

ASIAN HERITAGES



Edited by Carol Ludwig, Linda Walton and Yi-Wen Wang

The Heritage Turn in China

The Reinvention, Dissemination and Consumption of Heritage

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The Heritage Turn in China

*The Reinvention, Dissemination
and Consumption of Heritage*

*Edited by
Carol Ludwig, Linda Walton
and Yi-Wen Wang*

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To Jack, whose birth took place together with the birth of this book



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Introduction

(Un)Authorised Heritage Discourse and Practice in China

Carol Ludwig and Linda Walton

This edited volume focuses on heritage discourse and practice in China today as it has evolved from the ‘heritage turn’ that can be dated to the 1990s (Madsen 2014; Denton 2014). Using a variety of disciplinary approaches to a broad range of case studies, the contributors to this volume show how particular versions of the past are selected, (re)invented, disseminated and consumed for contemporary purposes. These studies explore how the Chinese state utilises heritage not only for tourism, entertainment, educational and commercial purposes, but also as part of broader political strategies on both the national and international stage. Together, they argue that the Chinese state employs modes of heritage governance to construct new modernities/identities in support of both its political legitimacy and its claim to status as an international superpower.

Both before and after the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, views of cultural heritage changed dramatically, from preservation to targeted destruction to reconstruction. Although the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) is well-known for violent attacks on people, places, and things associated with the ‘feudal’ past, in fact much earlier in the twentieth century, especially during the May Fourth Movement (1919), aspects of China’s cultural heritage were critiqued and rejected as a source of political weakness in the modern era (Ip, Hon & Lee 2003). During the first 30 years of the People’s Republic, while the pre-revolutionary past was for the most part vilified, revolutionary events, people, and places were celebrated with the building of the Yan’an Museum of Revolution in 1950, for example, although ‘Red Tourism’ to sites of revolutionary history did not become a phenomenon until the 1990s (Wang 2012; Denton 2014: 214-242). The pre-revolutionary past, however, drew positive attention from policymakers in the 1980s, when they began to see China’s cultural heritage primarily as an asset to be managed and utilised in the interests of the nation. State support

and regulation of cultural heritage consequently became a prominent aspect of governance. Since the 1990s, however, in tandem with efforts to practice heritage conservation, both urban development and massive public works projects such as the Three Gorges Dam have frequently derailed the protection of cultural heritage sites (Demattè 2012). Such projects have also displaced local communities, reflecting conflicts between the goals of economic prosperity (including profits for the powerful) and the preservation of cultural heritage (Shepherd 2016: 91-120). In the 2000s, tensions between conflicting national goals have intersected with international pressures to maintain global standing as a world power, one aspect of which is China's contribution to world cultural heritage, recognised through soaring numbers of UNESCO-designated World Heritage Sites (Shepherd 2009; UNESCO 2019a; Silverman & Blumenfield 2013: 5).

Positioned within current international trends in heritage discourse, in particular the global spread of Western¹ approaches to heritage conservation, the studies presented here contribute to understanding this new and historically significant phase in how heritage conservation is framed, conceptualised, and practiced in China. This 'turn' in how heritage is imagined, disseminated and consumed has important implications for the international practice of heritage conservation and management over the coming decades (Winter 2014a). As Western conceptions and practices of heritage have themselves been questioned and revised, it is imperative to consider how their global spread has begun to reshape them through translation to vastly differing geographic, political, and cultural spaces (Winter 2014b; Winter 2014c). In China and across the globe, the intersection of local, national, and international interests has brought new agency to a wider range of actors who participate in the construction of modernities/identities through the heritagisation process and raised new questions about the meaning and practice of heritage in a global setting (Askew 2010).

What is Heritage and Heritagisation?

The studies in this book are grounded in the understanding of heritage as a mutable, multifaceted construct, which is produced at any given point in

1 The term 'Western' is used throughout this volume to refer to people, objects, ideas or methods originating from Europe or the United States. We fully acknowledge the ambiguity and generalising nature of the term, yet consider it to be the most appropriate, given its frequent usage and acceptance in academic circles.



