictly regulated by the harmony discourse. For example, a resident and peddler at Tianluokeng complains that he and his family are required to live in their original residence, and his expansion of the house was forcibly dismantled by the government. As the family has now expanded, he is unable to find a place for his children to live.

A "positive" consequence of the hegemonic harmony discourse is that the dissonance serves as social glue for the community. By circulating the information of the campaign to gain a larger share of the profits, and by recounting the memory of related events, the inhabitants in Tianluokeng have reinforced solidarity within the village. As a villager stated, "What they [the government] did just made us stay more tightly together."

During my interview, the word the local residents most commonly used to distinguish themselves from the government was "class" (*jieji*). One respondent told me, "We are deprived because we are the lowest class. The government just wants to cater to the upper class, who have money, power, doing whatever they want." Issues of class have been analyzed in

heritage studies and have been shown to be significant in defining conflicts over heritage (e.g., Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996; Smith, Shackel, and Campbell 2011). Similarly, the experience of Fujian Tulou bears witness to how local people use the rhetoric of class deprivation to create self-identity and articulate social relations.

For example, Tulou residents tend to portray anyone who has a close relationship with the government as upper class. Thus a resident who maintains a close relationship with the government, and remains neutral during the conflict, is disliked by other residents, who call that person a traitor. One villager told me, "Don't interview him; he is part of the government. He belongs to that class." In addition, some even use class rhetoric to propose the need for a social revolution: "The society now is much like that before the Communist Revolution," one villager said. "We may need a new revolution to overthrow the corrupted government."

The class segregation between the locals and the government is also manifested in, and partly derived from, the government's own discourse. According to an official report, Fujian Tulou's World Heritage nomination was "highly supported and understood by both cadres and local residents" (Zheng 2008: 69). Another official report reviewed the nomination process in which "both cadres and ordinary people have one purpose, unified and devoted to winning the success of the nomination"



Figure 3.2. Interior view of Shengwu Lou, in which only a few apartments were still in use



Figure 3.3. Tianluokeng Tulou Cluster. This view of the five buildings shows how the site can be articulated as an example of architecture-nature harmony.



Figure 3.4. Harmonious life of local inhabitants in front of a Tulou building

(Zheng et al. 2008: 4). By separating cadres from ordinary residents, and by privileging the former over the latter, the statements implied that authorities and local inhabitants resided in two hierarchical levels of local society. Local residents were described as being merely motivated to “fully support and recognize” the government’s protection projects (SACH 2008c: 88).

This is again a manifestation of the hegemonic harmony discourse, which situates officials as the leaders of heritage nomination and the locals as supporters. While the officials are authorized to manage heritage conservation, identification, and nomination issues, the locals are disempowered in this process.

Classification

The inclusion of Tianluokeng and the exclusion of Shengwu Lou classified these two geographically and aesthetically homogenous buildings into different categories, leading to very different fates for the two sites and impacting the sites in two important ways. First, classification offered Tianluokeng buildings higher public attention and popularity than Shengwu Lou. Second, degrees of preservation and management diverged between the two sites, with protection regulations at Shengwu Lou becoming much less developed and much more poorly carried out than those at Tianluokeng.

Popularity

As mentioned previously, the public popularity of Shengwu Lou was originally equivalent to, or even higher than, that of Tianluokeng. *Fujian Daily’s* 2001 report describes the outstanding elements of Shengwu Lou:

Shengwu Lou, located in Pinghe County, was constructed in mid-Qing dynasty. Its structure is distinguished from other Tulou buildings for it incorporates both corridors and units, which is appraised by experts as “Luxi Style.” Delicate polychrome paintings, clay sculptures, and woodcarvings represent its unsophisticated and charming nature. This self-assured and animate building is called “the treasure house for south Fujian folk artifacts in late Qing dynasty.” Also, Tianluokeng Tulou Clusters and Hegui Building are unique, too. (Lin 2001)

This article was written one year after Tianluokeng was included in and Shengwu Lou was excluded from the World Heritage nomination. Despite the nomination list, Shengwu Lou was then still valued as more

significant than Tianluokeng in terms of aesthetics. Another example is found in the official newspaper of SACH—*China Cultural Relics*. In an article published in 2001, both Tianluokeng and Shengwu Lou were described as typical examples of Fujian Tulou (*China Cultural Relics* 2001). However, this is the only appearance of Shengwu Lou in this publication, whereas Tianluokeng has since then been mentioned at least ten times.

Since 2001, Tianluokeng has acquired increasing media exposure and public attention, whereas Shengwu Lou has gradually dimmed. The differentiation is reflected in travel books. After 2000, mass tourism in Tulou areas became increasingly popular, and a number of guide books were published. While most guide books published before 2008 introduced Tulou buildings without classification, those published after 2008 were primarily focused on World Heritage buildings. Sections about the non-heritage sites served more as “additional recommendations” after 2008. In *Understanding Fujian by Visiting Local Buildings* published in 2003, for example, both Tianluokeng and Shengwu Lou were significantly highlighted and described. This guide especially recommended tourists to visit “Zhencheng Lou and Chengqi Lou in Yongding County, Tianluokeng Tulou Cluster in Nanjing County, Shengwu Lou in Pinghe County, and Eryi Lou in Hua’an County” (2003: 95). Now, these recommended buildings have all become World Heritage, except for Shengwu Lou.

Travel along China is a Chinese series similar to *Lonely Planet*. It released the first edition on Fujian Province in January 2008, a few months before the World Heritage designation. In its introduction to Tulou, while Tianluokeng was described as “unparalleled” and highly recommended, Shengwu Lou was completely omitted.

Another guide, *Tours in Tulou*, was published in 2009 (Jiang 2009). It had a format very similar to that of *Understanding Fujian by Visiting Local Buildings*: a green cover, small glossy pages, and the same editing methods. However, the most noticeable difference between these two books was manifested in the latter’s exclusion of the non-heritage buildings. The first pages of *Tours in Tulou* included a map titled “A Map for Tours in Fujian Tulou,” which used black lines to denote the roads that connected various towns that had Tulou buildings. Surprisingly, Luxi Town, where Shengwu Lou was located, was the only town that was not connected to the road network. Descriptions of various Tulou buildings constantly highlighted such key words as “World Heritage” and “national treasure.” However, Shengwu Lou, also honored as a national treasure, was never mentioned in the book, let alone its aesthetic characteristics.

Another manifestation of heritage classification for the various Fujian Tulou is their international popularity. Tianluokeng, with its nomination

for World Heritage, soon gained an international reputation. Tourism in Tianluokeng has continued to rise since 2001, jumping especially after 2008. Because of its World Heritage status, Tianluokeng has its own Wikipedia page and online forum related to tourism. In contrast, until the American-based Global Heritage Fund commenced a preservation project for Shengwu Lou in 2009, there had not even been an English description of this building. In addition, World Heritage status has strikingly boosted Tianluokeng's entrance fee up from RMB50 (USD6) to RMB100 (USD12), whereas Shengwu Lou remains free to visitors. Tianluokeng has been the must visit heritage site, whereas Shengwu Lou has been to a large extent forgotten.

Protection and Management

In order to be qualified for World Heritage, a site needs to establish high-level and strictly enforced protective regulations and policies. As a result, World Heritage nomination and designation provide the buildings with highly systematic and effective protection and management measures. Tianluokeng has benefited from this process. In 2006, the Fujian People's Government issued Management Measures of Fujian Province for the Protection of Fujian Tulou. After that, the Government of Nanjing County passed a Notice on Strengthening the Management of Tulou Property Sites (SACH 2008c: 106). Furthermore, the larger context at the sites has been improved too: "Since 1999, the people's governments of the relevant counties have further mobilized manpower and money to improve the environment around the Tulou buildings. They dismantled buildings and other structures that were unharmonious with the property in the protection scope, and carried out appropriate activities on afforestation" (ibid.: 109).

A series of intensive protection actions were conducted for Tianluokeng. In 2001, the Protection Regulations of Tianluokeng Tulou Cluster was released. In May 2001, State Council included Tianluokeng Tulou Cluster in the fifth batch of National Priority Protected Sites. In the same year, due to a typhoon, the protection slope stretching from the front of Hengchang Lou to the back of Ruiyun Lou collapsed. SACH granted RMB500,000 for repairing the hillside under the instructions of experts. Then, in 2003, the Overall Plan of Nanjing County Tourism Development (2003–2020) was created. In 2005, landslides occurred on the mountain at the left side of Ruiyun Lou under the continuous attack of two strong typhoons and heavy rain, and the Nanjing government appropriated funds for immediate repair of the building.

In 2006, due to a strong typhoon and heavy rain, the protection slope in front of Ruiyun Lou collapsed, so SACH appropriated funds for reinforcing and maintaining the protection slope. Also in the same year, the Nanjing government entrusted the National Center of Historic City Studies at Tongji University to develop the protection plan for Tianluokeng Tulou Cluster (*ibid.*: 75).

In contrast to these strictly implemented plans and regulations for Tianluokeng, Shengwu Lou had no fully elaborated protection plan until the Global Heritage Fund decided to set up its conservation project at this site. Resource allocation was also strikingly different. For example, part of the building was damaged by a typhoon in 2004, after which the Pinghe County government appropriated funds for repair. Yet much less funding was received from the state level than at Tianluokeng. Moreover, Shengwu Lou has accomplished little in regard to regular monitoring and management of the site. It has only one unpaid volunteer to carry out daily basic monitoring duties.

The road to Shengwu Lou is poorly paved, and the surroundings are filled with trash. Although Shengwu Lou was designated as a National Priority Protected Site in 2001, the same year as Tianluokeng, its omission from the World Heritage List has given it a second-class label among all Fujian Tulou buildings. It is obvious that the degree of heritage protection and management among the various Fujian Tulou is largely associated with the individual site's World Heritage status.

From a broader perspective, the classification of similar heritage sites is seen by Barthel-Bouchier as based on the World Heritage Convention's problematic selection criteria. She suggests that the fourth criterion qualifies a site as World Heritage based, not on its aesthetic value but on its value as an architectural type. Many aesthetically valuable sites are therefore excluded from the list. Citing Beghain's criticism, Barthel-Bouchier says that this selection criterion is "the whole basis by which some villages, towns, cities, or landscapes are chosen for inclusion, whereas others are left unpreserved and exposed to potential destruction" (Barthel-Bouchier 2009).

As a result of heritage classification, not only are popularity and protective measures impacted but the core aesthetic narratives through which the classification is legitimized and made sensible to the public may also be altered. The meaning-making process is itself integral to heritage nomination and management. As Smith puts it, "Heritage management, conservation, preservation and restoration are not just objective technical procedures, they are themselves part of the subjective heritage performance in which meaning is re/created and maintained" (2006: 88). The classification of the two Tulou villages demonstrates this argu-

ment. As argued above, in order to make sense of Tianluokeng's designation and Shengwu Lou's omission, particular aesthetic narratives have been deployed to create explanations, which in turn fossilize the heritage sites.

Hegemony from Harmony

This chapter reveals a dangerous trend in heritage practices: an attempt to modify/correct the authorized heritage discourse may fail by creating an even more hegemonic discourse. The official discourse of Fujian Tulou—harmony between nature and community as well as the emphasis on human activity in a material site—is ostensibly different from the Western authorized heritage discourse defined by Smith (2006). However, the harmony discourse related to the Fujian Tulou resembles the authorized heritage discourse in that it privileges expert knowledge but dismisses local alternatives. This discourse is largely hegemonic and imposed on local inhabitants by the elite (largely external) group. Local life is “forced” to maintain imagined and idealized harmony. This consequence is also associated with the state-making process. World Heritage Fujian Tulou are utilized by the Chinese government as a tool to define and regulate social behaviors and moral discipline.

Heritage is a political resource, by managing which the authorities create and maintain particular aesthetic and scientific discourses. The relationship between the real owners of Fujian Tulou and the officially sanctioned experts is analogous with what McNiven and Russell found about the relationship between archaeologists and indigenous peoples—power relations (2005). The identity embedded in the heritage, therefore, has been politicized, embodied by the processes of discursive construction and political negotiation.

Rather than a cultural agenda, the making of World Heritage should be more precisely understood as a means of “social control.” “So-to-be World Heritage sites are identified, selected, collected, categorized, documented, evaluated, idealized and recontextualized into a unified whole by a socially sanctioned authoritative force” (Di Giovine 2009: 196). Under this social control, local residents’ original perception of their own properties has transformed to bifurcated memories. On the one side, a cultural memory is introduced based on the disseminated knowledge, replacing the original familial stories with universal legacies. On the other, a negative political memory and heritage dissonance are developed simultaneously with the process of making the heritage. Using these two frames, the local residents develop two distinct identities of “us,” the cultural us

and the political us, in order to make a distinction between the “cultural Other” and the “political Other.”

In this sense, as “sites of memory,” heritage sites not only entail how the past is remembered but also involve how this remembering is remembered. It is not only the memory of the heritage but also the memory of the heritage making that develops local identities. World Heritage’s nomination and management are themselves constitutive of narrative making. Heritage makes identity not only through pride but also through dissonance, not only with the history but also with the making of history.

In this process, heritage resources, including materials, and the right of interpretation and management have been withheld from the lower class by the upper-class elites. This is a common challenge faced by the UNESCO World Heritage program, whose core principle of universalism is also its Achilles’ heel. The case of Fujian Tulou illustrates the tension revolving around property ownership. As Barthel-Bouchier reveal, World Heritage has been seen as a challenge to individual property rights by positing universal, rather than private, ownership. “Although the first people to benefit from other human rights tend to be the poor and/or the persecuted, the first people to benefit from this universal ownership are affluent cosmopolitans” (2013: 31–32).

The situation of Fujian Tulou’s communities is also analogous with what postcolonial theorists such as Ranajit Guha (from Gramsci’s economic analysis) indicate is the situation of the “subaltern,” who are confronted with the rhetorical impedance to “speak” (Spivak 1988). In fact, as the case of Fujian Tulou reveals, the narratives utilized by the locals to articulate the cultural significance of the Tulou, and particularly experiences of class differentiation and tension, are largely derived from and shaped by the language of heritage produced and managed by the state apparatus.

Therefore, we should revisit the academic reflection on the West’s hegemonic imposition of heritage discourses on non-Western cultures. I agree that the reflection should be carried out by acknowledging the richness and distinctiveness of Asian heritage practices (Byrne 2011; Daly and Winter 2011). However, scholars need to understand that hegemonic inequality does not arise only from relations between the West and the non-West. Rather, it has been anchored within non-Western nations. As we see from the Fujian Tulou case, it is the Chinese experts and authorities, not the West, who impose the harmony discourse on the local community. Whereas the text of the harmony discourse is somewhat of a convergence of Asian traditions and UNESCO’s rhetoric of community, the practice of this discourse is exclusively managed by the state authorities. In such a sense, the harmony discourse is as hegemonic as, or even more hegemonic than, the Western authorized heritage discourse.

Notes

1. This chapter is derived in part from an article published in *International Journal of Heritage Studies* on 12 March 2014, available online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/13527258.2014.894930>.
2. Three major sources of data are used. First, the text of the discourse is primarily taken from UNESCO's official justification of the site, which itself is based on the Chinese nomination documents and from the file for Fujian Tulou's World Heritage nomination, both of which are available in English. Second, official documents in Chinese, including announcements, regulations, news reports, articles, and speeches, reflect how government bodies and experts understand and use the Fujian Tulou harmony discourse. Third, ethnographic work and structured interviews helped me observe and explore how officials and local inhabitants understand and respond to the harmony discourse and how the lives of local residents have been influenced by it. Specifically, my fieldwork was conducted over two periods of thirty days each in autumn 2010 and autumn 2011. I was located primarily in Tianluokeng. Because it was ten kilometers from Shengwu Lou, I traveled back and forth during my stay. I chose the two sites because they had opposing associations with the World Heritage designation: while Tianluokeng's Tulou cluster was among the designated heritage properties, Shengwu Lou was not designated. I interviewed six officials and thirty-three local residents from Tianluokeng and Shengwu Lou. Among the officials, two were from the state level and two from the provincial level, while one was from Tianluokeng and one from Shengwu Lou. Fourteen local interviewees were from the community of Shengwu Lou; the other nineteen were from Tianluokeng.
3. The value justification of Fujian Tulou, though provided by UNESCO on the World Heritage Centre's website, was originally developed by China's State Administration of Cultural Heritage. Therefore, regardless of the publisher, any narrative of Fujian Tulou in this book is the Chinese understanding of the buildings.
4. Fujian Tulou is not the only Chinese World Heritage Site whose narrative has been articulated for national purposes. Since China's ratification of the World Heritage Convention in 1985, it has actively employed the convention for its nationalistic ends. A number of scholarly works have demonstrated this, such as Hamlish (2000) on the Forbidden City and Hevia (2001) on the Mountain Resort and its Outlying Temples in Chengde.
5. I collected all quoted texts during my interviews with officials, professionals, and local inhabitants. To keep their personal information confidential, anything that may identify them is concealed in this book.
6. A datum that can be found in SACH (2008c: 52).

4



Mount Songshan

From the Center of Sacred Mountains
to the “Center of Heaven and Earth”

There are certainly numerous monuments or sites that can be taken for granted to correspond to the criteria of the List. Nevertheless, the justification depends on what themes are taken as the main reference.

—Jukka Jokilehto, “World Heritage: Observations on
Decisions Related to Cultural Heritage”

China used to be proud of its World Heritage: every historic site succeeded in being accepted by UNESCO on its first nomination attempt. This record surprisingly ended in 2009, when the World Heritage Committee referred the heritage application for the Historic Monuments of Mount Songshan back for additional materials and further value justification.

One year later, the site was successfully added to the World Heritage List on its second attempt. Astonishing many, the designation made another interesting record in China’s World Heritage history: it became the first heritage site that completely changed its official title and narrative theme during the nomination. The new and final name that was officially given and approved was the Historic Monuments of Dengfeng as the “Center of Heaven and Earth” (Tiandizhizhong). This name was unfamiliar to many ordinary people and heritage preservationists. With the new title and narrative theme, the site’s previously highlighted feature of mountain worship was eliminated, and the monument’s cultural meaning

shifted from a representation of a sacred mountain to that of traditional oriental cosmology.

What happened between the two nomination attempts? Was anything wrong or unqualified in the first one that was then corrected by the second one? What are the differences in the narrative claims between the first and the second attempts? This chapter will explore the institutional and discursive processes in which the name and central narratives of the Historic Monuments of Mount Songshan were reiterated and revalued. The title change, as I show here, reveals a shift between two distinct modes of cultural memory—from cultural working memory to cultural reference memory. The discursive transition is largely contingent on institutional forces, such as the administrative tensions within China's heritage management system.

