Preserving Under Triple Dilemmas: Study on the Jinyang National Archaeological Site Park

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Preserving Under Triple Dilemmas: Study on the Jinyang National Archaeological Site Park

Abstract
This thesis introduces a new preservation type in China — the National Archaeological Site Park (abbreviated as NASP). With a special concern on the Jinyang NASP, this study summarizes the historical significance of the Jinyang archaeological site and reveals the mounting threatens to the site, which is posted by the massive urbanization and the aggressive developmental strategy prompted by the local leader, Mayor Geng.

Taking the Jinyang site and Mayor Geng as an example, this research explores the complicated issues residing in the preservation fields of China. Viewing from the dimension of government, society and individual respectively, the author argues that there is a common status among China's preservation practices, which is preserving under triple dilemmas: the inherent institutional syndrome of the government used to results in the distortion of the real ends of historic preservation; on the side of society, the increasingly imbalanced social development creates a divisive environment in which affairs of historic preservation are not favored; for various individuals involved in historic preservation, it is very difficult to reach consensus and make a common effort because of inconsistent personal benefits. At last, this thesis makes some suggestions for the improvement of the Jinyang NASP.

Keywords
Jinyang, archaeological park, NASP, Mayor Geng, administrative subcontract

Disciplines
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Zhongpei Qin

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# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................ ii

Table of Contents .......................................................................................................... iii

List of Figures ................................................................................................................ iv

List of Maps ................................................................................................................... v

Introduction .................................................................................................................... 1

Chapter 1: China’s NASP ............................................................................................. 5
  1.1 The system of historic preservation in China ..................................................... 5
  1.2 What is the NASP ............................................................................................... 8
  1.3 The history of NASP .......................................................................................... 12

Chapter 2: The city of Jinyang ..................................................................................... 20
  2.1 Topography ......................................................................................................... 20
  2.2 Overview of history ............................................................................................. 23
  2.3 Archaeological discoveries ................................................................................ 27
  2.4 Historical significance ......................................................................................... 52

Chapter 3: The Jinyang NASP ..................................................................................... 55
  3.1 The Past past of the Jinyang NASP ................................................................. 55
  3.2 The extant situation of the Jinyang NASP ....................................................... 56
  3.3 Challenges for the building of Jinyang NASP ............................................... 67

Chapter 4: Mayor Geng and the Triple Dilemmas of Historic Preservation .......... 71
  4.1 Mayor Geng ........................................................................................................ 71
  4.2 The triple dilemmas of historic preservation .................................................. 81

Chapter 5: The Future of Jinyang NASP ................................................................. 98
  5.1 Reviews on the Jinyang NASP ......................................................................... 98
  5.2 Suggestions for the future of Jinyang NASP ................................................. 99

Bibliography .................................................................................................................. 104

Appendices .................................................................................................................... 110

Acronyms ...................................................................................................................... 117

Glossary ......................................................................................................................... 118

Index ............................................................................................................................. 120
List of Figures