time, and is accessed and consumed in the present (Ludwig 2016). Rather than a fixed tangible object, heritage is a set of values that are meaningful to different people, at different times, in different contexts and for different reasons (Ludwig 2013). Because heritage is constantly changing, it is useful to envision it as a process – heritagisation – as well as a construct, a verb rather than a noun (Harvey 2001; Smith 2006; Maags and Svensson 2018). To understand heritage as a subject of critical enquiry, it is useful to explore its discourse across scalar boundaries (Harvey 2015: 579) and through the conceptual lens of the authorised heritage discourse (AHD). The AHD is an uncritical, naturalised, and deeply embedded ‘way of seeing’, centred on the material nature of heritage defined by ‘experts’ (Smith 2006). With its origins in the Western nineteenth-century birth of the conservation ethic, it excludes ‘all dissonant, conflicted or non-core accounts of heritage’ (Smith 2006: 11). Its exclusionary nature reinforces ideological representations of heritage that focus on elite/consensus history, nationalism, tangibility, age and aesthetics. Moreover, it is described as a ‘self-referential’ discourse that, ‘privileges monumentality and grand scale, innate artefact/site significance tied to time depth, scientific/aesthetic expert judgement, social consensus and nation building’ (Smith 2006: 11). The AHD is therefore underpinned by a powerful set of ideas about what heritage is, and these ideas act as orientation points for expert decision-making and adaptation (Ludwig 2016). In contrast to the AHD and in line with recent critical scholarship, we perceive heritage to be complex, multilayered and closely tied to ascribed social meanings, associations and emotions. It therefore encompasses the tangible, built heritage ‘objects’, as well as the intangible heritage and its ‘affective registers’ (Waterton & Watson 2013).

The notion of intangible heritage was officially recognised by UNESCO as a separate category of heritage in 2003, with the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. It emerged as a result of growing criticism fuelled by questions that both affected communities and heritage scholars have raised about UNESCO’s focus on the traditional, elitist and tangible vision of heritage described above, and the consequent closing down of marginal voices (Smith and Waterton 2009; Bortolotto 2007). UNESCO (2019b) defines Intangible Cultural Heritage as ‘traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts’. The inclusion of intangible cultural heritage on the international conservation agenda therefore means ‘conceiving heritage not only as a consecrated masterpiece

of the past to be venerated and preserved, but also as a symbolic and living space' (Bortolotto 2007: 21).

Intangible heritage, therefore, is human activity. This understanding of heritage encompasses reproduction and the transmission of practices, and stands in stark contrast to the naturalised, and deeply embedded 'way of seeing' born out of the nineteenth century conservation ethic described above. As such, this interpretation has serious implications for the continued application of traditional conservation criteria used to identify heritage. One obvious issue is that of authenticity, for example. Whether heritage is deemed authentic traditionally relates to its genuineness, determined by experts, examining scientific evidence to establish whether the original fabric is sufficiently 'intact' (Taylor 2004: 430), as opposed to a form of 'fake' restoration (Larkham 1996; Hobson 2004; Pendlebury 2009). There are generally many problems with this positivist approach to the legitimisation of heritage assets (Ludwig 2016) and these are particularly exacerbated in the context of the Asia Pacific region (Verdini et al. 2017), where, in contrast to Europe, for example, architecture is 'essentially made of perishable and fragile materials, such as timber ... [requiring] frequent rebuilding' (Zhu 2015: 597). The Nara Document on Authenticity (1994) arguably goes some way to address this problem by acknowledging the plurality of cultural traditions and calling for more flexible criteria in regard to authenticity (Verdini et al. 2017); however problems remain in trying to shoe-horn the idea of intangible heritage into the long-established model (operations and rational mindsets) of traditional heritage practice and its deeply embedded conservation philosophy (Ludwig 2016; Also see Delafons 1997 and Jokilehto 1999). Indeed, several scholars are deeply critical about the very separation of the material from the symbolic, the tangible from the intangible (Byrne 2011: 147). Herzfeld (2014: 48), for instance, argues that such a separation assumes that these are 'two clearly defined and mutually opposed entities', which he considers to be not only unhelpful, but also ontologically impossible (Byrne 2011: 155). Indeed, he argues that the very act of reifying (documenting, creating a book, etc.) is textual and thus creates tangibility. Other scholars have also argued that there is 'no such thing as heritage' (Smith 2006: 11) or in other words all heritage is subjective, socially-constructed and intangible, existing only because of the values people attribute to it.