Mount Songshan: A Duplicated and Tension-Filled Nomination

On 31 July 2010, the thirty-fourth annual session of the World Heritage Committee was hosted by Brazil in its capital Brasilia. China's nomination for World Heritage—the Historic Monuments of Dengfeng in the “Center of Heaven and Earth”—was successfully added to the World Heritage List, bringing the total number of China's World Heritage Sites to thirty-nine. UNESCO soon put a brief description of the site on its official website:

Mount Songshang is considered to be the central sacred mountain of China. At the foot of this 1500 metre high mountain, close to the city of Dengfeng in Henan province and spread over a 40 square-kilometre circle, stand eight clusters of buildings and sites, including three Han Que gates—remains of the oldest religious edifices in China—temples, the Zhougong Sundial Platform and the Dengfeng Observatory. Constructed over the course of nine dynasties, these buildings are reflections of different ways of perceiving the centre of heaven and earth and the power of the mountain as a centre for religious devotion. The historical monuments of Dengfeng include some of the best examples of ancient Chinese buildings devoted to ritual, science, technology and education. (UNESCO 2010)

To get these 124 words on this website, however, China's heritage authorities had struggled for more than seven years. Compared to China's other nominations, this case was unique because it encountered a challenge that none of the others had faced: failure.

In 2003, Henry Cleere, then World Heritage coordinator for ICOMOS, paid a visit to Dengfeng, a city in Henan province. He strongly lauded the outstanding universal value of the historic monuments in Dengfeng. Encouraged by Cleere, the provincial government of Henan proposed to

nominate Shaolin Temple's Pagoda Forest, Songyue Temple Pagoda, and the Observatory for World Heritage (Dengfeng Office of Mount Songshan's Nomination 2008: 30). The first nomination dossier was drafted by 2004, and a series of conservation and management plans and policies were subsequently promulgated. In 2006, SACH formally added the nomination to China's World Cultural Heritage tentative list, extending the scope from three to eight sites, with eleven individual components. This property was given the title "Historical Monuments of Mount Songshan." Meanwhile, SACH announced that it would be China's only candidate for World Heritage (under the category of cultural heritage) in 2009 (Y. Li 2010a).

By June 2008, the municipal government of Dengfeng, which was in charge of the nomination, had completed a series of projects, including the draft and translation of the nomination dossier, restoration of architecture, personnel training, and legislation for heritage and environment protection. Also, as one significant part of the nomination procedure, Dengfeng hosted ICOMOS experts for an onsite evaluation in the fall of 2008 (Dengfeng Office of Mount Songshan's Nomination 2008: 33–34). At this stage, there was an atmosphere of strong confidence within the heritage sector about the nomination. According to one official cited in a news report, the possibility of being designated was "one hundred percent" (Jiang 2008). To most people, everything seemed to be progressing at a normal and steady progress, until they heard about UNESCO's decision to refer the proposal back to China on 26 June 2009.

Although the decision was neither a complete rejection nor a postponement for the nomination, this instance of referring back the proposal was seen by many Chinese as a total failure, as it was the first and only Chinese nomination that was not successfully designated at its first attempt. Internet forums were full of comments, complaints, and criticisms. Most commenters misconceived the "referring back" decision as a final rejection and worried about the fates of the Chinese sites on the tentative list. Many accused the government, especially SACH, for its inaction. A few, who seemed to be more involved in heritage management and preservation, used superstitious terms such as "karma" and "retribution" to explain the "failure." For example, one anonymous comment said, "Songshan and SACH just deserve what's coming to them. No wonder, the arbitrary nomination of Mount Songshan by itself, without including the other three Sacred Mountains, was destined to fail!"

This comment unveiled an awkward fact that the Chinese government had to concede: one direct cause of Mount Songshan's unsuccessful nomination was that it was nominated twice, by two distinct government organizations. SACH nominated Mount Songshan as a cultural heritage

site, whereas the Ministry of Construction (MOC) nominated it to the tentative list for mixed cultural and natural heritage as part of an extension of the World Heritage Site Mount Taishan¹ to include four other sacred mountains.² Indeed, both nominations were reasonable in that each of the sacred mountains was culturally invaluable, with their integration being famously titled the Five Sacred Mountains. The crucial value of the sacred mountains was the tradition and spirit of mountain worship with an appreciation and celebration of their sacredness. Hence, it was unsurprising that both nominations were centered on the theme of mountain worship, which resulted in Mount Songshan being nominated twice and with identical value justifications.

The duplication of nominations to a large extent confused ICOMOS evaluators and created tensions between the two administrative agencies. After the 2009 decision, SACH and MOC accused each other. SACH criticized MOC's nomination of the Five Sacred Mountains as immature and an impediment to Mount Songshan's evaluation, whereas MOC insisted that their nomination started earlier than that of SACH and that SACH's independent nomination of Mount Songshan had totally ignored the other three mountains' value and hindered their future access to World Heritage.³

What caused this internal "heritage battle"? It would be helpful to review China's bureaucratic divisions within the heritage sector. Overall, it was a complex result of some preexisting conceptual and institutional "divisions." At the very beginning, the division lay in distinctions between categories in UNESCO's definition for World Heritage, in which cultural and natural heritage were considered ontologically different. Under this categorical system, any nominated site should be cataloged as either cultural or natural, with a few being considered a mixed site.⁴ This categorical differentiation was fully adopted in China, as it was consistent with China's existing division of responsibilities for heritage preservation.

Before the introduction of World Heritage, China's heritage preservation system had been divided into two main agencies. Cultural relics were under the custody of SACH, while MOC was in charge of natural sites. The natural sites included natural parks and the national registered sites as "landscapes and famous scenery," a category that primarily included sacred mountains such as the Five Sacred Mountains. Thus, the original domestic division of labor continued for World Heritage management: SACH was responsible for cultural heritage sites, and MOC supervised natural heritage as well as the mixed heritage sites. As a result, a site honored as both culturally and naturally outstanding is qualified for either category and is eligible for nomination by either administrative body, but not both.

In fact, the problem of the distinction between cultural and natural sites has been noticed and discussed by UNESCO since the 1990s (Jokilehto 2011: 64). UNESCO modified the criteria for World Heritage in its 2008's revised Operational Guidelines (UNESCO 2008c), combining the original criteria 1 to 6 for cultural heritage and 1 to 4 for Natural Heritage into one integrated and continuous series of criteria, ordering them from 1 to 10. In spite of this effort, the existing conceptual and institutional barrier could not be easily removed. The Historic Monuments of Mount Songshan submission was perhaps a "victim" of this categorical distinction.

To explain the 2009 failure and the 2010 success, China provided an official account. Not surprisingly, nothing about the bureaucratic battle and conflicting nominations was disclosed. According to one report, the failure was because ICOMOS experts did not understand the concept of the "Center of Heaven and Earth." Moreover, by the next year, Chinese experts were finally able to educate the relevant international experts, leading to the 2010 successful nomination. However, this obviously does not fully explain the complex background of the original failure, nor does it address the significant and repeated challenges faced in getting the nomination finally accepted in 2010, nor how tenuous the possibility of success looked for a time.

In truth, for ICOMOS experts, the Center of Heaven and Earth as a cosmological notion was not very difficult to understand, but what did create real confusion, as revealed in an ICOMOS evaluation report, was China's seemingly somewhat arbitrary decision to completely shift the site's central narrative theme between the 2009 and 2010 nomination files. Why, they asked, transition from a fully established concept of mountain sacredness to a concept of cosmology much less perceived and promoted by the Chinese public?

Closely examining the nomination files and the correspondence between SACH and ICOMOS, it is clear that the decision for the title and theme change was not a sudden reaction to the 2009 failed attempt. Rather, ICOMOS's confusion and the negotiation about the narrative claims emerged immediately after MOC put the Five Sacred Mountains on the tentative list as a mixed property in 2008. Upon reception of Mount Songshan's duplicated nomination, ICOMOS began to request SACH to fully clarify the duplicated nomination. In order to make their nomination distinct from that of MOC, SACH had to convince ICOMOS that Mount Songshan was something "more than a mere sacred mountain." Gradually, the narrative about Mount Songshan's sacredness, and its importance in mountain worship, was replaced by a cosmological concept: the mountain as Center of Heaven and Earth.



Figure 4.1. “Progress board for World Heritage nomination” in the main lobby of the Nomination Office for the Center of Heaven and Earth

What explanation and information did ICOMOS ask for? How did SACH respond? How, in the communications between ICOMOS and SACH, have the Center of Heaven and Earth been highlighted and used to replace the original narrative of mountain worship? We now turn to the details of the nomination files.

The Rediscovery of “the Center of Heaven and Earth”

From 2007 to 2010, SACH submitted four versions of the nomination dossier, including the original nomination file (SACH 2007b) and three supplementary information files, one in each of the following years (SACH 2008b, 2009b, 2010). ICOMOS replied to the first three versions with meticulous suggestions (ICOMOS 2010a). Moreover, each volume of supplementary information generated by SACH was largely developed in response to ICOMOS’s evaluation of the previous volume. By and large, this communication process revealed an unequal relationship. ICOMOS always raised questions and challenged particular concepts and narratives; SACH had to answer the questions and defend (or modify) the concepts and narratives.

Over the course of this back-and-forth, the concept of the “Center of Heaven and Earth” incrementally transformed from a marginal note into a central narrative. Moreover, as revealed in the four versions of the nomination file and ICOMOS’s three responses, the official “rediscovery” and approval of the concept of the Center of Heaven and Earth was largely a consequence of domestic administrative tension in China and of the communicative process between the international actors.

Suppose that MOC had not submitted the nomination for the Five Sacred Mountains on the tentative list; ICOMOS would not then have been confused with the value justification of Mount Songshan’s mountain worship. The site quite possibly would have been officially approved by UNESCO in 2009. Because MOC did submit the duplicated file, SACH had no choice but to differentiate Mount Songshan from the other sacred mountains and to employ an entirely new concept to justify its valuations.⁵ Eventually, the new narrative centering on cosmology became reinforced and intensified during communication between ICOMOS and SACH.

The Original File: Sacred Mount Songshan

In the original nomination file, the Center of Heaven and Earth was only a marginal concept used to articulate the significance of mountain worship in Chinese culture and imagination. Mount Songshan was invaluable because of its representation of sacredness. “Thanks to its proximity to ancient capitals, which produced a compelling combination of both natural and cultural landscapes, it was the earliest and the most important sacred mountain of China” (SACH 2007b: 33). The file explicitly emphasized the importance of Mount Songshan’s “centerness,” accounting for it with its geological position as the center of the Five Sacred Mountains, instead of the Center of Heaven and Earth as it would later be characterized.

The system of worshipping sacred mountains was believed in China to be vital to the existence of a regime and the country. Taishan in the east, Huashan in the west, Hengshan in the south, another Hengshan in the north, and Songshan in the center are the five mountains that have long been sacralized by the system. In particular, Mount Songshan (the Central Sacred Mountain) was regarded as the core within the core, the very centre of the “central country” and thus the center of the world, and even of “Heaven and Earth.” (ibid.: 9)

According to this early text, the Center of Heaven and Earth was simply a rhetorical and metaphoric extension of the narrative of mountain worship. “Since Mount Songshan was seen as the place where ‘the ancestor of ten thousand mountains’ and immortals lived, it was used by rulers to offer sacrifices to heaven and earth, for communion with gods and pray-

ing for the stability and prosperity of their country” (ibid.: 96). Therefore, mountain worship, according to the original file, had precedence over the place’s representation of heaven and earth.

First Round: Mount Songshan Is Not Only Sacred

SACH submitted the original nomination file to UNESCO on 21 January 2008. ICOMOS responded on 9 October the same year. Between these two dates, MOC submitted its own nomination, titled “The Four Sacred Mountains as an Extension of Mt. Taishan,” to the tentative list on 4 July (2008). Consequently, ICOMOS, in its first response letter to SACH, addressed its primary confusion and concern with the duplication of the nomination. It required further information on “how the overall nomination of the five sacred mountains of China will be related to the current nomination” (ICOMOS 2010a: 14).

SACH replied on 13 November 2008 with a 24-page supplementary information section. It started its attempt to differentiate Mount Songshan from the other four sacred mountains, primarily by highlighting its geographic location in the center.

As being the core area both in geology and culture, Mount Songshan gave birth to the concepts of “Central State” ([the name for] China in Chinese, *Zhongguo*, means the “central state”) and “Central Plain.” There still remained abundant inscriptions and plaque brands reflecting contents of being “the center of heaven and earth,” and “the sacred mountain under the heaven. (SACH 2008b: 2)

Here, the Center of Heaven and Earth was still rhetorically and conceptually paralleled with the sacredness of Mount Songshan.

Regarding the relationship between Mount Songshan and the concept of Five Sacred Mountains, one approach to distinguish between these two was to find something beyond the simple narrative of mountain worship. The first supplementary information file thus explained, “The concept of Mount Songshan as the sacred mountain in cultural consciousness is formed prior to the concept of Five Sacred Mountains. Although the culture of Mount Songshan connects in [aspects] with the culture of the Five Sacred Mountain, it has its own distinctive origin and status” (ibid.: 3).

This narrative was slightly modified from the original file submitted the year before, which did not mention the chronological priority of Mount Songshan. To stress the superiority of Mount Songshan to the other sacred mountains, the concept of the Center of Heaven and Earth was removed. Unfortunately for SACH, this reduction in value brought about further confusion for ICOMOS, which was not convinced by the first supplement-

tary information about the relationship between two “centers” — the Central Sacred Mountain and the Center of Heaven and Earth. It sent another response letter on 19 December 2008 for further explanation about the two concepts.

In the nomination dossier, it is clear how the Han Gates refer directly to the practice of Imperial sacrifices to the mountain as the center of heaven and earth. It would be helpful if you could please substantiate which other parts of the nominated ensemble are considered to reflect directly the concept of the center of heaven and earth as manifested in Mount Songshan, and which attributes demonstrate these reflections. (SACH 2009b: 1)

In particular, ICOMOS asked how “Mount Songshan gave birth to the concepts of ‘Central State’ . . . and ‘Central Plain’” (UNESCO 2009a: 14).

Second Round: Cosmology In, Mount Songshan Out

In spite of some contradictory narratives, the original file and the first supplementary information text both employed Mount Songshan’s embodiment of mountain worship and sacredness as the key to the nomination. However, starting with the second volume of supplementary information, the mountain’s name almost completely disappeared from the nomination text. Instead, the place where the mountain was located—Dengfeng City rose to be the core of the nomination. Furthermore, SACH reiterated that it was *not the sacred mountain, but the place of the city* that gave birth to the Chinese civilization.

The narrative shift was a decision made in a meeting at SACH on 31 December 2008.⁶ Many key persons involved in the nomination attended this meeting, including officials from SACH, top officers of ICOMOS China, Dengfeng’s mayor, and top officers of cultural heritage management in Dengfeng. The officer from Dengfeng who was in charge of drafting the file was asked how the nomination could be justified with the perspective of cosmology instead of mountain worship and whether this concept was substantially supported by academic literature. The officer answered both questions, respectively, “the Center of Heaven and Earth” and “Yes!”

The next agenda item of the meeting was to create a new name for the nomination as a subtitle to its original name. There were three options, among which the participants eventually decided to use the Historic Monuments of Dengfeng in the “Center of Heaven and Earth.”⁷ Within two months of the meeting, SACH produced its second volume of supplementary information, submitted on 2 March 2009. In this volume, amounting to thirty-six pages, the overall nomination and its narrative theme were entirely changed, from the initial focus on the Dengfeng monuments’ link

to Mount Songshan's religious mountain worship to an emphasis on the cosmological importance of Dengfeng city. On page 14 in this volume, the word "cosmology" appeared for the first time, since which it remained as a fundamental concept for the overall nomination. It had never appeared in the previous two versions.

Based on the meeting's decision, a subheading, "the Historic Monuments of Dengfeng in the 'Center of Heaven and Earth,'" was added to the original title, "the Historic Monuments of Mount Songshan," and the document rearticulated its core narrative claim as follows:

The first point crucial for the understanding of the nomination is that the spiritual and physical location of the "Center of Heaven and Earth" in oriental cultures, especially Chinese culture, had been exclusively ancient Yangcheng (present Dengfeng) for 3000 years. This further led to the definitions such as *Zhongyuan* (Central Plain), while Mount Songshan — "the Central Sacred Mountain" did not play this role but [was] merely regarded as a natural element that emphasize[d] the center [my emphasis]. Therefore the cultural values are not within Mount Songshan, which therefore is not included in the nomination. (SACH 2009b: 1–2)

This statement rejected what SACH itself had articulated in the first supplementary information, "Mount Songshan gave birth to the concepts of 'Central State'" (SACH 2008b: 3). According to this second supplementary information file, the core value of the monuments located at Mount Songshan had no substantial association with the mountain per se. The file further addressed the issue about the duplicated nomination of Mount Songshan:

Some Chinese colleagues are trying to propose a nomination of other four Sacred Mountains (including Mount Songshan) as an extension to Mount Taishan for World Heritage sites. However, we do not believe that this is relevant to the nomination of Dengfeng, and can be considered separately, whenever the state finds it appropriate. At the same time, Mount Songshan, being [an] important element of the setting of the Dengfeng sites, is protected under the regulations concerning protection of national scenic area[s]. The overall value, the inherent logic, authenticity, and integrity of nominating the historic monument of Dengfeng in the "Center of Heaven and Earth" will not be affected by excluding Mount Songshan, which is a geomorphic and geomancy factor of the concept of the "Center of Heaven and Earth." (SACH 2009b: 5)

Eventually, Mount Songshan, once the core concept of the nomination manifested in the original file and the first supplementary information, was "eliminated," both conceptually and practically.

The shift of value justification was followed by the reordering of the nominated monuments. The Observatory, being divided into two individual properties, Zhougong Sundial Platform and Dengfeng Observatory,

became a fundamental manifestation of the guiding concept of cosmology. Having been included as a marginal property in the first two volumes, these two properties were now endowed with significant visibility in the second file in that they “corroborate an ancient cosmic view and astronomical history . . . [and] in most direct relationship to and bear the most persuading evidence of the cosmic view of ‘the Center of Heaven and Earth’ in Chinese civilization” (ibid.: 7).

In addition, other properties such as Songyue Temple Pagoda, Shaolin Temple and its Pagoda Forest, and Zhongyue Temple were also rearticulated with the underpinning concept of “center” because “they were all created here because of the universal centrality of the place and the notion that knowledge and wisdom, [the] same as political power, should come from the center” (ibid.: 7). Also, Songyang Academy of Classical Learning “should be located in this place as a result of the universally accepted ancient notion of ‘the Center of Heaven and Earth’” (ibid.: 8); Chuzu temple “was built here because of the notion of ‘the Center of Heaven and Earth’”; Three-Que Gates “witnessed the early stages of the conviction of the ‘Center of Heaven and Earth’” (ibid.: 9); and Huishan Temple was “confirmed as ‘the Center of Heaven and Earth’ by Mongolian minorities in the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368)” (ibid.: 10). Simply put, all the properties now took on an inseparable nature that was embodied not in the mountain but in the place.