Dynasties and periods of ancient China ................................................................. vii
Figure 1. West wall relics on the ground ................................................................. 31
Figure 2. Southwest corner of city wall ................................................................. 32
Figure 3. Section of north part of west wall ......................................................... 34
Figure 4. Section of south part of west wall ........................................................ 35
Figure 5. Aerial of No.1 ruins of complex (first period upper, second period bottom) ... 38
Figure 6. Relics of the ditch and iron fence ......................................................... 39
Figure 7. Relics of houses ................................................................................... 40
Figure 8. Aerial of No.2 ruins of complex ........................................................... 43
Figure 9. Aerial of the tomb of the Minister Zhao of the Jin State ..................... 47
Figure 10. Jades and Wine pots excavated from the tomb of the Minister Zhao of the Jin State.............................................................................................................. 48
Figure 11. Mural painting in the Tomb of Xu Xianxiu depicting the banquet of tomb owner ......................................................................................................................... 49
Figure 12. Yu Hong’s marble sarcophagus with Zoroastrianism decorations ......... 50
Figure 13. Heavily restored Buddhism statue in Kaihuasi ................................... 51
Figure 14. The Sage Mother Hall of the Jin Shrine ............................................ 52
Figure 15. Aerial of the Jinyang site and its vicinity (larger version in Appendix III) .. 59
Figure 16. A corner of one of the villages located on the Jinyang site .................. 60
Figure 17. Woodcut map (1826) and Aerial photo (1943) of the Taiyuan county town .. 62
Figure 18. The Northern gate of the Taiyuan county town (before the massive restoration) .................................................................................................................. 63
Figure 19. The restored gate of the Taiyuan county town ..................................... 64
Figure 20. The Lighting Carnival held on the newly restored city walls of the Taiyuan county town during the Lantern Festival of 2018 ........................................... 65
Figure 21. An stele marking the location of the Jinyang site stands in the void fields .. 67
Figure 22. Mayor Geng featuring magazine cover .............................................. 72
Figure 23. Mayor Geng and his office on-site ..................................................... 74
Figure 24. Wang Family Compound of the Lingshi county ........................................... 76
Figure 25. Yuci old town ............................................................................................... 77
Figure 26. The massive demolition and renovations Geng had made in Datong .... 78
Figure 27. The newly completed overpass in Taiyuan .................................................. 79
Figure 28. The combination of horizontal competition for promotion and vertical administrative subcontract ................................................................. 87
Figure 29. Residential environment of residents in the Taiyuan county town .......... 95
Figure 30. The triple dilemmas of historic preservation ........................................... 97
Figure 31. Archaeologist is making a lecture on-site for the public in the Open Day of the Jinyang site ........................................................................................................... 102
List of Maps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Map 1</td>
<td>Distribution of China’s NASP sites</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map 2</td>
<td>Location of the Jinyang site</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map 3</td>
<td>Topography of Jinyang</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map 4</td>
<td>Topography of the Jinyang site</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map 5</td>
<td>Archaeological discoveries in the Jinyang site</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map 6</td>
<td>Archaeological discoveries around the Jinyang site</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map 7</td>
<td>Geng’s footprints and records of promotion</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Once being a major city in Northern China, Jinyang (literally means “the north of Jin river”) had played a prominent role in the early and middle period of Chinese history, but it was utterly destroyed in 979 CE after a war of conquest and the following punitive demolition. It is regret that one could hardly identify the remains when standing in the modern villages built right on the site of Jinyang now, let along muse upon the glorious past of the city in the light of the scene of relics. However, the building of the National Archaeological Site Park (hereafter abbreviated as NASP), a newly adopted preservation type in China, brings the hope of improving the readability of the Jinyang site and transforming it to be a multi-functional public space.

The NASP is an in-situ planning and preservation form designed for large-scale and significant archaeological sites, which is aimed for enhancing scientific research, preserving archaeological site, as well as serving the public by creating a green and cultural space with the historical, archaeological and ecological resources conveyed by the site. As a flagship project in the fields of preservation and archaeology, it is prompted in great effort by the central government over the whole nation in recent years.

Generally speaking, the building of NASP will provide a rarely favorable chance for
both the Jinyang site and the public. For example, the site will receive much more
supporting resources (including financial allocations, convenience of polices) from the
government, by which its system of preservation and the research on the site could be
improved, meanwhile, for the public, a well-managed NASP means more decent public
space and cultural resource.

However, eight years after being inscribed into the first batch of the NASP Preparing
list, the Jinyang NASP remains nothing more than a hollow slogan hovering above the
archaeological site while more than half of the sites in the same batch of the Jinyang site
had already become the formal NASP site. Ironically, massive constructions in and
around the site — not for the NASP but for the restoring of a Ming-Qing town (at least
1000 years later than the Jinyang site) and other real estate projects — are now in full
swing day and night.