The initial inclusivity and openness created by UNESCO's official division of the tangible and intangible therefore swiftly evaporated into a problematic and confusing dichotomy. Moreover, if it is a question of ontology, i.e., what *is*, then just as for tangible heritage, Herzfeld argues that the important question is 'who gets to define what is' (Byrne 2011: 156). This is, of course, subject to

much contestation, simply because people value things in different ways, for different reasons. Herzfeld (2004) explains this through what he terms a 'global hierarchy of value', where only the 'officially acceptable' [heritage] get reified' - not the folklore or traditions which make up a country's 'cultural intimacy' (those uncomfortable or embarrassing jokes, songs or stories perceived as a potential source of national ridicule) (Byrne 2011: 148). As the conceptual heir of colonialisation, the global hierarchy of value therefore determines 'how seriously different traditions and intellectual cultures will be taken' (Herzfeld 2010: 296) and just like the conflict surrounding tangible heritage, the addition of intangible heritage provides merely an additional layer of subjectivity and 'vagueness' to this value system, which Herzfeld argues is the very essence of its authority. While the global shift from a tangible, archival approach to an intangible, process-oriented approach to heritage thus marks a change in direction for the AHD (Bonnici 2009; Meyer-Bisch 2009; CoE 2011; Sykes & Ludwig 2015; Ludwig 2016; Svensson & Maags 2018), and has 'paved the way' for a new perspective and appreciation of many cultural practices in China as elsewhere (Svensson and Maags 2018: 23), there is yet to be a fundamental shift in the underlying power of the AHD (Smith 2006: 106-114). Moreover, the case for heritage still needs to be made using an appropriate heritage discourse that is recognised within an ambiguous framework of heritage values and, perhaps more importantly, is complementary to contemporary national interests and priorities.

Despite its complex and controversial nature and history, the AHD therefore still provides a useful theoretical entry point, and several studies have adopted it as a heuristic device for international analysis (Waterton 2010; Högberg 2012; Mydland & Grahn 2012; Harvey 2015; Ludwig 2016). But others have also identified conceptual limitations of the AHD, arguing that its use as a critical theoretical device has diverted attention from the continuing significance and political role of nation states – not just simply professional elites – as stakeholders in the construction of it (Svensson & Maags 2018: 16; Herzfeld 2004; Askew 2010; Meskell 2013). This is an especially important consideration in understanding the theory and practice of the AHD in China, while documenting and analysing its practice in China promises to further complicate theoretical perspectives.

Rooted in a Western material understanding of heritage, the AHD is therefore a helpful construct to unravel nationalistic discourses in, of and for heritage (Waterton & Watson 2013) and to unpack consequent tensions between state-led and bottom-up celebrations of culture and identity (Svensson & Maags 2018). In the case of the UK, for example, it is relatively straightforward to identify the AHD, as it is consistently written into official

policy and law. It therefore provides a distinct contrast to the ‘unauthorised’ (alternative, minority or subaltern) versions of heritage, which subsequently may become marginalised and excluded. Indeed, the AHD is traditionally based on a deeply embedded conservation philosophy, which despite nuances, and claims of adjustment (Pendlebury 2013) remains pervasive in Western conservation practice (Ludwig 2016). Applying the AHD to the Chinese context is more complex, in part because of its size and regional diversity. Nonetheless, since the very beginning of the People’s Republic of China, there have been a series of state agencies responsible for developing and implementing official policies toward the protection and preservation of China’s cultural heritage. Currently, the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH) manages heritage sites and museums at national, provincial, and county levels throughout the country, and it also oversees nominations for World Cultural Heritage Site status at the global level. Since 2004, all construction- and heritage-related activities at national and provincial levels must follow a process of approval, planning, and construction under the authority of SACH. Although the bureaucrats and experts who constitute SACH can be said to represent a governmentally endorsed AHD, the chapters in this collection illuminate the diversity of institutional and non-institutional heritage definitions and approaches across China, reflecting both geographical scale and regional difference. These studies point to what could be better defined as, to borrow the term from Pendlebury (2013), an ‘assemblage’ of AHDs. In the absence of a singular, rigidly defined AHD, the plurality of interpretation and representation from local and non-elite groups may alter the version of AHD as conceived and intended by SACH and its regional counterparts. In other words, we suggest that the AHD in China is characterised by a relatively high degree of variability and fluidity.

While one of the underlying messages conveyed in the chapters is a ‘collective’ endeavour (or strong drive) to conserve, reconstruct and even reinvent heritage in China at all spatial scales, the campaign for heritage conservation has been driven and orchestrated by the state for clear purposes (discussed in more detail below) and such state-driven heritage management remains largely top-down and undemocratic. However, we show that tensions between stakeholders emerge, providing examples to demonstrate that spontaneous enthusiasm and initiatives undertaken from the bottom-up or grassroots level in many cases have been equally important, illustrating that other actors are very much involved in the heritagisation process and in creating a continuously developing AHD assemblage for China.