Once again, the ICOMOS experts were confused by such a radical narrative change. As they claimed, the new evidence and statements delivered an almost totally different justification for the criteria (ICOMOS 2010a: 14). Thus, in its final evaluation report to the World Heritage Committee, ICOMOS raised a serious concern with the narrative shift.

The original nomination and the first supplementary information received stressed the link between some of the nominated sites and the unique development of mountain worship and suggested that the value of the ensemble manifests the power and influence the mountain had in constitutional, religious and ceremonial terms and how the simple worship of nature was transformed into a force that legitimized imperial power, under the guidance of Confucian thought . . .

However in the second supplementary information received the link between the nominated sites and Dengfeng is brought to the fore and less attention is drawn to the association with mountain worship. It is suggested that the idea of Dengfeng being the Center of Heaven and Earth was the motivation for the construction of the various sites.

This has unfortunately led to confusion as there is not a coherent approach between the original nomination and the later material provided. The second supplementary information in effect creates a new nomination based on new justification which could not be scrutinized through expert review at that late stage (UNESCO 2009a: 59)

ICOMOS stated that it was not fully convinced by SACH about the narrative change. In fact, what ICOMOS had been convinced of was the significant and outstanding value of Mount Songshan based on the first two versions of the nomination file. It explicitly expressed its appreciation of the natural representation of the sacredness of Mount Songshan, suggesting that, in addition to the ritual and spiritual aspects embedded in the Center of Heaven and Earth, the nomination should retain its original narratives about the value of Mount Songshan as an integral and underpinning part of the nominated properties:

ICOMOS considers that, in line with the original justification, a case could be made for demonstrating a unifying value for part of the group of sites in terms of their association with the mountain as a visual as well as spiritual presence. Many of the buildings are aligned to peaks on the mountain, and their construction reflects perceptions of the mountain as one of the centers for the development of the Chinese state, as the physical manifestation of the center of heaven and earth and as where the ancient cult of offering sacrifices to the mountain was transformed by the Emperors into a national religion with ceremonies that confirmed imperial power. (ibid.)

Therefore, UNESCO, based on the ICOMOS evaluation report, made the following decision regarding the nomination of the Historic Monuments of Mount Songshan:

Refers the nomination of Historic monuments of Mount Songshan, China, back to the State Party in order to allow it to:

- a) Consider further the relationship between some of the nominated sites and the central China sacred mountain, Mount Songshan and;
- b) Consider how a nomination of some of the selected sites together with part of the mountain might reflect their value as an ensemble that manifests the power and influence the mountain had in constitutional, religious and ceremonial terms and how the simple worship of nature was transformed into a force that legitimized imperial power, under the guidance of Confucian thought;
- c) Consider nominating the Observatory on its own as a site associated with technological development and the development of scientific ideas. (UNESCO 2009b)

Third Round: It's Cosmology; Forget the Sacred Mountain!

Chinese heritage authorities viewed UNESCO's decision in 2009 optimistically.⁸ Dengfeng was encouraged to cooperate with ICOMOS to develop a better explanation for the narrative shift. SACH submitted the third volume of supplementary information on 21 January 2010. This last version of the nomination dossier primarily strengthened the narrative claim centered on the meaning of cosmology, with an attachment of a journal article to demonstrate the significant role of the Center of Heaven and Earth

(ICOMOS 2010a: 13). At the beginning of this volume, SACH explained why the mountain worship of Mount Songshan served as a misleading notion that overshadowed the Center of Heaven and Earth:

[Mountain worship] is easier to be understood by and to popularize in the public, succeeded in taking over the spotlight of the cosmology "Centre of Heaven and Earth;" and the thousands of years of relationship between the imperial power and cultures and religions in China has been always primarily a topic of academic research, leading to scant attention and insufficient understanding on the part of the general public of the more profound significance of the cosmology. (SACH 2010: 1–2)

The third supplementary file further consolidated the superseding role of cosmology over mountain worship in the meaning making for the monuments. It argued, "The fundamental reason for all the major religions and sects in China gathering together at this particular location is the oriental cosmology, 'The Centre of Heaven and Earth'" (ibid.: 7). The file also stated that the concepts such as Five Sacred Mountains and Central Sacred Mountain emerged 1,000 years after the construction of the Zhougong Sundial Platform (ibid.: 8). It accounted for the popularity and prevalence of the concept of sacred mountains by the gradual replacement of primitive oriental cosmology with modern scientific knowledge.

The traditional concept of "The Centre of Heaven and Earth" gradually faded from popular consciousness and memory, particularly after the introduction of scientific theories of the terrestrial globe into China from Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries. Progressively the name and influence of Mount Songshan as "Central Sacred Mountain" came to surpass that of the Region of Songshan, "The Centre of Heaven and Earth" from which it had originally acquired its importance. Unfortunately in the original nomination dossier this was not adequately explained or translated. (ibid.: 7)

In response to ICOMOS's recommendation to maintain consistency between the earlier and later narrative claims, SACH insisted that the later volumes were more accurate than the earlier ones. The narrative discrepancy between the earlier and the later nomination files was explained as a result of "either unclear wording or inadequate translation" (ibid.).

In addition, the third supplementary information document reinforced the core role of the Dengfeng Observatory and Zhougong Sundial Platform as the "direct evidence of the location and continuity of 'The Centre of Heaven and Earth' cosmology" (ibid.: 19). They were both characterized as physical embodiments of the influence of cosmology, which faded beginning in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, forgotten in the public discourse of science, education, and belief.

With this, the long-lasting cultural memory of the nominated monuments—their physical representation of mountain worship and natural

sacredness in Mount Songshan — has been replaced by a much less known memory.

UNESCO Justification: Cosmology, but also Sacred Mountain

UNESCO designated “the Historic Monuments of Dengfeng in the ‘Center of Heaven and Earth’” as World Heritage, since it met criteria 3 and 6.⁹ Yet for each criterion, there had progressively been three different versions of value justification, including the one in the original file, the one in the third volume of supplementary information, and the one finally completed by ICOMOS. In the original file, the value justification for criterion 3 was this:

The ritual buildings and Confucian educational buildings among the historic monuments of Mount Songshan, represented by the Han Que Gate, the Zhongyue Temple, and the Songyang Academy of Classical Learning, provide excellent evidence of two now vanished cultural traditions, the ancient sacrificial culture and the traditional academy education. (SACH 2007b: 117–18)

In the third supplementary file, it was modified as follows:

The scientific investigation and practice of the form of the universe began three millennia ago and only gradually faded from the 15th–16th centuries; many dynasties of advocating [on] the cosmology of “The Centre of Heaven and Earth,” promoted by the elite classes, and its acceptance by the general population; evidence of a scientific, educational and belief system that no longer exists today; the Buddhist cultural tradition that is living and evolving. All these support the application of this criterion. (SACH 2010: 18–19)

In the original file, the core justification lay in its ritual and Confucianism manifestations, whereas in the third supplementary file, the core justification was shifted to the monuments’ manifestation of the accomplishments of science and cosmology. However, ICOMOS eventually developed its own official justification for criterion 3 by including mountain worship and cosmology within one statement:

The astronomical idea of the center of heaven and earth is strongly linked with the idea of imperial power, with the propitiousness of establishing capitals at the center of heaven and earth, and with its natural attribute, Mount Songshan and the ceremonies and ritual associated with it. The serial property reflects the significance of the area in terms of prestige and patronage. (ICOMOS 2010a: 28)

The description for criterion 4 has been changed significantly as well. According to the original nomination file:

The concentration of the historic monuments of Mount Songshan in an area of some 40km² reflects the fact that this was one of the birthplaces of Chinese civilization, based upon the sacred concept of the “Centre of Heaven and Earth” in Chinese history. Additionally, the Shaolin Temple, the Pagoda Forest, and the mural paintings and stele inscriptions within them were directly responsible for diffusing the Chan sect and martial art culture in ancient China, and are thus evidence of the development of the Chan sect and the transmission of Buddhism. (SACH 2007: 121–22)

However by the third supplementary file, Mount Songshan is absent from criterion 4:

This historic ensemble has direct and tangible relationships with associated historical events, current traditions, ideology, and beliefs. The associated beliefs include the exploration of and belief in the laws of astronomy and the universe; promotion of and belief in the status of God-granted imperial power; the affirmation of and belief in sacrificial rituals, and the existing traditional Taoist and Buddhist beliefs that replaced them in later generations; and the belief in the Zen Sect of Buddhism which originated from and developed in Shaolin Temple. (SACH 2010: 23)

In spite of the SACH’s efforts to avoid such terms as “Mount Songshan” and “mountain worship,” Mount Songshan’s cultural significance as a



Figure 4.2. Cluster of Pagodas at Shaolin Temple, a component of the Center of Heaven and Earth

sacred mountain was once again included in the final text of justification for criterion 4 that was generated by ICOMOS:

The concentration of sacred and secular structures in the Dengfeng area reflects the strong and persistent tradition of the centre of heaven and earth linked to the sacred mountain which sustained imperial sacrifices and patronage over 1500 years and became of outstanding significance in Chinese culture. The Buddhist structures came to have a symbiotic relationship with the sacred mountain. (ICOMOS 2010a: 28)

ICOMOS's final modification of the narrative claims was not a surprise. In fact, in its response letters to SACH, ICOMOS has consistently hinted that their experts were not fully convinced by SACH's attempt to create an ontological binary between mountain sacredness and cosmology. What the experts sought was a consistent and convincing justification that could integrate the two narrative frames, rather than treating them as mutually exclusive. Therefore, in the finalized value justification, ICOMOS seemed to select components from both narratives that were derived from both earlier and later nomination volumes. Overall, the monument's final description was an integrated novel narrative, its formation contingent on a series of institutional and discursive tensions and communications, culminating in a particular form of new cultural memory for the local monuments.



Figure 4.3. Front gate of Songyang Library, a component of the Center of Heaven and Earth



Figure 4.4. The Observatory as a component of the Center of Heaven and Earth

Narrative Dissemination Back in China

Since its World Heritage designation, the cosmological narrative of the Center of Heaven and Earth not only has increased international recognition but also has become a kind of “national collective knowledge” that the government hopes to spread and diffuse domestically. We see the narrative transition as we compare and contrast the three main publications released before, during, and after the designation.

In 1985, the official editing group of Dengfeng Chronicles published the book *Local Cultural Relics in Dengfeng*, introducing all the properties that were later inscribed on the World Heritage List. The properties in this publication revolved around a central concept: the “Central Sacred Mountain.” However, there was no mention of the cosmological concept of the Center of Heaven and Earth. Even when introducing the sites that were now thought to be closely related to the Center of Heaven and Earth, such as the Observatory and Shaolin Temple, the book expended no words on any implicit cosmological meanings.

For example, *Local Cultural Relics in Dengfeng* says that Shaolin Temple “is famous for its accomplishment in the Chan sect of Buddhism and its Martial Art” (Official Editing Group of Dengfeng Chronicles 1985: 14); Shaolin’s Pagoda Forest has “the most Buddhism pagodas” (ibid.: 17); Songyue Temple Pagoda is “the oldest stone temple in existence, being unique in style” (ibid.: 28); and the Observatory “is one of the oldest observatories in China, as well as the most famous astronomical architecture in the world” (ibid.: 70).

This acclaim for the properties was reiterated in another publication released in 2008, particularly edited for the World Heritage nomination—*The Historic Monuments of Mount Songshan Reader* (S. Wang 2008). The purpose of the Reader was explicitly presented in its foreword, that is, “to develop the youths’ affection of their hometown, to make them understand the splendid historical architectural culture of Mount Songshan” (ibid.: 1). The book developed descriptions of the properties that were in accordance with World Heritage’s selection criteria, especially the emphasis on the site’s uniqueness. Shaolin Temple became “a long-term architectural and structural model for all other temples in China” (ibid.: 77).

In addition to having the “most pagodas,” Shaolin Temple’s Pagoda Forest became the “greatest ensemble of Buddhism pagodas in terms of scale, quantity, and value” (ibid.: 96); Songyue Temple Pagoda went from “unique” to “extremely creative in style for a Buddhist pagoda, being the ultimate example of a Chinese Buddhist pagoda” and “superior in both artistic and technical achievements” (ibid.: 62); the Observatory was

endowed with significance as “the sole example in existence” that represented a significant structural style in the history of architecture and science (ibid.: 147).

However, the Reader showed little interest in highlighting the notion of the “Center of Heaven and Earth.” Although it gave the monuments in Mount Songshan elevated meanings and valuations compared to the earlier descriptions as articulated in *Local Cultural Relics in Dengfeng*, it remained indifferent to the new overarching conceptualization itself. Except for one mention of this reconceptualization in its foreword, the remaining text merely used some ambivalent terms, such as “the Heaven’s Center” or “the Earth’s Center,” without a precise definition or articulation of this cosmological notion. This value judgment in the Reader was to a large extent consistent with SACH’s official nomination narrative claims. The publication date of the Reader was June 2008, when the original nomination dossier had been submitted but ICOMOS’s first response letter had not yet been prepared. At this particular time, the guiding discourse for the whole site was still mountain worship and sacredness, not cosmology.

When, and how, did the Mount Songshan (and environs) as the Center of Heaven and Earth become the dominant narrative widely accepted in Chinese culture? The transition occurred in parallel with the nomination. In March 2009, an official magazine published by SACH, *China Cultural Heritage*, created a special issue around the theme of the monuments of Mount Songshan. This issue was published on almost the same date that the second volume of supplementary information was submitted to ICOMOS (2 March 2009). Thus for the first time, the Center of Heaven and Earth became the principal association for the monuments in an official publication.

The volume’s introductory article primarily emphasized the monuments’ significance as being the center of, and superior to, not only the other four sacred mountains but also the world. “Yangcheng [now Dengfeng] was seen as the ‘Center of Heaven and Earth,’ because of which Mount Songshan [was] named ‘Central Sacred Mountain’ no later than [the] Zhou Dynasty” (Guo 2009: 10). Among the articles that covered all the nominated properties, only the introduction used the concept of the Center of Heaven and Earth, while the others retained the old narrative claim of mountain worship. Although there was no direct evidence showing that the introductory article had been rewritten due to the change of narrative in the nomination file, the new cosmological narrative emerged in domestic media soon after the narrative shift in the official nomination dossier.

One year later, on the second day after the World Heritage designation, *Zhengzhou Daily* published a special issue, introducing and affirming reconceptualization of Mount Songshan as Center of Heaven and Earth to the public. This special issue reflected immediate government action to initially disseminate the notion to the nation. It marked an official consolidation of the cosmological narrative as the guiding concept for understanding the site. The text stated:

Based on traditional Chinese cosmology, China is a country located at the center of heaven and earth, whose central area—the Central Plain—is centered in the city of Dengfeng. Therefore, the Dengfeng area became the capital of the early imperial dynasties and the cultural center, where a number of major religious schools including Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism originated. Also, the area was used for the scientific studies of astronomy and geography. Given this historical background, a considerable number of architectural structures emerged, among which the finest examples are the Historic Monuments of Dengfeng in the Center of Heaven and Earth. These World Heritage monuments all bear direct and certain witness to the traditional cosmology of the Center of Heaven and Earth. (*Zhengzhou Daily* 2010: 7)

The descriptions of individual properties in the special issue were identical to the third volume of supplementary information. As a result, the “newly rediscovered” cultural narratives of the monuments were homogeneously reformulated within the discursive frame of cosmology, a process of routinization and institutionalization.

For example, the *Zhengzhou Daily* article stated, “Songyue Temple Pagoda is a physical witness to Buddhism’s efforts to use the location of ‘The Centre of Heaven and Earth’ to extend its teachings [and] its influence”; “Shaolin Temple witnessed the Buddhist prosperity by establishing itself at the ‘Centre of Heaven and Earth,’ reinforcing and consolidating its influence, finally becoming the home of the largest Buddhist sect in China”; “Songyang Academy of Classical Learning is a landmark of the revival of Confucianism, the core component of the Chinese civilization, [and it] founded itself in the area of Mount Songshan because of the idea of the Center of Heaven and Earth.” The Dengfeng Observatory and Zhongong Sundial Platform received the highest praise in this report as “the product of the interaction between science and religion or politics, and the most direct and convincing evidence of the formation of ‘The Centre of Heaven and Earth’ cosmology” (ibid.: 7).

In Table 4.1, I compare the changing narrative claims for three key properties across the three abovementioned publications to show the stages of narrative transition before, during, and after the World Heritage designation.

Table 4.1. Narrative Change before, during, and after the World Heritage Designation

Property	<i>Local Cultural Relics in Dengfeng</i> (before designation, 1985)	<i>The Historic Monuments of Mount Songshan Reader</i> (during designation, 2008)	<i>Zhengzhou Daily's</i> special issue (after designation, 2010)
Shaolin Temple	famous for its accomplishment in the Chan sect of Buddhism and its martial arts	a long-term architectural and structural model for all other temples in China	witnessed Buddhist prosperity by establishing itself at the "Centre of Heaven and Earth"
Songyue Temple Pagoda	the oldest stone temple in existence, unique in style	superior in both artistic and technical achievements	a physical witness to Buddhism's efforts to use the location of the "Centre of Heaven and Earth"
The Observatory	one of the oldest observatories in China as well as the most famous astronomical architecture in the world	the sole example in existence representing an important specific structural style in the history of architecture and science	the most direct and convincing evidence of the formation of the "Centre of Heaven and Earth" cosmology

Of course, the narrative change would not necessarily be reflected materially in changes of the properties' physical structure. For example, in the case of Huishan Temple, the physical structure was not changed, but rather a historic figure, Monk Yi Xing (683–727), was reinvented first from a great monk, then to an outstanding astronomical scholar, and then finally to a figure of Chinese cosmology. In the early publication *Local Cultural Relics of Dengfeng*, Yi Xing was characterized as the creator of the Color-Glazed Pagoda in Huishan Temple, without further details about his biography (1985: 26). In the later Reader, "Monk Yi Xing was an outstanding astronomical scholar in China's science and technology history, with his achievements in astronomy, calendar, instrument, and mathematics being an honor for Mount Songshan" (S. Wang 2008: 122). Finally, in *Zhengzhou Daily*, his role was exalted into a central figure involved in the ancient Chinese cosmology of the Center of Heaven and Earth.

In short, in the first publication, Mount Songshan was honored as one of the Five Sacred Mountains. In the second, it became not only one of the five but also superior to the other four. In the third and last, mountain

worship associated with Songshan disappeared and, indeed, so did the other four sacred mountains.

Having official sanction, the Center of Heaven and Earth narrative soon emerged across the media and spread with strong official efforts. An officially produced documentary, released in September 2010, was focused on the narrative, even starting with the title, *The Center of Heaven and Earth: The Central Sacred Mountain Songshan* (Henan Luyou Shipin Wang 2010). The script, using geological accounts looking back into the farthest antiquity, explicitly asserted Mount Songshan's significance of "centerness" in cosmology; it emerged geologically at the center of, and temporally earlier than, all the other mountains. The mountain was called "the ancestor of ten thousand mountains." With this articulation from a geological and historical perspective, the authorities were able to constitute, spread, and reinforce the cosmological narrative with empirical evidence derived from natural and scientific spheres.