The nature and meaning of heritage continue to be a topic of intense debate, and its contemporary *use* is the subject of an expanding field of



academic enquiry. This expansion includes the ‘critical heritage studies’ movement ‘to promote heritage as an area of critical enquiry’, developed in part in response to the growth of a global ‘heritage industry’ (www.criticalheritagestudies.org; Maags & Svensson 2018: 11-12). A mounting number of studies show that heritage forms part of the overall ‘territorial capital’ of a place (Sykes & Ludwig 2015: 9) and plays a core role in legitimising and mobilising current identities (Massey 1995). The elements of history chosen for reproduction, dissemination and consumption reveal much about the social, economic and political power/influence of heritage in the contemporary world. More specifically with regard to China, researchers have asked questions about the uses of history, nostalgia and heritage by the post-Mao state in the construction of Chinese identities and subjectivities (Wu 2006; Blumenfield & Silverman 2013; Maags & Svensson 2018). The chapters in this book address questions related to the production and practice of an AHD in China, its social, political and economic impacts, as well as conflicts between the goals and priorities of state authorities, experts, and local communities through several key interconnected themes: concepts of power and legitimacy, (re)claiming identity, public pedagogy/moral education, urbanisation, and economic development.

Meanings and Uses of Heritage in Early and Imperial China

Prior to the twentieth century, conceptions and displays of heritage played important roles in the state’s assertion of its legitimacy and power in China as elsewhere (Harvey 2001). As early as the Zhou era (1045-256 BCE), for example, the development of urban space in the capital projected the ruler’s authority. Like the Zhou capital, succeeding dynastic capital cities all followed the same general arrangement: a rectangular walled city, centrally located palace, north-south orientation and central axis. Both the buildings themselves and the layout of the city were designed to reflect the centrality of the ruler and his power (Sit 2010: 95-101). Cultural artefacts also assumed an important symbolic role. Rulers asserted their legitimacy by displaying ‘bronze and jade ritual objects, court seals, scrolls and tax records of either ancestors or those whom they had defeated’ in order to illustrate their triumph and/or legitimise their new status of power/authority (Shepherd & Yu 2013: 5). For example, when the founder of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), Zhu Yuanzhang, conquered the Mongol Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368), an imperial collection of artefacts dating from the ninth century was seized (Shepherd & Yu 2013: 5). These were proudly displayed as a symbol of the power and legitimacy of the new regime.



Cultural artefacts were valued in the private, as well as public, realm. During the Song (960-1279) era private scholarly interest in remnants of the past blossomed, especially the study of bronze and jade ritual objects. While differing political and cultural agendas motivated scholars to collect antiquities and compile catalogues of them, all shared a belief in the contemporary relevance of the relics of the past (Hsu 2010). Rubbings of ancient texts were also collected and catalogued because determining the authenticity of the textual tradition was an important undertaking with deep political significance. For these reasons, cultural heritage, in the form of ancient relics, was the object of profound concern not only for emperors intent on confirming the legitimacy of their rule but also for the educated elite who sought continuity with antiquity, both as a source of classical ideals and as a link to their own ancestors (Wang & Rowlands 2017: 261).

Throughout the history of imperial China, from the Han Dynasty (207 BCE-225 CE) to the early twentieth century, conceptions of cultural heritage were closely tied to Confucianism. A primary example is the performance of Confucian rites and the transmission of these rites through texts as well as practice. Both Confucian texts and ritual vessels embodied the ideals of antiquity and the moral values of the sages who created them, as the practice of rites making use of both texts and vessels performed this cultural heritage. The preservation and transmission of cultural heritage were driven by a desire to access the accurate record of the past in order to use it as a model for correct behaviour in the present (although not necessarily to apply it in a literal sense). Moral and pedagogical uses of the past did not disappear after the demise of imperial China, although the influence of Confucianism was drastically curtailed until its official renaissance in the post-Mao era (Billioud & Thoraval 2015).

Heritage Conservation and the Modern Nation State in China

While both urban space and ancient relics were used by China's dynastic rulers to legitimise their authority, a modern conception of heritage conservation in the public realm and as an aspect of governance only began to emerge in the late Qing era (1644-1911). Along with other elements of 'modernity', the idea of heritage conservation as a domain of state authority was introduced into China from the West. Imperialist exploitation and plunder of historic sites such as the Buddhist cave-temples of Dunhuang by European nations and Japan spurred the Qing government to take steps to protect and preserve China's cultural heritage, beginning with *Measures*



for the Protection of Ancient Sites in 1909. The growth of public awareness and legislation to protect cultural heritage were tied to the building of a modern nation state in China, as the idea of heritage had evolved in tandem with the rise of the nation state in Europe (Meskell & Brumann 2015: 23; Evans & Rowlands 2014: 276; Lai 2016: 50-51). After the fall of the Qing Dynasty and the revolutionary upheavals that followed, however, it was not until 1930 that a second policy statement on the protection of cultural heritage was adopted by the Nationalist government (Lai 2016: 72-78). The *Law on the Preservation of Ancient Objects* was quickly followed in 1931 with further conservation-related legislation, including the *Statute for the Preservation of Scenic Spots, Points of Historical Importance*, and *Articles of Historical, Cultural, and Artistic Value* (Gruber 2007). In 1948, an attempt was made to categorise China's material heritage with the listing of 450 sites in the publication *A Brief List of Important Architectural Heritages in China* (Shepherd & Yu 2013: 10). This inventory, the first of its kind in China, was compiled only a short time before the collapse of the Nationalist government following civil war with the Communists. Political and military turmoil disrupted the prior momentum for heritage conservation and thus had a profound effect on the development of heritage policy in China (Lew 2009).

Following the defeat of the Nationalists in 1949, heritage conservation was not an immediate priority for the Communist government, given the more urgent military, political, and economic demands of establishing a new nation. Once power was consolidated and their rule stabilised, the new government supported archaeological work to salvage artefacts of Chinese antiquity while both utilising and altering cultural monuments inherited from the past. The Gate of Heavenly Peace at the entrance to the Forbidden City was used purposefully by the victorious Communists for their triumphal announcement of the founding of the People's Republic of China on 1 October 1949. Standing on this symbolic monument of the Qing and earlier dynasties, Chairman Mao Zedong waved to the cheering masses, showing that the previously Forbidden City, accessible only to the rulers, had become a public space open to the people and that China now belonged to them. While such monuments from the past were used in this way to legitimise Communist power and authority, the new government also permitted the destruction of cultural sites for the purpose of constructing new monuments and public spaces. The historic areas south of the Forbidden City were demolished in 1958-1959 to build the Great Hall of the People and to expand Tiananmen Square (Shepherd & Yu 2013: 15). Destruction also occurred in the course of urban development undertaken to fulfil the regime's promise to meet the daily needs of the masses. For example,

Beijing's Ming-era walls were destroyed during the construction of a new subway system in the mid-1960s (Shepherd & Yu 2013: 15).

One of the first indications of the Communist leadership giving serious attention to heritage management as a domain of state power and a potent political and cultural resource was the 1961 adoption of the PRC's first official policy on the protection and management of cultural heritage, the *Provisional Regulations on the Protection and Administration of Cultural Relics*. Only a year later, in 1962, the Cultural Relics Bureau within the Ministry of Culture published a list of national cultural sites (Shepherd & Yu 2013: 15). Together, these changes represented an attempt to form a national cultural heritage system for China. This momentum was disrupted by the Cultural Revolution, characterised by Mao's encouragement of an unprecedented attack on the 'four olds' – customs, culture, habits, and ideas (Dikötter 2016). The decade between 1966 and Mao's death in 1976 saw the consequent destruction and vandalism of many historic sites, including temples, churches, and mosques, as a means of eradicating all evidence of 'old thinking' and 'old culture'. Despite prevalent images of destruction and desecration during the Cultural Revolution, however, both official and private efforts succeeded in protecting many sites and relics by promoting their value as instruments of revolutionary nationalism (Ho 2011; Evans & Rowlands 2014: 276-277). State interest in China's cultural heritage surged in the 1980s, in tandem with the political and economic 'opening' that took place in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution. In 1982 China published its first *Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage of the People's Republic of China*, and three years later it ratified the 1972 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