These purposes were explicitly manifested in the publication of the book *Journey to Mount Songshan* in early 2011, a milestone for the conceptual expansion from cosmological to geological explanations for the Center of Heaven and Earth. Its author, Zhou Kunshu, a geologist, was portrayed by official media as a pioneer who had found the empirical evidence that demonstrated the affinity of the geological and natural components of Mount Songshan to its cosmological representativeness. According to a report in *Zhengzhou Daily*, the book provided a scientific approach to the primordial role of Center of Heaven and Earth as the foundation of Chinese cultural identity and the core of Chinese civilization. The book was recognized and acclaimed as a remarkable theoretical breakthrough for the concept of the Center of Heaven and Earth and beneficial for the concept's public adoption (Li 2011).

The Center of Heaven and Earth narrative has been powerful in nonheritage fields. Shortly after its designation, the narrative had a part in diplomatic affairs. In October 2010, Henan province hosted the sixth annual event named "Foreign Ambassadors to Henan's World Heritage." The Historic Monuments of Dengfeng in the "Center of Heaven and Earth" became a star in this event. In the opening ceremony, director-general of the Henan Bureau of Cultural Relics Chen Ailan delivered a welcome speech, introducing the monuments as "the true embodiment of the unique cosmology and aesthetics of ancient Chinese people" (Chen 2011: 33–34).

By 2015, more than five years after the designation, the Center of Heaven and Earth had become popular knowledge. Advertisement boards are everywhere along the highway; an automobile company selected it as its new brand name; a local comic book contest was named after it. If you search Tiandizhizhong (the Center of Heaven and Earth) on baidu.com,

the Chinese equivalent of Google.com, you will get 9.7 million hits, and the old concept Zhongyue (Central Sacred Mountain), 9.2 million hits. Within a few years, we have seen an originally unknown term rising to become a popular star in public discourse.

The Institutional Transmitter of Cultural Memory

How can a long-lasting cultural memory of a historic site be replaced with another one that is framed with an entirely distinct narrative theme within a very short period? We can understand the narrative shift by using Aleda Assmann's (2010) theory of cultural memory. As she suggests, cultural memory entails different dimensions, primarily composed of a cultural working memory—canon and cultural reference memory—archive. The narrative shift for Mount Songshan's monuments reflects the malleability of memory and how distinct frameworks of memory can easily be reformulated. In particular, cultural working memory has been replaced by cultural reference memory in the nomination process, a dynamic process of a series of contingent institutional and cultural communications, tensions, negotiations, articulations, and presentations.

A more fundamental mechanism, however, lies outside the narrative frameworks. Cultural memory is institutionalized, not only in the way that it has to be officially sanctioned and routinized with certain forms of narrative and practice but also due to exogenous forces that engage in diffusing an institutionalized framework for creating narrative.

Canon and Archive

According to Assmann, cultural memory consists of cultural messages that are employed for repetition and reuse (ibid.: 99). She has distinguished two types of cultural memory—canon and archive. While the canon refers to the cultural memory that is actively circulated, “destined to repeatedly be reread, appreciated, staged, performed, and commented,” the archive refers to the cultural memory that is stored and has little immediate connection to the present.

Assmann suggests that canon does not automatically appear. Rather, it is produced through a process called “canonization,” in which a small number of texts and interpretations are “selected” and “valued” with particular meanings. A direct reflection of canonization is the efforts of nation-states to produce and sustain patriotic narratives about the national past as manifested in monuments and ceremonies. By contrast, on

the other end of the spectrum, unselected texts are excluded from the capsule of cultural messages, constituting the storehouse of cultural memory, the archive, and these “traces” of the past fade, having “lost their original place in life” (ibid.: 103).

However, the canon and the archive are not fixed in time; they are *inter-convertible*. The archive serves as a rich repertoire for the canon. Its stored messages can be used to redirect the working memory’s discursive frame. Both the archive and the canon are open to change, depending on external contexts. Canon can be restored to become archive, and certain messages of the archive can be reselected as part of the canon. As Assmann puts it, “Elements of the canon can also recede into the archive, while elements of the archive may be recovered and reclaimed for the canon. It is exactly this interdependence of the different realms and functions that creates the dynamics of cultural memory and keeps its energy flowing” (ibid.: 104–5).

Assmann’s conceptual distinction is consistent with the two narrative frames associated with the meaning of the historic monuments in Mount Songshan. The mountain worship narrative had long been the canon that endured to be repeated and sanctioned as the official cultural memory of Mount Songshan, whereas cosmological associations were cataloged in the archive. Also, analogous to Assmann’s thesis that the responsibility of academic research is “to examine the contents of the archive and to reclaim the information by framing it within a new context,” the monuments’ underpinning cosmological meaning was unraveled and “reclaimed” by heritage authorities and scholars.

It was explicitly elaborated in later volumes of the nomination dossier that, although the term “Center of Heaven and Earth” seemed new to the public, the cultural message embedded in this term was something that had been stored and preserved in the historical archive. Therefore, the Center of Heaven and Earth was not an “invented” tradition. Instead, it was “rediscovered” traditional knowledge that bore direct witness to the dynamics of cultural memory. The narrative shift reflected what we could call the “recanonicalization” of the cultural reference memory with the selection of particular stored historical sources. Moreover, this archived cosmological knowledge had never faded.

According to the nomination files, mountain worship was primarily practiced and remembered by the masses, while the monuments’ cosmological meanings were only displayed in academic works by elites and scholars. Thus, to some extent, cultural memory is durable because it resides not only within the sanctioned and legitimized official narratives but also within a set of institutional archives that store and preserve the “cultural sources” that can later be unfolded and given a “second life.”

The World Heritage nomination was not the first time that the canon and the archive of the monuments' cultural memory were interchanged. An earlier shift occurred a number of centuries ago. According to the third volume of supplementary information, the Center of Heaven and Earth as a substantial cosmological thought had faded away in public memory since the introduction of modern technology and scientific theories between the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, the time that we can now mark as the first canon-archive switch. Because of this transition, mountain worship acquired the status of canon while cosmology was archived. Now the two narrative claims have experienced their second switch.

The Communicativeness of Cultural Memory

In spite of the distinction, the canon and the archive share common characteristics with cultural memory, in comparison to other forms of memory. Jan Assmann distinguishes cultural memory from communicative memory by suggesting that while the former is institutionalized via a "high degree of formation" and "formalized language(s)," the latter is formed through and committed to everyday communication (2010: 117). But this statement may mislead us to conclude that cultural memory is not communicative, while Assmann maintained that, in spite of its terminological differentiation from communicative memory, cultural memory is also communicative. It is "maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance)" (Assmann 2011: 213). Whereas communicative memory is derived from interpersonal and oral communication, cultural memory is based on a more formalized communication between institutions.

This communicativeness of cultural memory was manifested during the production of narrative claims related to the Historic Monuments of Mount Songshan. Value justifications for the monuments were reiterated through the process of organizational negotiations between SACH and ICOMOS. Without the repeated requests from ICOMOS for further evidence, the concept of the Center of Heaven and Earth would never have been so sophisticatedly and comprehensively developed and constituted. Therefore, cultural memory embodied in material heritage depends partially on institutional communications. World Heritage serves as an "institutional mnemonic transmitter," facilitating and promoting discursive production via technical connection. Indeed, in world society, the institutional communication of cultural memory is internationally framed. Global forces have become increasingly crucial in the making of a nation-state's cultural memory in certain fields.

Institutionalization of World Heritage

We have examined, above, the mechanism of communication that frames cultural memory. However, we are still unsure how the communication is shaped, constituted, and even controlled by the involved actors. How do the nature and role of the involved agencies influence the communication? To answer this question, we need to unravel the nature and role of the World Heritage program first.

World Heritage, or in a broader sense the Global Heritage Community, is what John Meyer et al. define as a kind of institution with “a set of cultural rules that give generalized meaning to social activity and regulate it in a patterned way” (2009 [1987]: 85). The narrative shift of a heritage site to fit the World Heritage selection criteria, in addition, reflects a process of institutionalization that makes “such sets of rules seem natural and taken for granted while eliminating alternative interpretations and regulations” (ibid.).

The result of the institutionalization of cultural memory in World Heritage is not only the emergence of what Barthel-Bouchier calls a “community,” but more precisely a “World Heritage Regime.” The term “regime” is derived from an analogous term “world environmental regime” employed by Meyer et al. (2009 [1997]). It is defined as “a partially integrated collection of world-level organizations, understandings, and assumptions” (ibid.: 223). Similarly, I define World Heritage Regime as a set of world-level organizations, understandings, and assumptions that specify, regulate, and sometimes enforce the cultural and institutional rules by which narratives of particular heritage sites are framed and managed.

The rules are authoritative and legitimized with the acts of listing as well as unlisting. The principal difference between a community and a regime is that while a community is constituted on the inclusion of factors like common interests, agendas, and narratives, a regime is primarily empowered by the exclusion of alternatives that are inconsistent with so-called universalistic values, namely the general goods and truths of human rights, world peace, equality, and so on.

In addition, the World Heritage Regime is softly scripted rather than strictly coercive. Though postcolonialism theorists may suggest that World Heritage acts as a hegemonic power that constructs and controls heritage domains in nation-states with a central/periphery relationship, it is better characterized as a discursive arena imbued with negotiations and reconciliations. Taking the example of the Historic Monuments of Mount Songshan, there were clearly other options for China when it received the second response from ICOMOS. It could insist on what it proposed in

the first two versions of the nomination dossier, that is, that Mount Songshan's worship was central to the value of the monuments.

Or it could have simply withdrawn the nomination. As Smith observes, local authorities of heritage are strongly able to resist exogenously imposed heritage knowledge from international experts. However, SACH's choice was a third one: to modify the narrative and even change the nomination title to conform to ICOMOS's requests. As a powerful agent of cultural memory, why was SACH so cooperative in this case?

Meyer et al. have noted, "International organizations often posture as objective disinterested others who help nation-state pursue their exogenously derived goals . . . Resistance to world models is difficult because nation-states are formally committed, as a matter of identity, to such self-evident goals" (1997: 160). This account reveals two main sources of the authoritative and powerful role of ICOMOS within the World Heritage Regime: an institutional source and a discursive source, both of which provide accounts for the enthusiastic participation in, and cooperation with, global nongovernmental heritage organizations by China and many other nation-states.

The institutional power lies in the organizational authority, established and reinforced with ICOMOS's role in making world peace and keeping moral order. That is, the preservation of historic sites and monuments (especially those in third world countries) makes substantial and humanistic contributions to the general goods of the world. Consisting of heritage experts from different disciplines and countries, this organization is profoundly framed with, and appreciated for, its transnational and nonpolitical posture. In this sense, ICOMOS rhetorically constitutes a "nonpolitical political correctness." Therefore, to display its conformity with the general good and this "nonpolitical political correctness," the States Parties have no choice but to carry out their best efforts to nominate and manage World Heritage with the standardized "scripts" provided and evaluated by ICOMOS.

Any act, either rejection or withdrawal, may be seen as a violation of the commonly accepted moral order, which may further challenge the States Parties' reputation and identity in the World Heritage system. Indeed, World Heritage nomination and evaluation are rhetorically a ritual. In the performance of the ritual, by practicing formalized textual and contextual procedures, the involved agents are endowed with legitimacy and identity.

Also, at the organizational level, ICOMOS functions as a judge for domestic conflict-ridden relationships. For example, it played an authoritative role in reconciling the administrative tension in Mount Songshan's nomination. If we see this tension as a competition between different dis-

cursive frames of cultural memory for official recognition, the final judge in this case is ICOMOS, an exogenous organization. For SACH, the best way to solve its competition with the MOC was not to seek legitimacy through the State Council or the Party, but to gain official recognition by ICOMOS. Because World Heritage is associated with the making of the “national image,” any failure of nomination will affect this image. Therefore, heritage authorities had no choice but to change the title to increase the possibility of being designated.

ICOMOS is also empowered by its discursive source. It is derived from a set of rationalized scientific languages and practices, perceived by the world society as common interests that transcend national and cultural boundaries. The core component of this source lies in the professionalization and institutionalization of the discourse of science, including terms, methods, logics, and agendas for worldwide expansion. The scientific interpretation of heritage sites enables those holding the expertise to be authoritative and powerful. With the authority and power, they are able to define the acts of preservation, presentation, and exhibition, among others. They constitute a world epistemic community, through which certain collective knowledge, narratives, and practices of heritage are disseminated to influence policies and management at the state level.

Analogous with the concept of nature, cultural heritage is “scientifically rationalized” with the frame of professional discourse on the value of heritage. As Askew puts it, the World Heritage List “derives one potent level of legitimacy from its apparently scientific scheme of classification (criteria of significance) and by virtue of the technical procedures employed to designate significance, develop sites and instigate plans to ensure particular standards of preservation” (Askew 2010: 39). In the case of Mount Songshan, for example, even the ritually organized and inherited practice of mountain worship has to be reformulated with scientific terms. The rationalized languages, methods, and standards serve as the only approach to the merits of the World Heritage Regime. To secure its position within the regime, every heritage site must be evaluated based on standardized criteria because the criteria are easily managed in the discourse of science. Cultural memory embedded in this type of heritage, therefore, is also scientific.

With institutional and discursive legitimacy, World Heritage has been regarded as one of the most prominent programs to endeavor to create human peace and promote global equity for the general good. If this were true, World Heritage would have achieved its purposes of universalism. However, in spite of the ostensible institutional and discursive merits, to what extent is World Heritage genuinely perceived as “World” heritage by the masses? How is the institutionalized cultural memory of a heritage

site interpreted by people from different cultures? Do they use the language provided by UNESCO, or do they interpret heritage with their own peculiar narratives? The following chapter, examining the cosmopolitan memory of the Great Wall, will address these questions.

Notes

1. Mount Taishan, designated in 1987, was among the first six World Heritage Sites in China.
2. In addition to Mount Taishan (also called East Sacred Mountain) and Mount Songshan (Central Sacred Mountain), the other three sacred mountains are Mount Hengshan (North), Mount Huashan (West), and Mount Hengshan (South).
3. Some remarks between the two agencies are contradictory. Based on my interview with an insider of both nominations, it was hard to tell which side was right.
4. As of November 2011, there were twenty-eight mixed properties on the World Heritage List. China has four sites, with Mount Taishan being the first one.
5. By 2016, the Five Sacred Mountains nominated by MOC is still on the tentative list.
6. Interview with a respondent who worked at the Dengfeng Bureau of Cultural Relics.
7. The meeting does not release official minutes. All the provided information was based on the respondent's notebook records. The other two options were the Center of Heaven and Earth—the Historic Monuments of Dengfeng and the Historic Monuments of Dengfeng.
8. Interview with a respondent from the Dengfeng Bureau of Cultural Relics.
9. Criterion 3 is “to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared,” and Criterion 6 is “to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.”

5



The Great Wall

From Ethnic Boundary to Cosmopolitan Memory

World Heritage is a cosmopolitan law and a cosmopolitan project.
—Jan Turtinen, “Globalising Heritage—On UNESCO and
the Transnational Construction of a World Heritage”

The preceding two chapters focused on how the concept of “heritage” is constituted and constitutive in particular sites. In this chapter, I will explore the role of “world”: to what extent is World Heritage really “world” Heritage? I choose the example of the Great Wall.

The Two Great Walls: Exclusive versus Inclusive

According to UNESCO’s official description, the Great Wall¹ “is an outstanding and unique example of a military architectural ensemble which served a single strategic purpose for 2,000 years” (UNESCO 1987). In other words, its core value lies in its role as a defensive system against invasion from the outside, especially the non-Han “barbarians.” However, this single role was contested by an opposing narrative of cultural exchange and integration, which emerged during the early twentieth century and further resulted in a discursive sublimation such that the Great Wall was said to represent “the spirit of the Chinese nation as a whole” (Luo 2008: 25). Simply put, there are two Great Walls: (1) the Great Wall that is defensive, exclusive, and conservative; and (2) the Great Wall that is expan-



Figure 5.1. Badaling section of the Great Wall

sive, inclusive, and open. Before we can understand how World Heritage shapes the Great Wall's contemporary narratives, we need to explore the dynamics of these two narratives.

Ethnic Barrier

The Great Wall's usage as a barrier between the Han Chinese and the so-called non-Han barbarians of the north has both a material and a symbolic dimension. As Carlos Rojas puts it, since as early as the Han Dynasty, the Wall began to be perceived not only as a physical boundary but also as a symbolic marker of the Han's political boundary (2010: 75). Although militarily the Great Wall did not function as expected, its role as a cultural marker between civilization and barbarism was enduring throughout imperial China. As Arthur Waldron (1995) suggests, this narrative reveals an ancient Chinese worldview, which distinguished the Central Plains from other territorial powers by centering itself in the world and by despising the Others, such as Mongolians and Manchus, as barbarians. This culturalism-barbarism prejudice was extensively documented in wall-building archives. For example, in 1547, the commander of wall building asserted that the construction would establish a barrier "separating 'the Chinese and the barbarians.'" Fortress names, many still in use today, often reflect this prejudice, for example, "Overawing the Goat-like Barbarians."

The Great Wall as a barrier did not fit the narrative of cultural superiority when it was later thought to represent China's cultural stagnancy and conservatism. In 1925, Lu Xun published an article titled "The Great Wall," in which he maintained that the Wall had cost many lives to construct but had never successfully defended the Central Plains against barbarian attacks. He used the Great Wall as a metaphor for the tenacity of traditional culture (Lu Xun 1973 [1925]: 63). Lu Xun wrote, "Actually, all it has ever done is to work many conscripts to death—never kept out the Huns . . . I am always conscious of being surrounded by the Great Wall . . . A curse on this wonderful Great Wall!" (translation quoted in Schwarcz 1984: 457).

As one of modern China's "most famous and most radical modern writers," Lu Xun was an important representative of modern China's antitraditionalist intellectuals. The Great Wall served as a symbol to "remind his countrymen of mental boundaries far more entrenched than emperors, or capitalists or landlords" (Schwarcz 1984: 457). Cursing the Great Wall from a domestic angle, according to Vera Schwarcz, critical intellectuals "refuse to place the blame for China's backwardness on outside aggressors" (ibid.: 455).

This negative narrative lasted until the 1980s. In 1988, one year after the World Heritage designation, a tremendously influential documentary *He Shang* (River Elegy) was broadcasted on a state-run TV station (then promptly banned). The documentary accused the Great Wall of being responsible for imperial China's stagnancy and isolation.