During the 1980s, as China adapted to UNESCO-based global values and language, the term 'cultural relic' (*wenwu* 文物) was replaced by 'heritage' (*yichan* 遗产), which originally referred to inherited family property. The compound '*wenhua yichan*' (文化遗产) thus came to be used for public historical remains or 'cultural heritage', a seemingly better fit with the universalistic language employed by UNESCO's member states (Wang & Rowlands 2017: 268; Fiskejö 2015: 100). Once China's participation in the global heritage community was formally established, the Chinese government sought to inscribe sites such as the Great Wall, Beijing's Forbidden City and the nearby Peking Man archaeological site at Zhoukoudian on to the World Heritage List (Shepherd & Yu 2013: 19). UNESCO (2019a) lists 55 Chinese cultural, natural and mixed heritage assets currently inscribed on the World Heritage List. The Chinese government now claims these and other sites to be of 'World Heritage value', despite the fact that some had been attacked

and discredited in the recent past. The fluidity of values ascribed to such sites over time – from negative associations with ‘feudal’ culture to proud reminders of a glorious past – is compounded by the ambiguity surrounding UNESCO’s European-derived universalistic conceptualisation of heritage coupled with the claims of the modern Chinese nation state to represent the legacy of an ancient and unique civilisation (Evans and Rowlands 2014: 273). This dilemma is not unique to China, but it is nonetheless a crucial framework for understanding how Chinese state authorities negotiate China’s position in the global hierarchy of value (Herzfeld 2004; Meskell & Brumann 2015). International recognition and accolades are useful marketing tools to highlight what China’s cultural heritage has to offer the world and to enhance its value as an economic asset. Following the embrace of heritage in China, the tourism industry has boomed, drawing both domestic and foreign tourists to these and other sites (Sofield & Li 1998; Ryan & Gu 2009; Bao, Chen & Ma 2014). However, a number of questions concerning this ‘heritage turn’ remain to be answered: how did domestic and global strategic purposes evolve and align, whose and what interests did processes of selectivity in heritagisation serve, and what were the consequences of the ensuing (re)invention, dissemination and consumption of heritage?

Content and Contributions of this Book

From the perspective of the state, heritage is viewed in contemporary China as a vehicle for the rebuilding of moral values and as a tool to cultivate shared national identity in the face of widespread disaffection from Marxism and cynicism about the Communist Party (Madsen 2014). Set within the historical context briefly outlined above, this book draws attention to the ways in which sanitised historical discourses of nostalgia and heritage (carefully controlled, selective narratives of the past) are used to cultivate a form of cultural nationalism by (re)claiming past identities, how these discourses can be understood as a tool of power/knowledge and governance (Foucault 1991; Johnson 2016; Wu & Hou 2015), and how they can be used to assert political authority by leaders at all levels (Barr 2011). In doing so, the chapters present a variety of case studies to illustrate how versions of the past are selected, (re)invented, disseminated and consumed for contemporary purposes. Each chapter raises complementary questions about which parts of the past are included in such narratives, whose pasts are (re)presented and for what purposes, who is involved and how does the Chinese notion of heritage drive the (re)invention process? Finally, they ask what are the



implications of the above for place-making and conservation of the built environment, and what are the effects of the consumption of such sanitised forms of heritage for China, as well as for the rest of the world?

By addressing these questions, the chapters in this book explore the strategies of cultural heritage management that political leaders in China and elsewhere use to represent their national identities on the world stage. Indeed, there is increasing recognition that 'shared' cultural heritage can play an important role in promoting international cooperation, and simultaneously enhance a nation's global reputation (Winter 2015). While the values of culture, science, and education have been seen as critical indicators of the success, civility and development of nations, using heritage as a mechanism to promote such 'achievements' has become a popular contemporary political strategy (Winter 2014a). Scholars such as Nye (2004) refer to this as a diplomatic strategy of 'soft power', arguing that China and other nations invest in the enhancement of their country's 'soft power' to achieve broader nationalist aims, including national security and peace-keeping. Robert Albro (2012) describes this as 'cultural display' and Winter (2014a: 335) explains that such cultural display is used, 'to convey affinities, bonds, dialogue, mutuality, and other such values in the international diplomatic arena'. The complexities that can arise in the nationalistic assertion of cultural heritage ownership in the international setting have been revealed, for example, in the 'Zodiac saga' concerning Chinese demands for the return of bronze-plated animal figures stolen from the ruins of the Summer Palace in Beijing in 1860 (Fotopoulos 2015). The irony here is that these figures were of European manufacture in imitation of Chinese style, presented to the Chinese court, then reportedly looted by Westerners. At the beginning of the twenty-first century when these objects began to appear on the international art market, the Chinese government demanded their repatriation as part of its cultural heritage stolen by Europeans. Given the questionable provenance of these figures as 'Chinese', claims to them as part of China's cultural heritage are rooted more in a rhetorical narrative of national humiliation than in verifiable cultural patrimony (Fiskesjö 2010).

The chapters presented here contribute to the growing body of literature on China's appeal to the exposition of its traditional values and cultural heritage after rising to the status of a global economic power, as suggested by the cultural politics of the 'Zodiac saga'. While Winter (2014a: 326), for example, draws on the recent book by Natsuko Akagawa (2014) to explain how Japan is using cultural display to advance a foreign policy built on 'narratives of peace', other scholars have suggested that China has also embraced and invested in heritage for international diplomatic purposes. Since the

re-awakening of interest in the country's heritage in the 1980s following the widespread destruction of historical sites, particularly during the Cultural Revolution, heritage has been linked closely to Chinese nationalism and shaped by a desire to restore a strong sense of the historical standing of China's 'great' civilisation. In other words, China is eager to portray itself externally as a country 'with a rich cultural past' and as 'a civilization that has influenced other countries and cultures' (Winter 2014a: 328). Such claims are supported by China's evident 'stepping up [of] its heritage diplomacy efforts' (Svensson & Maags 2018: 17; Winter 2015), including its active involvement since the 1980s with UNESCO World Heritage initiatives. The process of heritage-making is used as a mechanism through which 'soft power' can be enhanced and modern identities can be crafted, interpreted and consumed.

The chapters in this collection are the product of an international symposium on heritage held in April 2016 in Suzhou, Jiangsu, China. The combination of expertise in the fields of history, anthropology, ethnography, urban planning and design, politics, critical theory, literary and visual culture casts a vital multidisciplinary lens on the discourse and practice of heritage in China, enabling a nuanced and comprehensive perspective on this complex topic. Papers were invited around three themes: 'Sanitised narratives of heritage', 'Politics of heritage' and 'Commodification of heritage'; they were selected based on their fit within these topic areas, together with their theoretical contributions and positioning within the wider literature. The papers chosen for publication in this book draw upon established theoretical discourse in heritage studies, as well as more recent developments in the critical heritage studies movement. This book builds on and expands two related collections on China: *Cultural Heritage Politics in China* (Blumenfield & Silverman 2013) and *Chinese Heritage in the Making: Experiences, Negotiations and Contestations* (Maags & Svensson 2018). The studies presented here ask complementary theoretical, socio-political, ethical and geographical questions about the management and politics of heritage governance in China in an age of shifting global power, introducing new topics, areas of research, and disciplinary perspectives.

Section 1 looks at processes of reconstruction, reinvention, and representation of heritage in different settings. In Chapter 1 Florence Graezer Bideau (Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, Switzerland) presents a conceptual introduction to many issues addressed throughout the book. She uses the disciplinary lens of anthropology to focus on two case studies, a sacred mountain near Beijing and an urban district in Beijing, highlighting the implementation of institution-driven policies as well as the agency



of affected communities, and conflicts that erupt among them. From the perspective of state policy, Chapter 2 argues that the restoration and reconstruction of traditional Confucian academies as cultural heritage sites represent a sanitised Confucian past used to cultivate cultural identity and foster bonds of nationalism. Linda Walton (Portland State University, USA) shows that state investment in such heritage-making is crucially about more than simply extracting the profit from heritage and that it is instead better understood as promoting public pedagogy through the use of the traditional academy as a model of moral education deeply rooted in Confucian values.

Yingjie Guo (University of Sydney) builds on this in Chapter 3, analysing the restoration of sites at Confucius's birthplace to show how China's position in relation to heritage has transformed from neglect to an unprecedented commitment to heritage conservation. He illustrates the close linkage between conservation and nationalism, as well as the primacy of identity politics in decision-making for major Confucian sites. In doing so, he draws attention to the official ideology of state socialism, national self-identity and China's vision of its place in the world. Kristin Bayer's (Marist College, USA) Chapter 4 deals with a universally recognised feature of the Chinese landscape, the Great Wall, through its literary representations in works by William Edgar Geil (1865-1924) and more recently by William Lindesay (b.1956). She traces how the Wall's meanings and symbols have been manufactured to fit both non-Chinese and Chinese imaginings, suggesting that the Great Wall is a malleable symbol of cultural heritage that can serve multiple – and even conflicting – interests, including foreign as well as Chinese.