If the Great Wall could speak, it would very frankly tell its Chinese grandchildren that it is a great and tragic gravestone forged by historical destiny . . . it can only represent an isolationist, conservative and incompetent defense and a cowardly lack of aggression . . . Alas, O Great Wall, why do we still want to praise you? (Lovell 2006: 334)

In addition to the image of isolation, the Great Wall was also portrayed as a reflection of imperial China's oppressive political system. Archeologists have demonstrated that many pre-Qin (prior to BCE 221) walls were built by the fragmented states in the Central Plains, to defend themselves not from northern barbarians but from each other (Rojas 2010: 69). They were used as a strategic state apparatus for domestic control and internal hegemony. Negative views of the Great Wall emerged during the early Han Dynasty, when Sima Qian completed his classic *Shi Ji* (Records of the Historian), which said the wall building was an embodiment of political despotism (Sima 1959 [BCE 91]: 2565–70).

National Symbol

Regardless of its representation of either cultural superiority or domestic oppression, the Great Wall was seen as a pure Han Chinese product until the early twentieth century. This role was changed during the nation-building process in the Republican era, when the previous ethnic barbarians became incorporated into the newly invented Chinese nation.

Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925), the leader of China's Republican Revolution of 1911, which overthrew the last imperial dynasty,² was the first Chinese figure to characterize the Great Wall as a historic icon of the formation of modern Chinese national identity. Sun rearticulated the historically anchored culturalism-barbarism dichotomy. In order to assimilate the ethnic minorities into the newly established Republic of China, Sun searched for a physical representation that could symbolize ethnic unification. The Great Wall, for the first time in Chinese history, acquired its cultural superiority by including, instead of excluding. Sun described the Great Wall as the greatest of all engineering feats in China and elevated it by assigning it the cultural function of ethnic assimilation:

China's most famous work of land-based engineering is its Great Wall . . . If we Chinese hadn't had the protection of the Great Wall, China would have

been conquered by the northern barbarians during the Han, long before the Song or the Ming, and the Chinese race would not have flourished and developed as it did during the Han and Tang, and assimilated the peoples of the south. And after our country had fully developed its powers of assimilation, we were able even to assimilate our conquerors, the Mongols and the Manchu. (Sun 1998 [1919], translation adapted from Lovell 2006: 302)

This narrative of ethnic unity was given more prominence during the war against Japan. Between 1931 and 1933, a number of battles alongside the Great Wall³ evoked nationalism around China. Though none of these battles helped, in a practical sense, to resist the Japanese advancement into the inner mainland, the Great Wall as a symbol gained reinforced and extraordinary national significance through poems, films, songs, and articles. In 1936, the writer Wu Boxiao expressed his affection for the Great Wall in an essay, in which he sincerely regretted “never seeing the Great Wall” (1995 [1936]: 198). “I hate myself,” he added, for he “can’t fly there like a bird” (ibid.: 200). He wrote that the Great Wall should be “a symbol of a civilized nation with more than four thousand years history, not because it stands for the First Emperor’s grand accomplishment, but because it is a crystallization of millions of ancient Chinese people’s blood and flesh” (ibid.: 199). In the end, he wrote that he was hoping to visit the Great Wall to greet those strong “Chinese people” (ibid.: 201).

On 7 July 1937, the Japanese troops initiated the Marco Polo Bridge incident and advanced on downtown Beijing. The enemy’s possession of Beijing, and the atrocities in Nanking⁴ that occurred later that year, ultimately and radically expanded nationalistic sentiment in China. For a film titled *Guanshan Wanli* (Ten Thousand Li⁵ of Mountains and Passes),⁶ a theme song was composed for the Great Wall, which later became a nationwide favorite and is still widely appreciated today.

The 10,000-*li* Great Wall is 10,000 *li* long,
Beyond the Great Wall lies our homeland.
The hearts of our 400,000,000 compatriots are as one,
The new Great Wall is 10,000 *li* long.
(China Great Wall Society 1994: 901, translation adapted from Lovell 2006: 312)

“Beyond the Great Wall lies our homeland.” This lyric marked the completion of the Great Wall’s first narrative transformation, from an ethnic boundary to a symbol of national solidarity.

Since 1949, additional events have consolidated the Wall’s role as national symbol. After the Cultural Revolution, the protection of the Great Wall became more tightly linked to patriotism. In September 1984, Deng Xiaoping launched a nationwide campaign named “Love China, Restore Our Great Wall.” Hundreds of thousands of people were mobilized and

organized, and millions of dollars were raised, drawing massive attention from the public. The famous slogan “Love China, Restore Our Great Wall” has been employed as a motto not only for Great Wall preservation but also for many other protective projects in contemporary China. More recently, in 2014, Xi Jinping launched another restoration movement, calling the Wall “the spiritual representation of the Chinese nation” and demanding more intensive conservation for the sites.

Going Global

After 1949, at the same time that the Great Wall’s value in national patriotism was being increasingly consolidated, the Wall also gained a new role related to global friendship. In the 1950s, some important passes through the Wall were in a bad state of conservation and needed repair. Deputy premier Guo Moruo proposed to restore the sections, especially Badaling, in order to show the spirit of the newly founded People’s Republic to the world (Figure 5.1). The Badaling section was later used as a site for diplomatic visitors. In 1954, Jawaharlal Nehru, India’s prime minister, accompanied by China’s premier Zhou Enlai, visited Badaling, becoming the first foreign state leader at the Great Wall. The Great Wall thus, for the first time, developed a role in global relations.

The Great Wall’s value in international friendship was reinforced by the icebreaking diplomatic visit of Richard Nixon in 1972. Nixon’s visit not only represented normalization between China and the United States but also led to a relational transition between China and the world (Zhao 2001: 668). Nixon highly extolled the Great Wall as a construction by a great people: “A people that can build a wall like this certainly have a great past to be proud of, and a people who have this kind of a past must also have a great future” (Schechter 1972: 16). Nixon’s remark has since influenced the domestic narrative regarding the Great Wall. Using acclaim from the outside, the Chinese were able to forge a link between the Wall and national identity. By 2016, more than 400 foreign state leaders had visited the site, including Ronald Reagan, Mikhail Gorbachev, Elizabeth II, Margaret Thatcher, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, Boris Yeltsin, George W. Bush, Vladimir Putin, and Barack Obama. According to the Badaling website, “The age-old great wall, lit up with the bloom of youth, shoulders a new historical mission to give voice to the world in its unique modes that the Chinese people love peace and cherish friendship.”⁷ China is proud of another record related to the Great Wall: in 2002, Badaling received the Guinness record for a “scenic spot receiving the largest number of tourists in the world” and a “scenic spot receiving the largest number of foreign heads of state and heads of government.”

After Deng Xiaoping launched Chinese economic reform in 1979, external recognition became an increasingly large part of the formation of national identity. For example, an image of the Great Wall now adorns China's foreign visas. More appealing is the giant tapestry portraying the site, which is 5 × 10 meters and weighs six hundred pounds, that China presented to the United Nations in 1974. Instead of its original function of defense, the Great Wall is now used more as a symbol of China's endeavors toward peace making and openness. As then foreign minister Qiao Guanhua said at the presentation ceremony, the gift embodied "the new outlook and new style of the new China" (Teltsch 1974: 43).

The "Others'" Role in Narrative Construction

Nixon's high acclaim was not new. It was derived from long-existing Western notions about the Great Wall. In fact, the West has played an indispensable role in the narrative transformation: those who made the Great Wall "great" were the Westerners (Lovell 2006; Waldron 1992). The greatness of the Great Wall is believed to have originated in the imaginations and writings of Western missionaries, travelers, and intellectuals. In Western records,⁸ the Great Wall of China began to be characterized as a mythical masterpiece by the end of the seventeenth century. In 1655, a Jesuit, Martino Martini, claimed to actually visit the Wall and he says that he thought of it as a continuous, entirely stone-built structure. He misidentified the Wall he saw as the one built thousands of years ago (Waldron 1992: 206). He celebrated, saying, "It exceeds three hundred German leagues in length . . . The work is magnificent, huge, and admirable, and has lasted right up to the present time without any injury or destruction" (quoted in Lovell 2006: 266). Accompanying Martini's erroneous accounts, another astronomer and missionary, Verbiest, asserted in his diary, "The seven wonders of the world put together are not comparable to this work; and all that Fame hath published concerning it among the *Europeans*, comes far short of what I myself have seen" (ibid., italics in original). Even the name "the Great Wall" was an exogenous creation. As Lovell finds, historically, Western observation of the Chinese walls transitioned from "a tremendous wall" (1616), "this famous wall" (1681), "that prodigious wall" (1683), "this great Wall" (1693) to "the GREAT WALL" (1738; 2006: 273).

A pivotal event came in June 1793, when Lord Macartney, a diplomat, led an embassy dispatched by King George III to China.⁹ Macartney and his companions undertook a tour at the Gubeikou pass of the Great Wall, and he later reflected on the structures he saw: "It is carried on in a cur-

vilinear direction often over the steepest highest and craggiest mountains as I observed in several places, and measures upwards of one thousand five hundred miles in length." Astonished by what he saw, Macartney characterized the wall as "the most stupendous work of human hands" (1803: 243).

However, according to Macartney, the Chinese themselves showed little interest in this architectural masterpiece. As he observed at the Wall, while he and his party diligently counted the bricks, their Chinese guides "appeared rather uneasy and impatient at the length of our stay upon it. They were astonished at our curiosity" (ibid.: 244). Macartney was very confused by the fact that so few Chinese had visited the site. Then how have the Chinese people become interested in the Great Wall's "greatness?" Waldron argues that the Western praises of the Great Wall were not "translated" into Chinese until Sun Yat-sen's aforementioned seminal work. Sun was educated in mission schools in Hawaii and Hong Kong, where his thoughts were inevitably influenced by Western ideas.¹⁰

Narratives of the Great Wall in the West have been diverse since the beginning. For instance, Voltaire presented a paradox while depicting the Great Wall. In his adulations, he exclaimed that the Great Wall "simply leaves [the monuments of other nations] all behind in the dust" (quoted in Lovell 2006: 277), but later he portrayed its uselessness and said it "had not been able to defend the Empire" (quoted in Waldron 1992: 207). The negative narrative was not about the site itself but about the Chinese people during late imperial period, for they were unable to restore the nation's heyday, the time when the Great Wall was built.

In the late nineteenth century, Western visitors became more comfortable explicitly expressing their sense of cultural and scientific superiority when mentioning the Great Wall. In 1861, a British army doctor and traveler, George Fleming, visited China and obtained from the local British consulate a passport to travel over the Great Wall. Before seeing the wall, Fleming was frustrated by almost everything he experienced in China: Chinese smells were "revoltingly vile." Chinese villages were "wretched." The China of the time was seen by him as a country that "exercised but little influence in modifying or directing the progress of either the antique or modern world" (1863: 181). But the Great Wall remarkably changed Fleming's tone. By identifying himself as a person of Western civilization, he labeled the Great Wall as the "world-famed barrier whose wonders have been sounded for centuries in the West . . . There could be no hesitation now in consoling ourselves for the suspense we had endured" (ibid.: 287). Furthermore, he admitted that "even to a Westerner, who has seen some of the triumphs of nineteenth century engineering . . . it seems all but im-

possible that any people could set themselves down to the performance of so monstrous a difficulty" (ibid.: 332–33).

Perhaps the most influential negative statement is Karl Marx's depiction of the Great Wall as a representation of an obstacle to China's economic and social modernization. Marx wrote in 1850, "The Chinese Wall [functions as] the gates that lead to the seat of primeval reaction and conservatism" (1968 [1850]: 45).

The Great Wall's role in domestic oppression also appeared in Western writings. In a piece of short fiction published by Franz Kafka named "The Great Wall of China," the Great Wall embodied an imagined and gigantic—but invisible—political institution implemented by the Chinese emperor, who, like a parent, ruled his kingly domain by putting his lax, uneducated, and unpredictable people into motion. The emperor is invisible but powerful in both physical and symbolic dimensions. The land "is so huge, that no fairy tale can adequately deal with its size. Heaven hardly covers it all. And Peking is only a point, the imperial palace only a tiny dot" (Kafka 1931). Kafka realizes that the Great Wall's real power lies not in its physical ability to prevent external invasion but in its symbolic representation, which facilitates the integration and hegemony of the Chinese empire (Rojas 2010: 36).

Whether portrayed as an icon of greatness or of failure, the Great Wall was seen as a site within China's national boundary. It was China's Great Wall. However, after 1987, the year of its World Heritage designation, the Great Wall transcended this national border. It became the Great Wall of the World.

The Great Wall as World Heritage

The year 1987 was a critical year for the Great Wall's narrative transformation from national icon to global property. The China Great Wall Society was founded, and William Lindesay, now perhaps the most active and widely known international preservationist for the Great Wall, visited the Wall for the first time (Rojas 2010: 143). The most decisive moment came in December, when UNESCO added the Great Wall to the World Heritage List.

World Heritage status since 1987 has improved almost every aspect of the Great Wall's preservation and enhancement. As required by UNESCO, China submitted a periodic report on the Great Wall in 2003, which listed the achievements since 1987. In 2006, a series of protection regulations were promulgated, including the Regulations on the Protection of the Great Wall, being the first state-level regulations on the protection



Figure 5.2. A Chinese national flag at the Badaling section of the Great Wall

of a single cultural heritage site. Improvements were made to the Wall's protective management, which included academic studies, seminars, and efforts at environmental protection. Publicity was strengthened in order to disseminate heritage knowledge, which promoted public awareness of the Great Wall. Public institutions such as the Great Wall Museum were established to promote relevant education. Students were organized to carry out a project named "Loving the Chinese Nation and Knowing the Great Wall," and the Great Wall started to appear conspicuously in Children's Day celebrations, adulthood ceremonies, young pioneer ceremonies, summer camps, and knowledge contests (SACH 2003: 15). By 2000, the Badaling section had launched its official website on the internet (ibid.: 12).

Also, the Great Wall has become more mysterious. For example, it used to have the mystique of being the only human-made structure that could be seen from the moon. A 1923 *National Geographic* article stated, "According to astronomers, the only work of man's hands which would be visible to the human eye from the moon is the Great Wall of China" (Warwick 1923: 113). The value justification provided by the Chinese authorities and sanctioned by ICOMOS and UNESCO legitimized this statement. According to the justification text for Criterion 1, the Great Wall is the "only work built by human hands on this planet that can be seen from the moon." In spite of the obvious lack of evidence and an honest negation in 2003 by

Yang Liwei, China's first earth-orbiting astronaut, this myth still remained in the periodic report of the same year, which reiterated, "From the moon, the Great Wall is the only human-built architecture recognizable with naked eyes" (SACH 2003: 146).

A more impressive discursive impact of the World Heritage status lies in the articulation of universality. The value justification of the Great Wall represented its role not only as a Chinese property but also as a global treasure. This new "knowledge" was widely spread among some 120 delegates, including 12 foreign experts, during the September 1994 International Symposium on the Great Wall, held in Beijing (Waldron 1995: 844). The official purpose for the seminar was to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Deng's campaign "Love China, Restore Our Great Wall." A compelling result of this seminar, as indicated by Waldron, entailed the emergence of new narratives of the Great Wall, among which the narrative of the Wall's role as a symbol of international friendship drew much attention from the Chinese public. And for the first time, the Great Wall appeared in Chinese writings accessible to the public as a cultural treasure not only belonging to China but also to the world, dramatically altering the Chinese mindset regarding the Wall. During the meeting, the delegates attended a musical titled *Ode to the Great Wall*, which was staged "with an emblem that incorporated a stylized stretch of crenelated wall into the character *ai* (love)" and highlighted "friendship and commerce as symbolized by camel bells tinkling along the Silk Road" (ibid.: 847).

The international symposium was part of a series of endeavors to transform Wall narratives. In an issue of *China Today* published in the same year, China's former foreign minister Huang Hua wrote that the Great Wall served as a "meeting point" for cultural communications between China and foreign countries. He concluded, based on this, that the Wall promoted China's friendly relationships with other nations (Huang 1994).

Furthermore, in 2003, the "Circular on Making Further Efforts on the Protection and Management of the Great Wall" (SACH 2009 [2003]c) reiterated the universal value of the Great Wall. According to the circular, the Great Wall "not only represents Chinese fine culture, . . . but it also constitutes an important part of the cultural heritage of all human beings" (SACH 2009 [2003]c: 477). The website of the China Great Wall Society explicitly states that the Great Wall is a cultural treasure not only of the Chinese civilization but also of the whole of human society (China Great Wall Society 2005). Also, Sun Zhisheng, one of the founders of the China Great Wall Society, published an article on the Great Wall. Sun cited the many expressions of appreciation by foreign leaders at their visits to the Wall and concluded that in the twenty-first century, "the Great Wall is not only a representation of the Chinese nation, but also that of the whole

human civilization and peace in the earth. All mankind will benefit from this precious cultural heritage" (Sun 2009: 29).

As I have shown in Chapter 2, China's commitment to the world cultural model is in fact a tactic to reinforce national identity and nationalism. Similarly and seemingly paradoxically, the claim of the Great Wall's global status has provided China with a discursive device to strengthen the Chinese-ness of the Wall. According to Waldron, some presentations at the 1994 International Symposium reflected the blurring relationship between scholarship and patriotism. Some Chinese scholars of the Great Wall even tended to pull together incompatible elements to articulate the Wall's mythical continuity and singularity. Even holding the symposium itself was a strategy employed by the state to create a link between the Wall's international reputation and its national importance.

The "new" narrative of the Great Wall's representation of international friendship was an approach to strengthen the discourse of state-led nationalism; it was intended to aid a shift from Communist-based to non-Communist-based language so that China could be reincorporated into world society. Therefore, the Wall "has to" simultaneously play an international and a domestic role, mostly for the purposes of constructing regime legitimacy. The more it is appreciated internationally, the more the Great Wall becomes domestically enshrined.

The rhetorical affinity between the Chinese-ness and the universality was especially manifested in 2008, as the Great Wall was characterized as a symbol of China's contribution to world peace. In that year, a giant sign was erected on the Badaling section: "One World, One Dream" — the motto of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. By displaying this symbol at the Great Wall, the Chinese government intended to associate the Great Wall's physical embodiment with a cosmopolitan representation of the world. The sign revealed that the whole world seemed to be crystalized among the zigzag passages of the fortification. On 7 August 2008, one day before the opening ceremony, after a long and controversial journey around the world, the Olympic torch arrived at its last stop before entering the main stadium in Beijing. The official website of Badaling recorded this moment:

In the morning of 7 August 2008, Beijing time, the most visible Olympic torch finally arrived at the foot of Badaling, the most representative portion of Great Wall, Beijing, the host city, after going through 21 countries and regions, and 113 cities and sacred cultural sites in China. A grand ceremony was held at the Guancheng Square. People greeted the arrival of the sacred torch by dancing merrily the red silk dance at Badaling Great Wall. Thousands of young people waved yellow silk ribbons to compose a galloping dragon at the fluctuant Great Wall. Toiling from Olympus, Athens to Badaling Great Wall, Beijing, the Olympic flame set up a bridge of friendship between the two ancient civilizations. It witnessed the marvelous picture of

"One World, One Dream," and exhibited the prosperity of the ancient Great Wall. (Office of Badaling Section of the Great Wall 2008)

Here, the Great Wall as a national icon is made possible through its international reputation and through its newly articulated role as a peace-maker for the world. At this very moment, the old Great Wall—closed, conservative, faded—is being replaced by a new Wall, representing openness and friendship. Rather than a barrier, the Wall became a symbolic channel, rearticulating the boundary and relationship between China and the world. The two Great Walls, as a result, have converged.

Exhibition and Narrative: The Great Wall Museum of China

Museums are an integral part of heritage. "The museum does for the site what it cannot do for itself" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 169). So does the Great Wall Museum of China, which opened to the public on 6 September 1994. At this museum the two narratives of the Great Wall, and their transformation, are carefully and deliberately presented and organized. Located beside the most famous scenic section of the Great Wall, Badaling, the museum is in a compound over 4,000 square meters in size. As a crucial location that articulates the Great Wall's meaning for patriotism and identity, the museum has served to create and maintain nationalistic sentiments through two media: (1) narrative texts, and (2) display techniques. The media jointly guide the audience to capture and conceptualize the link between the materiality of the Great Wall and its symbolic representations.

Narrative Texts

The power of the museum's narrative texts is explicitly manifested in its major themes. The museum is arranged in four main sections, each of which presents a distinct theme of the Great Wall: (1) Continual Construction over 2,000 Years, (2) A Ten Thousand *Li* Bulwark, (3) Economic and Cultural Exchanges between People on Both Sides of the Great Wall, and (4) the Imperishable Noble Spirit. The four themes can be interpreted as (1) historic continuity, (2) physical masterpiece, (3) cultural diversity, and (4) spiritual representation. By placing these messages within a firmly organized order of narratives, the museum provides a set of educational resources deployed for the dissemination of a specific and intentional state-sanctioned discourse of cultural identity.

In the opening theme, the description text stresses the historic continuity of the Great Wall's construction, although scholars have demonstrated

that this kind of continuity is a myth (Waldron 1992). For example, one text exclaims, "Construction of the Great Wall started in the Spring and Autumn Period over 2,500 years ago, and construction continued in many dynasties afterwards. It was constructed by various peoples." To make this statement more convincing, the text is accompanied by a series of comparisons with various walls being built in other countries, with pictures including Hadrian's Wall, the wall at Waltham Crags, the fortifications of Wessex, and Norman stone castles in France.

In the second theme, the Great Wall's physical construction is endowed with meanings of technological advancement and peace seeking. The text says that the Great Wall "was not only huge in scale but also its defensive system was scientifically designed." This section also illustrates some famous battles that occurred alongside the Great Wall, including a digital display of the Tumu Incident.¹¹ These are presented to develop the statement that the Chinese nation was established among the vicissitudes of the past thousands of years, which serve as "valuable historic experiences" for the future generations to maintain peace. In the same section, the physical representation of the Great Wall is acclaimed as an accomplishment of the "working Chinese people." With sculptures depicting laborers carrying stones on their backs and text referencing "the life of soldiers and civilians guarding the Great Wall," the exhibition affirms a discursive link between the nation and the people.



Figure 5.3. Presentation board in the museum, trying to demonstrate the historical continuity of the Great Wall

The third theme presents cultural diversity and ethnic solidarity. The Great Wall is depicted as a communicative hub between ethnic groups in economy, culture, and politics. Pictures of commercial activities between the Han Chinese and the ethnic minorities are highlighted. The rich Chinese folk culture is characterized as resulting from exchanges between ethnic groups that lived on both sides of the Great Wall. Some popular folktales are illustrated, including “Wenji Returning to Her Hometown” and “Zhaojun on Her Way to Her Wedding.” The latter is especially appreciated as a “symbol of friendly relationship between the Central Plains dynasty and the northern ethnic groups.”

In addition, the exhibition in this section illustrates ancient poems about the Great Wall, including those written by both the Han Chinese and the ethnic minorities, which help the section culminate in a remark that “the Great Wall is the monument to the history of the Chinese people.” With this conclusive statement, all the messages presented in the first three themes are integrated into a cohesive and schematic frame, and the Great Wall’s cultural narratives of historical continuity (history), physical accomplishment (monument), and ethnic solidarity (the Chinese people) are fully crystallized.

Finally, museum narratives take a turn, and the Great Wall is portrayed as an impulse for the future. In the fourth section, historic preservation is the primary concern. The exhibition description insists that the Wall’s historical, physical, and cultural meanings can be maintained only with continuous efforts for preservation by both the government and the people. Furthermore, the spirit embodied in the stones can become available for future generations only with the revitalization of the Chinese nation. The theme’s introduction says, “The Great Wall richly embodies a nation’s mentality and aspirations; in the New Century, it will inspire more Chinese to reinvigorate the nation.” The spirit is embedded in, and derived from, efforts for historic restoration. Accordingly, the museum includes a chronological display of restoration efforts, especially those after Deng Xiaoping launched the preservation campaign. To make it more statistically convincing, the exhibition details the dates and activities related to each restoration project since 1949.

In fact, the meaning of the term “future” entails not only a temporal dimension—the restoration and preservation of history—but also a spatial dimension—the world. Here the Wall’s future is characterized as tightly associated with globalized society. Toward the end of this section, a special hall exhibits a collection of objects related to international appreciation of the Great Wall, among which UNESCO’s official certificate of its World Heritage status is enshrined in the very center. In addition, pictures of visits by foreign leaders to the Badaling section are chronologically

displayed, with the most noticeable digital manifestation a picture taken during Obama's visit in 2009.

Displaying international appreciation can be seen as a powerful discursive strategy in that it delivers the official message that the conservative and closed Great Wall has been replaced by a friendly and open one. By emphasizing the narrative of friendship and global recognition, China has secured its cultural status in world society. Given this, the museum exhibition culminates on a high tone.

As time went by, the Great Wall's role changed,
as history turned it into a bridge of friendship linking
China to the other parts of the world.

Museum narratives play a regulatory role in defining cultural identity (Bennett 1995; Macdonald 2003; Smith 2006). As Smith (2006) suggests, the museum has a powerful function in the shaping of social order, personal conduct, moral improvement, and national identity. All of the elements are manifested in the four themes of the Great Wall Museum. The exhibitions show what Sharon Macdonald suggests the two temporal narratives commonly employed in museum articulation: (1) a distinctive national trajectory, and (2) the nation as the final triumphant stage of successive progression (2003: 3). In addition, the Great Wall Museum is distinctive in that it also shows how the national trajectory and successive progression are exogenously articulated and legitimized.

Display Techniques

Besides the narrative texts, the technique of object display reveals how the state authorities attempt to create a totalizing collective memory of the Great Wall. As Christine Boyer suggests, "Within the confining walls of the museum . . . the spatial juxtaposition of heterogeneous and arbitrarily associated artifacts is miraculously transformed into a carefully studied and ordered display" (2011: 379). Similarly, as Susan Crane suggests, most museums turn out to develop the construction of narratives that "inhibit random access in favor of orderly, informative meaning-formation" (2000: 4). The Great Wall Museum of China displays its collections in an orderly fashion, most of which include items of stone-carved calligraphy, unearthed wall-building tools, various weapons, and Chinese paintings. Consistent with what Boyer and Crane have demonstrated, many of these objects are randomly ordered and arbitrarily associated, disregarding their historical situatedness for the sake of contemporary narrative. With the integration of these random messages, the narratives are enriched with strong material evidence.

The craft of museum display starts with the exterior appearance. The Great Wall Museum is no exception. Unique in design, its external design resembles joined beacon fire towers. Above the main entrance is the title of the museum in calligraphy inscribed by China's then president Jiang Zemin. Inside, zigzag passages resemble the Great Wall's mountain passes and towers. The museum design and the name inscription depict a remarkable association between the physical representation of the Wall and its symbolism as sanctioned by state authoritative discourse. Right behind the main entrance is Sun Yat-sen's famous remark on the Great Wall, "The Great Wall is the most famous construction on land in China . . . It surpassed any other ancient construction in scale and is a unique miracle in the world." By the same token, right beside Sun's words, the museum quotes, "World Wonder, Historical Monument," a saying of a crucial figure in the Great Wall's modern history, Luo Zhewen, who was among the group of experts that promoted China's ratification of the World Heritage Convention. By quoting both Sun's and Luo's comments, the museum attempts to show the discursive continuity of the Great Wall.

Inside the museum, the order of the themes is carefully arranged. The visitor's path in the museum is deliberately organized and guided, beginning with a historical recollection and ending with a future expectation, between which are both material and nonmaterial representations of the Great Wall. The clearly presented paths unfold the stories and narratives in a concrete sequence. Some three-dimensional displays are employed for the audience to experience the spectacular scenic views that demonstrate the integration between mountains and the fortifications. Moreover, digital techniques are used to present the Tumu Incident, presenting a vivid manifestation of the famous battle that occurred alongside the Great Wall.

Another rhetorical technique of display lies in the timing of the opening of the museum. Rana Mitter suggests, "The timings of the openings of museums could add to their symbolism" (2000: 282). The museum's dates of opening and reopening both revealed significant meanings. The original opening occurred on 6 September 1994, the tenth anniversary of Deng's launching of the "Love China, Restore Our Great Wall" campaign (Jiang 1994). Later, in 2007, the museum was closed for renovation. One year later, right before the Beijing Olympic Games, the renovation was completed and the museum was reopened to the public.

The museum is integral to the state's efforts in the construction of the Great Wall's symbolism. While it introduces the Wall's historical function as ethnic barrier, it culminates in a high tone about the site's representation of cross-cultural friendship. It suggests the unquestionable role of the Great Wall as something belonging to the world. Nevertheless, the

rhetoric of “world” not only entails friendship but more often generates contention. In many occasions, the battle for world recognition creates stronger identification and attachment domestically for the nation and the public. A revealing example was the battle centering on the New 7 Wonders of the World.

Battle on the New 7 Wonders of the World

On 31 May 2007, when I opened my email inbox, a message sent by a friend caught my attention: “If you are a real Chinese, ACT NOW!” The message continued in an evocative tone: “The Great Wall is being voted out of the New 7 Wonders of the World.” It explained, “This is an authoritative award decided only by online votes. Please act now to vote the Great Wall for this title!” I soon realized that the same day millions of Chinese internet users received the same message, which appealed for everybody to vote for the Great Wall. As I searched on Google for similar key words, I found that the appeal had first circulated a month previously, “If you are Chinese, you should make an effort. We should not let our great China fall behind! Come on, everyone who has a will! We are going to show and demonstrate our Chinese spirit to the World!” The result was amazing. Thanks to the large population and the zealous passions of the Chinese voters, the Great Wall eventually ranked top among all the finalists, according to the organizer on 7 July 2007.¹²

However, comments on this event diverged at the very beginning. One comment on an internet forum said, “We don’t need another ‘title’ for the Great Wall! The Great Wall is already World Heritage sanctioned by United Nations, which is the most authoritative organization for historic relics in the world!” In addition, some challenged the authority of the project. One said, “The program was launched in 2001 by a Swiss-based private foundation. It is neither official nor authoritative.” Some others voiced the criticism that “if you give the foundation money, you could vote more than once! How can this kind of profit-oriented program be connected to our enshrined Great Wall?”

The information found by the internet users was correct: the New 7 Wonders program was launched by a Swiss-based New7Wonders foundation, as an online program to select seven historic sites as the New 7 Wonders of the World, analogous to the seminal list created by the Greek historian Herodotus 2,500 years ago. Unlike the classic list, the new inventory was characteristic in that it was “voted” on by people all around the world. But as a *Los Angeles Times* article reported, “Nothing prevented repeat voting by fans, citizens, governments, tourism agencies,” which

made the poll “decidedly unscientific” (Wilkinson 2007). Thus UNESCO (2007a) officially affirmed that it was not involved in or associated with the poll. However, in spite of its unofficial status and unscientific procedure, the poll had strikingly generated nationalistic sentiments in many countries, especially the Third World nations, including China.

In Brazil, zealous nationalists launched the campaign *Vote no Cristo* (Vote for the Christ), which evoked millions of people to vote for the Brazilian national icon—the Christ the Redeemer statue. Similar campaigns were everywhere. Votes for Machu Picchu were zealously championed by the Peruvian Ministry of Commerce and Tourism in Peru; the Taj Mahal received similar publicity in the Indian mass media; and Chichen Itzá evoked a sense of national pride for Mexicans.

China did not have an officially sanctioned campaign. But there was a number of self-organized internet endeavors by public campaigners. No wonder most of the voters were internet users, especially forum goers, and mostly young people. As described above, they used evocative slogans such as “Be a Real Chinese!” “Showcase Our Motherland!” and “Shame on You if You Don’t Vote” to arouse people’s nationalistic sentiments. According to a report by the Reuters news agency, the Academy of the Great Wall of China, a privately run organization, actively engaged in the campaign, charging that the voting process was unfair because of its internet-only method (many potential Chinese voters could not access the internet, and most of them did not understand the voting language, English).¹³ The academy stated, “China’s Great Wall missed an opportunity 2,000 years ago when the Greeks named the Seven Wonders of the World. It would be extremely regretful if it became an also-ran this time” (Reuters 2007). In the meantime, an officer of Badaling made this appeal, “If the Great Wall was dropped, it would be a shame for Beijing, for China, for the whole world!”

Ironically, in spite of the continuous official efforts to enthusiastically nominate World Heritage sites, the state government and the scholars showed relatively moderate and even critical attitudes toward the poll. Two days after the final award ceremony, the Party-run *People’s Daily* published a commentary criticizing the heavily nationalistic campaigns. The article stated that the Chinese passion for this poll was far stronger than that of the other nations: “It is unquestionable that the Great Wall is ‘great.’ Why are we so concerned with and in need of ‘global recognition?’ . . . This reflects a lack of cultural confidence!” The article continued to criticize the statement that the exclusion of the Great Wall would be a “national shame.” The article even suggested that this kind of nationalistic movement is not real patriotism. The author concluded that it was a real shame that the Chinese are more preoccupied with the “international

competition" than the domestic collective memory of its "shamed past," the history of defeats by Western countries since 1840, the First Opium War.

Cultural confidence was a key term in the nationwide debate. The *Guangzhou Daily* commented that the poll was only a "digital game" that "did not shake the Great Wall, but vibrated the cultural confidence of some Chinese people." It further commented that the final result, whether the Great Wall was in or out, would never affect the Great Wall's reputation as a spectacular national icon and its status in the world. "We do not need to affirm our cultural value by repeatedly engaging in these kind of polls" (Zhou 2007). Similarly, a commentary on Xinmin Evening News satirized the activists for being so culturally self-abased, arguing that "a wonder is not selected!" (Zhen Ge 2007).

The New 7 Wonders case raises two questions for discussion. First, why is an international heritage competition so evocative for nationalism? Second, why was the poll for the New 7 Wonders much more controversial, and much less officially supported, than World Heritage?

The first question has been answered by Lowenthal. As he observes, "Heritage provokes internal as well as international rivalry" (1998: 229). Lowenthal questions the real effect of World Heritage's claim of universal ownership. He argues, "Heritage is normally cherished not as common but as private property. Ownership gives its essential worth" (ibid.: 227). Essentially, the UNESCO principle "cultural property belongs to all mankind" generates disputes and competition. As shown in the second chapter, about the competition between Thailand and Cambodia, World Heritage has never seen a global consensus on its universal ownership. Lowenthal suggests, "The very notion of a universal legacy is self-contradictory . . . confining possession to some while excluding others is the *raison d'être* of heritage" (ibid.: 230). Heritage is essentially exclusive. As Turtinen (2000) points out, World Heritage is now the Olympic Games of heritage.

Why was the poll for the New 7 Wonders much more controversial and much less officially supported than World Heritage? Ostensibly, the answer seems to be quite easy: (1) the poll is profit oriented, and (2) it is unscientific. Both rendered the poll unauthoritative. However, another question emerges: how could an unauthoritative poll evoke such a zealous nationalistic campaign among ordinary people? To understand the key to this question, we need to reconsider UNESCO World Heritage's real power: World Heritage has acquired its international authority and legitimate power not only through its scientific posture but also through its power of generating nationalistic passions.

The real evocative power lies in the very term “World.” World Heritage is a rhetorical combination of two seemingly opposite but correlated aspects of common life: sense and sensitivity. Whereas the former provides the project with institutional recognition and adoption, the latter is the decisive factor that facilitates the public to either accept or reject the project. World Heritage is so widely accepted because it encompasses both factors: it is scientifically organized and operated at an institutional level, and it is discursively compatible with the public’s passion for collective pride and identity. By the same token, even if the New 7 Wonders project did not have the aspect of sense, it still evoked public zeal, for it has the aspect of sensitivity, which is primarily derived from external recognition. The sensitivity here, in general, is an internationally produced nationalistic emotion.

Does the aroused public sentiment parallel the state’s rationally created and officially sanctioned discourse? Are the passions universally homogeneous, or are they heterogeneous between cultures? If the term “World” is largely associated with and constitutive of nationalistic sensitivity, we should hypothesize that common Chinese tourists are more likely to see the Great Wall as a Chinese cultural masterpiece than their foreign counterparts are. Then, how do the non-Chinese visitors see the Great Wall? I will introduce the concept of “cosmopolitan memory” to examine these questions.



Figure 5.4. A local farmer serves as a volunteer guard for the Great Wall

The Cosmopolitan Great Wall?

The concept of cosmopolitan memory was proposed by Levy and Sznajder (2002) in order to characterize the type of memory that has transcended its national boundaries, reaching a level of global significance and fostering a degree of global solidarity. Levy and Sznajder argue that particular historical events, such as the Holocaust, have transformed from territorial subjects to universal affairs that have achieved a universal level of recognition and are embedded in humanitarian values. This process of the decoupling of nation and memory is centrally framed in the arena of cosmopolitanism, which is considered "a process of 'internal globalization' through which global concerns become part of local experiences of an increasing number of people" (Levy and Sznajder 2002: 87). Within this process, the cosmopolitan memory of a particular event therefore contributes to reconcile conflicts between nations and the dissemination of universal values (Miszta 2010: 36). By understanding and reorganizing the past of Others, the cosmopolitization of memory is integral to an important element of globalization, the deterritorialization of culture (Tomlinson 1999). Through the construction of a global community, cosmopolitan memory connects people with foreigners and even enemies, reconciling conflicts and giving rise to a consciousness of globality.