The above chapters pave the way for Section 2 'Creating Identities: Constructing Pasts, Disseminating Heritage'. In Chapter 5 Carol Ludwig (University of Liverpool) and Yi-Wen Wang (Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University) examine the selective usage of memory and practice to reconstruct specific versions of the past. Beamish open-air museum, Durham, UK and the theme park Song Dynasty Town in Hangzhou are presented as comparative case studies. The authors use education, tourism and the creation of new identities as an analytical framework to understand the different ways in which the dissemination and consumption of cultural heritage take place. They show that the 'unauthorised' heritage, such as the commercial heritage presented in these cases, which was not necessarily intended by the state to be a part of the AHD, can become a part of it, revealing a blurring between authorised and unauthorised heritage.

Chapter 6 by Patrick Wertmann (Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies, Zurich) similarly addresses the dissemination and consumption of cultural heritage by showing how the popularisation of cultural heritage is part of



government strategies to foster common cultural identity, social unity, and patriotism among different groups and levels of society in China. The author provides examples of how the achievements of Chinese civilisation are glorified through entertainment, education (edutainment), the creation of ‘unforgettable experiences’ and initiatives such as the mobile museum. He argues that such initiatives have successfully popularised heritage while simultaneously enabling its transmission to wider audiences. Finally in this section, focusing on the creation, dissemination, and consumption of heritage through museums, Chapter 7 by Kenny K. K. Ng (Hong Kong Baptist University) surveys several museums in Nanjing to show how museums in this former imperial and modern capital contribute to the construction of local identities through (re)creations of the past in place. He thus addresses the theme of place-making in the creation, dissemination, and consumption of heritage.

Section 3 on ‘History, Nostalgia and Heritage: Urban and Rural’, picks up the idea of place, beginning with Andrew Law’s (University of Newcastle) Chapter 8, which reveals how selective discourses of history and nostalgia are used as part of place-making and place-branding strategies for urban growth, as well as for constructing Chinese modern identities. He draws on contemporary examples from the cities of Shanghai, Wuhan and Xi’an to argue that histories and imaginaries of the Republican 1920s-1930s, Ming (and Qing) era mercantile capitalism and the earlier Tang Dynasty imperium, have all played important parts in the construction of indigenous urban histories and identities of Chinese modernity and capitalism. These real or imagined heritages, he argues, serve as crucial marketing instruments in the branding of Chinese cities, but perhaps more importantly are also ‘used to actualise imaginaries in the present’. Turning to the role of nostalgia and history in heritage-making in a rural environment, Marina Svensson (Lund University, Sweden) analyses in Chapter 9 the ways in which heritage is constantly (re)imagined in Xinye village and how, in particular, performance and entertainment have become crucial and normalised aspects of China’s heritagisation process.

Section 4, ‘Appropriations and Commodifications of Ethnic Heritage’, addresses the utilisation of ethnicity by the state for the definition and construction of heritage as a means of social and political control, and by ethnic groups themselves as a means of resistance. The latter is demonstrated by Joseph Lawson (University of Newcastle) in Chapter 10 on the Yi ethnic group’s reappropriation of their alcohol-related culture as heritage, in opposition to Han Chinese perception and interpretation of it as simply the excessive consumption of alcohol (criticised by both health researchers

and government officials). It explores various historical narratives and the influence these have on discourses and practices of heritage in the present-day. This is complemented in Chapter 11 by Melissa Shani Brown and David O'Brien's (University of Nottingham) study of the idealisation and commodification of ethnicity and the past in Xinjiang. The chapter focuses on the utilisation of a traditional Kazakh village to present an idealised depiction of national ethnic harmony – images of ethnicity reiterated, represented and disseminated, as well as commodified and consumed.

While aspects of the heritage 'turn' in China are well-documented elsewhere (Blumenfield & Silverman 2014, Maags & Svensson 2018), this book pays particular attention to this (re)awakening in a discursive and global context. It argues that heritage is being (re)invented, disseminated and consumed in ways that diverge from, and even challenge, Western understanding and practice of heritage. Moreover, the role and purpose of heritage (re)invention, dissemination and consumption are expanding into new arenas. These relate not only to the economic value of heritage, or to the public pedagogy/reclamation of traditional moral values and ideals, but also to the fostering of bonds of national identity, purifying and strengthening the 'spirit' of citizens and cultivating cultural nationalism. In China as elsewhere, heritage has also become a useful political strategy for wider international diplomacy and power relations on the world stage (Winter 2015). The purpose of this book is to advance understanding of heritagisation in China at the intersection of the local, national, and international arenas, tracking the dynamics of this process as it unfolds in diverse settings, the stakeholders and actors who carry it out, and its dissemination and consumption.

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