Barthel-Bouchier and Hui (2007) examine how the concept of cosmopolitan memory could be applied in heritage sites. They argue that places that are of universal significance, such as World Heritage sites, should be considered good candidates for cosmopolitan memory. Based on collected data on public attitudes toward selected heritage sites, their study suggests that certain sites, including the Great Wall, have acquired a status of global importance and thus have formed collective memory at a cosmopolitan level. Consistent with Levy and Sznajder's thesis, Barthel-Bouchier and Hui find that the world is witnessing an accelerating tendency toward "internal globalization," in which people from different cultures have developed shared concerns with particular foreign sites. The images and narratives of certain World Heritage sites are disseminated and negotiated through the improvement of communication, rise in tourism, and prevalence of global media, which is available beyond national borders.

Barthel-Bouchier and Hui's data represent the views of only retired professionals in the United States, among whom over 99.2 percent have heard of or visited the Great Wall. The majority of the respondents considered the Great Wall to be of "universal significance." The study also illustrates some of the respondents' expressions of a cosmopolitan perspective, such as "we need to learn to think of ourselves as citizens of the world as well as citizens of the US."

However, the data have two major limitations. First, the judgment of “universal significance” reveals only the degree of the respondents’ knowledge. The authors did not study the actual feelings of those respondents toward the Great Wall. In fact, cosmopolitan memory not only involves knowledge but also (and more importantly) entails the “local experiences” of global concerns. Second, the data did not compare the attitudes of visitors from different cultural backgrounds. As the authors admit, the cultural narratives attached to the Great Wall may vary according to particular personal identifiers, especially national identifiers.

My own fieldwork and survey at the Badaling section, drawing on Barthel-Bouchier and Hui’s approach, examine the onsite experiences of the tourists at the Great Wall, exploring the extent to which the Great Wall is perceived by the visitors as a site of cosmopolitan memory. In particular, I asked three major questions. “In your opinion, what is ‘World Heritage?’” “In your opinion, what meaning(s) does the Great Wall have?” “Visiting the Great Wall makes you feel like a ___?” For comparison purposes, I divided the respondents into Chinese and non-Chinese groups. Finally, based on random sampling, 150 Chinese and 150 non-Chinese visitors agreed to answer (and actually completed) the survey. It should be noted that the respondents were allowed to select more than one answer for each question. Below are the results:

Table 5.1. “In your opinion, what is ‘World Heritage?’”

	Chinese Frequency	%	Non-Chinese Frequency	%
Global cultural treasure for all human beings	92	61.3	149	99.3
A nation’s cultural symbol	90	60.0	53	35.3
Patrimony for local owners of the heritage	10	6.7	11	7.3
Old stuff	21	14.0	24	16.0
Tour sites	45	30.0	26	17.3
Place for education	20	13.3	10	6.7
A Western idea diffused into non-Western countries	8	5.3	5	3.3
A site in need of preservation	47	31.3	33	21.7

For the first question, “In your opinion, what is ‘World Heritage?’” a total of ninety-six (64 percent) non-Chinese respondents chose the two

options of “global cultural treasure for all human beings” and “a nation’s cultural symbol.” A total of fifty-three (35.3 percent) of them selected only the former. Only one non-Chinese visitor picked the latter without circling the former. It is clear that a majority of the international visitors acknowledged that the Great Wall should be a global treasure and a national property. In comparison, Chinese visitors were more likely to see World Heritage as a nation’s cultural symbol (60 percent) than were non-Chinese (35.3 percent) and less likely to conceive of it as a cultural treasure belonging to all mankind (61.3 percent to 99.3 percent) than non-Chinese. Of course it is highly possible that the expression of the recognition of World Heritage is conditioned by certain circumstances (time and place) in which the survey is conducted. And it is possible that these Chinese visitors may have distinctive attitudes when visiting a site in a foreign nation. All we can conclude from this question is that the discourse of universality embedded in the concept of World Heritage is interpreted in considerably many ways by different groups.

Table 5.2. “What meaning(s) does the Great Wall have?”

	Chinese Frequency	%	Non-Chinese Frequency	%
Representation of China’s spirit	128	85.3	42	28.0
Educational resource	91	60.7	74	49.3
Representation of the power of China	110	73.3	103	68.7
Touristic	88	58.7	105	70.0
World memory	21	14.0	66	44.0
National memory	135	90.0	85	56.7
Harmony between nature and human societies	44	29.3	30	20.0
Promote world peace	70	46.7	66	44.0
Cultural communication	50	33.3	73	48.7

With particular respect to the Great Wall, when answering “What meaning(s) does the Great Wall have?” 103 non-Chinese respondents marked “representation of the power of China.” However, only 66 international respondents marked it as “world memory,” while 85 believed that it represented a national memory. The frequency of “representation of the power of China” was much higher among the Chinese respondents (110), as was that of “national memory” (135). The Chinese respondents

were also more likely to see the Wall as a representation of China's spirit (128) than were the non-Chinese visitors (42). Only 21 Chinese visitors thought of the Great Wall as "world memory." About half of the respondents in each group reported that they thought of the Great Wall as a promoter of world peace.

Table 5.3. "Visiting the Great Wall makes you feel like a ____?"

	Chinese Frequency	%	Non-Chinese Frequency	%
Chinese	147	98.0	19	12.7
Citizen of your nation	n/a		6	4.0
Westerner	0	0.0	17	11.3
Global citizen	11	7.3	30	20.0
Yourself	25	16.7	80	53.3
Others	18	12.0	9	6.0
No response	0	0.0	2	1.3

The third question attempts to explore the feelings of the touristic experience at the Great Wall, with particular options related to identity consciousness. More than half of the non-Chinese visitors (80) reported that they just felt like themselves. Strikingly, only 30 non-Chinese visitors said that they felt like a global citizen. Some (19) reported that they felt Chinese, while 17 reported that they felt like a Westerner. Very few (6) responded that they felt like a citizen of their own nation. By contrast, a vast majority of the Chinese respondents (147) reported that they felt like a Chinese when visiting the site, with only 11 thinking that they represented a "global citizen." Unlike the first two questions, very few respondents selected more than one answer to this question, which indicates that identity consciousness is still an exclusive sense of being for the tourists.

In sum, largely distinct from Barthel-Bouchier and Hui's survey, my study reveals another picture in the minds of visitors to the Wall. It is far from a type of nationless experience, even among the international visitors. For the Chinese tourists, the Wall has never had a chance to be "cosmopolitan." Rather, it is just a Chinese icon. The Great Wall is still tightly bound within the national border, although it surely has promoted international friendship to a large extent.

This is also revealed in the visitor comment book of the Great Wall Museum.¹⁴ Most comments associated the Great Wall with strong Chinese characteristics. Drawing on Deng Xiaoping's campaign slogan, one Chi-

nese visitor wrote, "Love Our China, Love Our Great Wall!" in the book. Another visitor left the message, "May the country flourish and the people live in peace." Also, words like "May our great motherland blossom" and "Proud of the great scenes of our great nation" were pervasive. Similarly, foreign visitors also saw the Great Wall as an icon of China. A Sudan visitor wrote, "Great Wall is great achievement of Chinese nations [*sic*]."

Has the Great Wall become a representation of cosmopolitan memory? The answer depends on how we define cosmopolitan memory. In fact, cosmopolitan memory does not necessarily devalue local perspectives, since it supplies protection for cultural and minority rights, while combining local and national elements with the global (Misztal 2010: 36). As Levy and Sznaider admit, cosmopolitan memory represents not the end of national voices but a transformed sovereignty in which different groups establish different connections with the global community (2002: 92). Rather than representing identical feelings, cosmopolitanism entails an equal relationship between nations, cultures, and religions among many other social denominations.

Indeed, the Great Wall has been a cosmopolitan concern in recent years. There have emerged a number of active international preservationists for the Great Wall, namely David Spindler and William Lindsay. Both have walked along most parts of the Wall and recorded its venerable physical state of conservation and social settings. Spindler has been enthusiastically and independently participating in the Wall's preservation projects since the 1990s and has conducted ambitious fieldwork that involves walking along all discrete sections of the wall and measuring every detailed feature of it, including towers, vaulted ceilings, arched windows, doors, and inscribed tablets (Hessler 2007: 58). Spindler insists that the heritage preservation of the Great Wall should be internationally charged: "It's not only a Chinese issue; it's a world project."¹⁵ Moreover, he disliked symbolic usages of the Great Wall. He saw the Wall neither as national icon nor a representation of xenophobia: "It's just one manifestation of what China has done. It's just a way they defended themselves" (Waldron 2009: 29). Similarly, Lindsay has taken hundreds of pictures of today's Great Wall to compare with the same sites photographed in the past. He has published five books directly related to the Great Wall¹⁶ and founded a nongovernmental organization for the preservation of the Great Wall—Wild Wall.¹⁷ As he observed, the World Heritage status of the Great Wall has generated changes that are "almost entirely negative" and makes it more vulnerable (Gluckman 2001).¹⁸

Spindler and Lindsay, with their preservation acts, may represent what Tomlinson calls the "citizen of the world." Tomlinson defines it like this: "Being a 'citizen of the world' for our purposes means having a cultural

disposition which is not limited to the concerns of the immediate locality, but which recognizes global belonging, involvement and responsibility and can integrate these broader concerns into everyday life practices" (1999: 185).

However, Spindler and Lindsay are perhaps the exception. Most of the Great Wall's Chinese tourists do not agree with the heritage site's global belonging. As we read from the tourists' comments as well as the zealous campaigners' words, we see that the Great Wall's articulated universality is not created for the recognition of its global ownership. Rather, the universal narrative is in fact a discursive device for the consolidation of state-led patriotic education. For the Chinese, the national border is still there. More precisely, the Great Wall's role as a representation of the Chinese nation has been intensified, in spite of the claim of universalism.

In comparison, despite international tourists generally not having the feeling of being citizens of the world when they visit the Wall (Table 5.3), international tourists express certain perspectives that are imbued with cosmopolitan considerations. They view the Great Wall more equally and neutrally than do their Chinese counterparts. Seeing themselves just as individuals, international visitors reveal a realistic future of the Great Wall's cosmopolitanization: rather than being focused on the claim of universal ownership, their focus is more based on the cognition that all human heritage, regardless of its national characteristics, should be treated and respected equally. As Lowenthal has suggested, "We can never wholly know a heritage on our own. But we can now appreciate its alien traits as more cognate, in many ways, to our own domestic legacy than we ever before realized" (1998: 248).

An example and model of the Great Wall's cosmopolitan future may be found in Obama's comment at the Badaling section in 2009 during his first official visit in China as president of the United States. Obama was quite reluctant to relate the Great Wall with the Chinese people as Nixon did. As the *Financial Times* (Luce 2009) reported during a press conference after the visit:

Initially, President Obama repeated the same superlative he had used on Tuesday when visiting the Forbidden City and described the wall as "spectacular." But on being pressed by reporters on Wednesday, Mr. Obama said: "It's [the Wall is] a reminder of the ancient history of the Chinese people."

Obama also remarked, "It's magical. It reminds you of the sweep of history and [that] our time here on Earth is not that long and we better make the best of it." And "It gives you a good perspective on a lot of the day-to-day things. They don't amount to much in the scope of history." His usage of the words "you" and "we" articulate a sense of cosmopolitan rhetoric.

His perspective on the day-to-day things and his reluctance to mention the Great Wall's affinity with the Chinese spirit might satisfy the World Heritage program because it was a claim that demonstrated the program's ultimate goal: World Heritage belongs to a general "us" and unfolds a potential path to the ultimate cosmopolitanism of mankind.

Notes

1. In spite of popular usage and acceptance of the term the "Great Wall" of China, the definition and historicity of the Great Wall is still a matter of scholarly debate. According to Arthur Waldron, popular narratives of the Great Wall are modern constructions and mistaken perceptions from the past few centuries. Literally and physically, the so-called Great Wall should be more precisely understood as an artificial conceptual construction related to a series of defensive fortifications, or "long walls" literally in Chinese (Waldron 1992). Likewise, Julia Lovell lays out three mythical narratives of the Great Wall: its singularity, cultural superiority, and military function (Lovell 2006: 15–17). Rather than a historic representation, the Great Wall is negatively characterized in Lovell's analysis:
Ever since walls were first built across Chinese frontiers, they have provided no more than a temporary advantage over determined raiders and pillagers. It was a sign of military weakness, diplomatic failure and political paralysis, and a bankrupting policy that led to the downfall of several once robust dynasties. (Lovell 2006: 17)
2. For more information about the Republican Revolution, see Worden, Savada, and Dolan 1987.
3. Two major battles took place: at Shanhaiguan in January 1933 and Jehol in March 1933. The Chinese troops even defended the wall "hand-to-hand," whereas by the end of May 1933, after two months of battle, the Japanese controlled all the key northeast wall passes.
4. Also known as the Nanking Massacre, it was committed by Japanese troops on 13 December 1937.
5. One *li* is half a kilometer.
6. The film was not screened in the end.
7. http://badaling.cn/language/info_en.asp?id=45.
8. Mentions of the Great Wall in the West were scarce before AD 1650. See Waldron (1992: 204–6) for more discussion.
9. This journey later proved to be a diplomatic failure because China's emperor Qianlong rejected nearly all the requests presented by the embassy. To Late Qing China, all foreigners were seen as being from backward civilizations, lacking the political and cultural capability of communicating with the advanced Chinese civilization. International relations were seen by the central court as a relationship between hierarchical political levels, say, the central power and local subordinates.

10. Though there was no direct evidence that could demonstrate that Sun had read the Western writings about the Great Wall, there were connections between the Orientalist romanticization of the Great Wall and Sun's later works about the wall.
11. Also known as the Tumu Crisis, in 1449, there was a frontier battle between the Oirat Mongols and the Ming Dynasty, resulting in the capture of the Chinese emperor Zhengtong.
12. The final seven "winners" were Chichen Itza, Mexico; Christ the Redeemer, Brazil; the Colosseum, Italy; the Great Wall, China; Machu Picchu, Peru; Petra, Jordan; and the Taj Mahal, India. In addition, the Giza Pyramid of Egypt, the only remaining Wonder of the Ancient World, was named an honorary site.
13. Because of these complaints, the official website of the poll added a Chinese page and enabled a voting system for mobile telephone.
14. The visitor's book is named *Yijianbu* (Suggestions Book) and was originally designed for guests to leave recommendations for the museum's management. But most guests left messages not with suggestions but rather about their feelings. This is common in China's museums.
15. Quoted from my interview with Spindler.
16. *Alone on the Great Wall* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1998); with Hilary Banks, *The Great Wall: The Genius of China: A Close-Up Guide* (Kowloon, Hong Kong: Odyssey Publications, 2003); *Wallscapes—Landscapes of the Great Wall* (Hong Kong: WildWall, 2003); *Images of Asia: The Great Wall* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2007); *The Great Wall Revisited: From the Jade Gate to Old Dragon's Head* (Beijing: China Intercontinental Press, 2009).
17. <http://www.wildwall.com>.
18. This cosmopolitan position ostensibly should reconcile their role as Westerners with their participation in Chinese issues. But it does not. Instead, it has reinforced their non-Chinese role. Spindler is admired by his Chinese fellow preservationists because of his non-Chinese origin; Lindesay is respected as the most influential foreigner whose pictures have influenced the Chinese government to reflect on and reformulate its policy to preserve the Great Wall.



Conclusion

World Heritage as Discursive Institution

The Heritagized Society: Obsession and Obliteration

Heritage is cultural production (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998). It is constantly interwoven with resources and interests of the past, present, and future. Moreover, heritage is not simply a result of production, but it is also a process, in which the physical, social, cultural, and political representations and embodiments of heritage are generated and reproduced. There is no fixed or frozen form of heritage. Rather, heritage should be understood as a terminological construction that is developed, negotiated, modified, reflected, and transformed in both discursive and organizational settings. Its textual and contextual elements are made possible through particular internal or external impulses or constraints.

Furthermore, in the globalization of culture, one's heritage cannot be contained within a limited framework of discourse, but instead must engage external processes, in which its preservation, management, interpretation, and presentation encounter a series of exogenous forces that serve either directly or indirectly to reshape the current discursive and organizational scheme of preservation. At the same time, agents and stakeholders in complex linkages form either cooperative or contentious relationships, building on any deployable heritage resources for purposes such as identity formation or ideological construction.

Heritage, as a medium of identity politics and cultural symbolism, proliferates in many aspects of Chinese social life. Insofar as heritage issues are pervasive and influential in various social dimensions, such as economy, culture, urban planning, Chinese society is to some extent heritagized. That is, a large portion of Chinese social life is now directly or

indirectly entangled with heritage discourse. Nominating and utilizing heritage has become one of the most effective strategies for the government to claim political legitimacy and economic benefit. Most local commemorative rituals and folktales are now integrated into the discourse of intangible heritage. Common lifestyle forms and practices are reformulated and promoted as appealing heritage in order to allure tourists. Even the routine demolition of common architecture or the normal redesign and rebuilding of unremarkable locations are often contested with the terminology and ethics of heritage preservation.

The whole of Chinese society is now witnessing a trend toward heritage preoccupation. The yearly World Heritage nomination draws national attention every summer, and newly designated heritage sites often become the most searched terms on Internet forums and social networks for at least a week. The whole country is obsessed with heritage. Therefore, it is easy to understand why heritage nomination is highly politically oriented. Now it seems that every historic site of some cultural or political significance has to be proposed as a potential candidate for World Heritage. If a site fails to be officially designated as heritage, it might lose its public popularity, and its value would be ignored. Hence, heritage nomination becomes one of the most important political duties for local governments.

Sites that represent war memories and dark past events are ardently proposed by both the government and ordinary people to be World Heritage. For example, considering that the Hiroshima Memorial is now a World Heritage, Chinese nationalists claim that the ruin of Unit 731, where the Japanese army experimented on human bodies for its germ warfare program, has to be analogously inscribed on the World Heritage List (Mills 2010).

In spite of this heritage obsession, however, in reality, heritage in China is in danger. Industrialization and overexploitation have undermined the environments and resources of the past. According to the report of the Third National Cultural Relics Survey, over 40,000 unmovable cultural relics have disappeared since the previous national survey, covering 1981–1985 (Wang 2011). In 2012, cultural preservationists and the public were outraged by the news that the former residence in Beijing of Liang Sicheng and Lin Huiyin, China's famous twentieth-century architect couple, was demolished without official permission.

This incident is all the more striking as an example of the current poor condition of Chinese heritage given that Liang and Lin were famous for their endless endeavors to protect and preserve ancient architecture. The demolition of their residence, therefore, is an ironic disjunction between the nationwide obsession of heritage nomination at one pole and large-

scale reckless obliteration at the other. One Beijing municipal officer rationalized the destruction as “renovation through demolition (*Pohuaixing Baohu*),” which gained the sarcastic commentary, “A cultural heritage is destroyed, and a new term is born” (Xu 2012).

Both the obsession and obliteration of heritage can be explained from a broader perspective of national resurgence. China has experienced a long period of instability and domestic turmoil and sees itself as the victim of a century of international humiliation. Therefore, both national pride and economic development are integral themes in the resurgence of the great nation. While cultural heritage provides elements useful for national pride, allowing demolition is regarded by many people as beneficial for economic development. In fact, rather than entirely obliterating cultural heritage, a moderate approach, heritage commercialization, has been used to simultaneously promote cultural pride and generate economic returns. As a result, nonheritage elements become incorporated into heritage sites. Fiona Starr has illustrated a number of examples of heritage commercialization taking place in China.

In October, 2007, the Juyongguan section of the Great Wall was exclusively enclosed for a fashion show by Italian brand Fendi. One international commentator queried, “It seems like China is willing to sacrifice their history and monuments in order to make money and seem more western . . . Does European high fashion belong on the Great Wall?” (Starr 2010: 149). And in Lijiang Old Town, in southwest China, “commercial development has caused a loss of authentic atmosphere with encroachment and even displacement of the protected heritage areas by tourist-oriented commercial premises” (ibid.: 155). With the benefits from the commercialization of heritage, even the “claimed” former residence of one of the most infamous figures in Chinese classical fiction, Ximen Qing, a corrupt social climber and lustful merchant from the famous novels of *Water Margin* and *Jin Ping Mei*, is now extremely popular and yielding economic profit.

Therefore, there are two main benefits that the government can obtain from heritage. First, nominating heritage, especially nominating a World Heritage Site, serves as very strong political capital related to future promotion for the officials involved. Second, commercializing heritage provides immediate financial return. These two benefits are implicitly interdependent, as political capital may be transformed into economic capital, and vice versa.

Heritage issues permeate society, whether as matters of obsession, obliteration, or commercialization. As society is heritagized, and as heritage is more often interwoven with political or economic discourses, cultural preservation has been increasingly an issue of ethics rather than

aesthetics. Entangled with the complexities of nationalism, obliteration, and commercialization, we see a tautological statement: the purpose of heritage preservation is to preserve heritage. As a result, in a heritagized society, counterintuitively, heritage is alienated. Its original aesthetic values are replaced with political, social, and economic values. A heritage site now has to prove its heritage through official designation. Those designated heritage sites, in this sense, are differentiated and recontextualized from the real essences on which they were originally built. Hence, more precisely, the heritagization of society tends to result in the deheritagization of genuine heritage.

Neoinstitutional Theory on Heritage

As issues of heritage have taken a more central place in society, heritage has inevitably become more interlinked with the factors and forces of cultural globalization. One dimension of globalization lies in the “expanded flow of instrumental culture around the world,” which promotes the development of world cultural models, ones that are widely adapted by nation-states and penetrate our social life (Meyer et al. 1997: 156). As an integral part of social life, heritage is globalized in an isomorphic process, regulated, and articulated as a normative world cultural model. Ostensibly, this reflects the postcolonial thesis regarding the cultural colonization of the non-West by the West, such as Smith’s “authorized heritage discourse” and Turtinen’s argument on the center/periphery binary between the West and the non-West nations. However, as examination in this book reveals, China’s responses to WHC and its advisory bodies are voluntary.

China is keen to embrace the world cultural model of heritage preservation in order to claim the legitimacy of a sovereign nation, and China’s organizational and discursive transformations in heritage preservation are not simply a consequence of the world model, but rather are path dependent on its domestic system. The word “world” acts more like a rhetorical resource for internal political and social regulation than a substantial imposition of Western ideas and values. Chinese heritage sites are reconstituted not through directly superimposed texts but through soft cultural templates. Drawing upon John Meyer’s neoinstitutional theory on institutional isomorphism, I argue that the concept and practice of heritage in the world has been institutionalized. This is a process analogous with what Andreas Huyssen has called the “globalization of memory,” through which the aspirations of national pasts are articulated with global (and somewhat utopian) cultural templates for expression.

My analysis of the institutionalization of heritage in China examines and demonstrates four main aspects of neoinstitutional theory: (1) the rise of world models, (2) the impact of global models on actors, (3) the decoupling of models from each other, and (4) the impact of global models, independent of their adoption, on internal structure and activity. That is, first, the global heritage community develops and maintains a world cultural model for heritage preservation. Second, the model has largely shaped the organizational and discursive components of China's internal heritage system. Third, heritage policies and activities in local sites are inconsistent with the overarching model. Fourth, many terms and principles raised by the global heritage community have not been fully adopted during application and practice in the nation-states.

Neoinstitutional theory has provided explanations for the worldwide diffusion of models of education, environment, science, and human rights. My analysis of heritage expands the scope of the theory's application. Yet, the institutionalization of heritage also reflects on the theory with a distinctive case: in China, heritage has above all a nationalistic rather than a universalistic constitution. Thus, the universalistic model of cultural heritage faces fundamental challenges when it encounters national identity.

While it is easy for the public to understand that China's environment or its scientific accomplishments belong to all mankind, it is nearly impossible for the Chinese people to admit that China's heritage belongs to others. Heritage generates nationalistic sentiments and pride, evokes passions and affection among the citizens, and provides resources of national identity and narratives of cultural superiority. Heritage also promotes the consolidation and cohesion of mainstream collective memory, while marginalizing countermemories. Given this, does such a strong nationalistic character inhibit the institutionalization of heritage? I argue that, to the contrary, it has strengthened and promoted the process of institutionalization. This seeming paradox can be understood with neoinstitutionalism's account of how world cultural models impact nation-states: "World-cultural principles license the nation-state not only as a managing central authority but also as an identity-supplying nation . . . Moreover, in pursuing their externally legitimated identities and purposes by creating agencies and programs, nation-states also promote the domestic actors involved" (Meyer et al. 1997: 160).

Therefore, heritage as a national-oriented concept does not contradict the universal-oriented cultural model, in that both are utilized by the nation-state in order to claim identity for the actors within it. Both heritage and institutionalization are tightly associated with identity formation and legitimization. For China, in particular, this association between heritage and the world can also be understood as a representation of the relation-

ship between the Chinese sense of the past and its view of the world. The Chinese pursuit for identity and status in the world is not a recent phenomenon; it has been a century-long process. As Duara puts it, "Over the last century, historical consciousness in China has been chiefly used to enable the emergent nation to find its place in the world" (2008: 64). Indeed, the world as a spatial notion is tightly associated with the temporal nature of heritage.

Timothy Mitchell has remarked that "for a state to prove it was modern, it helped if it could also prove it was ancient" (2001: 212). I rephrase this statement: for a state to prove it is national, it helps if it can also prove it is international. We can also propose that the more enthusiastically a nation-state seeks legitimacy and identity in world society, the more actively it engages in the isomorphic process of structural transformation.

World Heritage as Process

In general, how can we understand UNESCO's World Heritage program, including the convention, the list, the advisory bodies, and its series of subprograms from a sociological perspective? World Heritage is above all an ongoing process of organizational and discursive productions and negotiations. It is closely associated with textual and contextual powers and embraced by and embodied in the nation-states. World Heritage is not, in sociological terms, a single dependent variable; rather it always entails, represents, and mediates the political, cultural, and social mechanisms by which knowledge, memory, identity, and even sentiments are produced and reproduced. It is not a concrete thing, but it is a powerful meaning-making process. In this process, power is softly developed and exercised. From a Foucauldian perspective, the power of World Heritage is never solely captured and manipulated by one dominator, or group of dominators, upon the dominated.

Rather, every actor in world society, including international organizations, nation-states, and individuals, is inevitably involved in power production and utilization. "It's a machine in which everyone is caught, those who exercise power just as much as those over whom it is exercised" (Foucault 1980: 156). However, previous heritage studies tend to create an ontological dichotomy between the dominator and the dominated. They either focus on how the dominator produces and practices the authorized heritage discourse upon the dominated, or they emphasize how those dominated form resistance and dissonance against the powerful dominators. Few have acknowledged that the resistance against power is always tied with the production of power. The power of World Heritage

lies not only in States Parties' adoption of it but also in States Parties' resistance and violations against it. Rather than undermining the legitimacy of World Heritage, these violations actually intensify the isomorphism of the world cultural model (Meyer et al. 1997: 161).

By transcending the dominator/dominated binary, I map out a more dialectic and dynamic understanding of World Heritage in China. As illustrated below in figure 6.1, there are three main components of the World Heritage system: (1) organization, (2) discourse, and (3) China's Heritage Enlightenment. The first component, organizational mechanisms, provides and facilitates organizational formation and transformation, institutionalizing the ethics of global cultural preservation at the organizational level. The second component, discursive diffusion, serves as a cultural script provider, whose legitimacy is acquired and enabled through interaction with a script translator. The third component, Heritage Enlightenment, is related to the two previous components, and it utilizes the institutional and discursive resources to develop China's own cultural heritage system, one that is partially path dependent on the preexisting cultural relics system.

Organizational mechanisms consist mainly of WHC, the World Heritage List, the advisory bodies, and the related international charters and

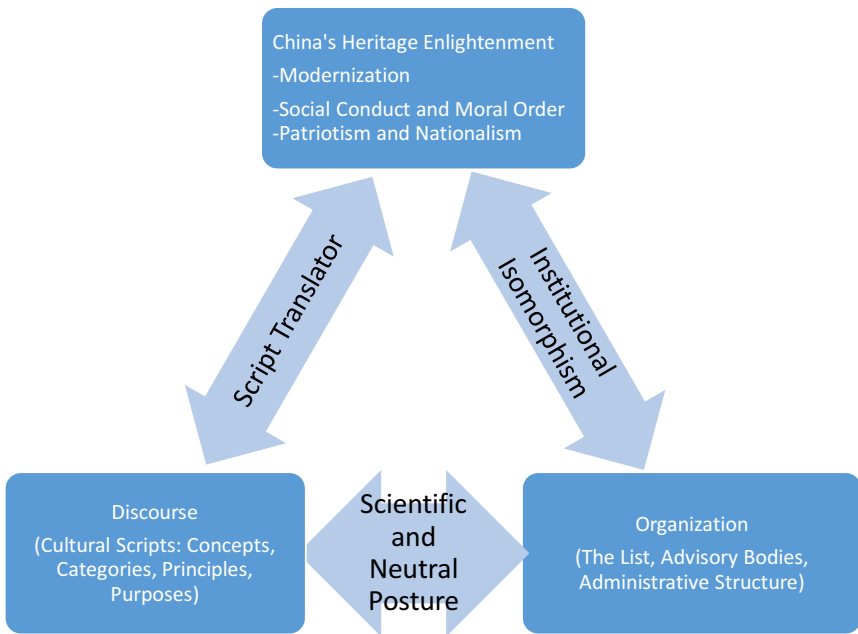


Figure 6.1. The relationships between the three components of the World Heritage system

agreements. These organizational bodies are legitimated to a large extent because of their transnational and assumed neutral posture. As a result, the isomorphism of these organizational bodies has seen parallel diffusion of domestically oriented national heritage inventories, nongovernmental organizations, charters, and so on, on a wide scale. With its objective and transnational character, World Heritage acts as an authoritative master program over regional, national, and local programs. Also, with its non-profit posture, World Heritage is widely adopted as superior to profit-driven programs, such as the New Seven Wonders of the World.

The World Heritage List and the nomination procedure guarantee its image as a rigorous and ostensibly coercive institution. But the institutional power is far from hegemonic in that none of the domestic heritage departments or organizations is coercively imposed; rather they are all voluntarily created and operated by the States Parties. As shown in this study, China shifted its original conceptual system, based on a notion of cultural relics, to a system based on cultural heritage, a transition that was more a voluntarily exercise by domestic forces than an outside imposition.

The organizational part of World Heritage is discursively supported and maintained. Its discursive legitimacy benefits from three main aspects of heritage: (1) its perceived scientism, (2) its set of ethics, and (3) its rhetoric of "world." Scientific methods of heritage designation and management endow World Heritage with "objective and reliable knowledge," while the ethics of preservation entails universally accepted humanitarian principles such as human rights, world peace, social equality, and cosmopolitan harmony.

The rhetorical power of the word "world" is itself potent in generating nationalistic sentiments that directly or indirectly reinforce the discourse of universalism. With these three aspects of discursive formation, World Heritage acts as a cultural script provider that creates a certain set of concepts, categories, principles, and standards for cultural preservation worldwide. These cultural scripts are in turn implemented in national settings at the national level as laws, charters, and regulations. As chapter 2 showed, the theorization of core terms such as authenticity, integrity, cultural diversity, minimum intervention has created a set of discursive tools for a nation's ideological and political governance.

Yet as Meyer has suggested, there are always disjunctions between the master initiative and actual practices. World cultural models are often decoupled from national practices.

First, global models are elaborated as ideals to solve global problems of legitimation, not only to be useful in practice. Second, these models routinely reflect ideals beyond what is practicable in the most resourceful countries, let alone impoverished peripheries. Third, most actors do not have the ca-

capacity to conform to the best proprieties. Fourth, historic path dependencies and local interests may make conformity to standard models subject to some resistance. Finally, the adoption of exogenous models can create dialectic reactions. (Meyer 2009: 51)

One apparent consequence of this disjunction is the binary between universalism and nationalism in heritage preservation. As Askew suggests, "The 'universal' meanings ascribed to sites in the [World Heritage] List have little influence on the ways that World Heritage sites are deployed by member states for their own domestic ideological or exclusionary purposes" (2010: 40). Also, as Barthel-Bouchier and Hui (2009) observe, the major contradiction within the discourse of World Heritage lies in its vacillation between articulating cultural identity with national identity and manifesting cultural identity with the rhetoric of universalism. Hence, the cultural scripts embodied in World Heritage are soft and nonhegemonic.

In fact, the most revealing aspect of the cultural scripts lies not in the texts, but in the process of their translation and recontextualization in the national system. There are three types of agents in this process: the script provider, the script translator, and the script performer. WHC is the ultimate script provider, the heritage professionals and national authorities are the script translator, and the whole World Heritage regime is the script performer. The performers interpret and practice heritage preservation based on their own understanding of the script. But there is no right or wrong performance.

In this sense, the relationship between universalism and nationalism is more dialectic than antithetical. The binary between the two stances can be reconciled, as we describe World Heritage not as a representation of the dichotomy of global/national but as a crystallization of cultural scripts, translations, and performances. To a great extent, the discursive power of World Heritage exists only through the translation and performance of its scripts. World Heritage here serves as a world cultural model that is made possible only by cultural translation of its universalistic claims into national, regional, and local settings.

Moreover, in China, World Heritage serves as a facilitator for Heritage Enlightenment: the introduction, collection, dissemination, and promotion of heritage preservation's concepts; principles; legal knowledge; and its scientific, ethical, and patriotic characteristics. This series of actions is collectively employed by the state authorities in order to develop three principal statements: (1) Heritage preservation is highly consistent with and constitutive of China's economic reform and modernization. (2) Heritage preservation represents a citizen's behavioral civility and disciplined social conduct. (3) Heritage preservation is patriotic and meaningful for the nation's ethnic unity and spiritual development. In other words, Her-

itage Enlightenment promotes the affinity between heritage preservation and the discourse of economic modernity, social conduct, and moral order.

In addition, Heritage Enlightenment is both rationally adaptable and emotionally evocative. On the one hand, it provides a set of scientific statements, which are disseminated among people via educational programs and mass media, and it asserts that the knowledge provided by the government on heritage preservation has solid scientific roots and represents advanced theories of preservation. On the other hand, it is enfolded within a nationalistic discourse that promotes the message that it is only a nation imbued with heritage that supplies its people security and position in world society. Therefore, preserving and appreciating national heritage is emotionally powerful and evocative for the citizens.

World Heritage is a process. Its concept and practice are constantly entangled with discursive institutionalization and institutionalized discourse. Rather than a concrete thing, it is a discourse constructed, negotiated, and reconciled by a group of agents with particular interpretations and interests. Moreover, World Heritage is a discursive and institutional product that is highly associated with domestic endeavors for national integrity, ethnic unity, and social control. The universalistic discourse and principles are institutionalized within particular national contexts. The power of World Heritage, therefore, is authoritative but soft, embodied in cultural scripts that are consistently provided, translated, and practiced by different agents and actors.

The Future of World Heritage

On 30 January, 2012, the director-general of UNESCO Irina Bokova launched the fortieth anniversary celebration of World Heritage. The year-long celebration, commencing in Paris at UNESCO's headquarter, was held around the world, culminating in November in Kyoto, Japan. In the opening ceremony, Bokova delivered a speech greatly commending World Heritage's accomplishments over the past forty years and particularly emphasized that World Heritage has established a system of international responsibility sharing and expertise and that World Heritage embodies the efforts for preserving heritage of all mankind as a "dream" and "beautiful adventure." As Bokova said, "It [World Heritage] is a source of energy that is endlessly renewable. It is a foundation of wisdom and knowledge upon which to build a better future . . . It is a dream of humanity united in its great diversity" (World Heritage Center 2012).

Indeed, there are many reasons to celebrate. There are so many accomplishments at the crossroads of cultural globalization. According to

Bokova in an earlier speech in November 2011, "Heritage carries high stakes—for the identity and belonging of peoples, for the sustainable economic and social development of communities" (World Heritage Center 2011).

Many believe that World Heritage will assuredly continue contributing to human sociocultural life and to the great diversity of the world. As UNESCO's constitution declares, "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed" (UNESCO 1945). World Heritage is an integral program of UNESCO that aims at fulfilling this endeavor to create peace in people's minds. Di Giovine has published a lengthy book on this initiative. He argues that World Heritage is an important step in creating peace in people's minds because it is "the key element in a more ambitious placemaking strategy designed to rearrange the geopolitical landscape into a reconceptualization of the world" (2009: 6).

Di Giovine calls the result of this placemaking strategy the "heritage-scape": "the social space of an imagined community linked together by their common appreciation and identification with cultural diversity" (2009: 36). With the title of World Heritage, material sites are transformed and recontextualized into imaginative universal nodes within the whole network of the heritage-scape. Di Giovine argues, therefore, that the new heritage-scape breaks the preexisting physical boundaries between nations, cultures, regions, and individuals, recontextualizing them within a new imaginative cultural and social order—one that fulfills the task of creating peace in the minds of men.

However, Di Giovine is too optimistic. The imaginative cosmopolitan nature of World Heritage is often intertwined with national or local structures and conflicts of economy, politics, and culture. Di Giovine's heritage-scape prioritizes cosmopolitanism over nationalism, a unilateral relationship that is extensively rejected by my findings. As Daugbjerg and Fibiger put it (2011), heritage has not simply gone global, nor should it be assumed to favor local or subaltern perspectives. Neither the global nor the local is epistemologically and analytically superior to the other.

World Heritage is an institutional transcendence beyond the global and the local, beyond universalism and nationalism, beyond materiality and spirituality, and beyond nature and culture. By adopting, incorporating, and framing World Heritage within a national context, China itself is a discursive construction, integrally built upon the exogenous appreciation and celebrations of its own past. Overall, World Heritage, as well as its prestigious list, is precisely a constitution simultaneously constrained by and transcending the discursive limits of world society.



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