This stagnation and the confusing developmental priority had drawn the local chief
— Mayor Geng who is known for his controversial developmental mode: aggressively
renovate old towns with the aim of building them to be popular tourist sites — into the
center of debate again. Rather than building the promising NASP first, why Mayor Geng
still cling to develop the Ming-Qing town? Were the fake reconstructions really
appropriate and necessary even though they might be attractive for tourists? With these
questions concerned, this thesis reveals the threats that massive urbanization and
aggressive local development mode posted to the Jinyang site.
Taking the case of Jinyang and Mayor Geng as an example, this study explores further on the plights residing in the preservation fields of China. From the perspective of government, social and individual respectively, the author analyzes the complicated issues of historic preservation and argues a common situation of current historic preservation in China — preserving under triple dilemmas: the inherent institutional syndrome of the government used to results in the distortion of the real ends of historic preservation; on the side of society, the increasingly imbalanced social development creates a divisive environment in which affairs of historic preservation are not favored; for various individuals involved in the fields of historic preservation, it is very difficult to reach consensus and make a common effort because of inconsistent personal benefits.

Following a short introduction of the historic preservation system in China, chapter 1 discussed the nature of NASP and reviews the origin of China’s NASP as well as its practice over these years.

Started with the examination of geographical conditions and history of Jinyang, chapter 2 summaries the archaeological discoveries in and around the site, through which the historical and cultural significance of the Jinyang site is revealed and stressed.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to introduction of the past and the present situation of the Jinyang NASP, as well as discussions about the extant difficulties of the building of Jinyang NASP.

Centering with the specific case of Mayor Geng, Chapter 4 analyzes the dilemmas of
preservation from the dimension of government, society and individual respectively.

Chapter 5 reviews the Jinyang NASP in the light of the dilemmas revealed above and raises several practical proposals for the future of Jinyang NASP.
Chapter 1: China’s NASP

1.1 The system of historic preservation in China

As a matter of public service, it is the forces of government that played a dominant and indispensable role in China’s historic preservation, though non-governmental organizations, academic institutes are increasingly active in this field. Government’s administration could be roughly divided as three major branches: administrative agency, financial bureau as well as preservation laws and regulations.

The principle department governing preservation matters is Wenwuju (Administration of Cultural Heritage). The State Administration of Cultural Heritage (hereafter, SACH), an agency of central government, is responsible for making the state-wide preservation policies and administrating bureaus of lower levels. Likewise, the Administration of Cultural Heritage in each level of government (from high to low: province, municipal, county) undertakes respective routines of preservation.\(^1\)

An important principle in this administrative structure is especially worth to note,

\(^1\) In the level of municipal and county, some administration of cultural heritage are set together with the bureau of tourist, from which we can see the tourist/economic oriented standpoint of administration followed by the government.
namely the rule of “Jurisdiction-Based Administration”, which means the administration of cultural heritage should be the responsibility of the local government of the place where the cultural heritage is located. As a result, major burdens of maintaining and preserving the heritages largely lay upon the local government, despite it collects a far less income of revenue compared with the central government.²

Corresponding to the administrative departments, the structure of financial bureaus is also divided as levels of state, province, municipal and county. Due to the financial reform in 1994 (since when the central government collected the majority of tax revenue, but left most of the expenditures to the local government), the local government has to raise most of funds to cover the cost of historic preservation affairs.³

Laws and regulations supply historic preservation with legal support and executive guidance. The basic law is Zhonghua renmin gongheguo wenwubaohufa (The People’s Republic of China’s Law of Preservation of Cultural Heritage, here after abbreviated as LPCH), which was first issued in 1982 and revised in 2015. This law defines the definition of cultural heritage and identifies the responsibility of each department in historic preservation. A less mandatory but more practical regulation is The Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China, which was issued in 2000 and then revised

² Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage, ed. Dayizhi baohu xingdong genzong yanjiu (Tracking on the large archaeological site protection scheme), (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2016), 333-334.
³ Ibid.
in 2015. This is a cooperative work of both domestic and international preservation experts. This regulation is widely adopted because it not only consults international conventions but also refers to experience of practices in China over decades.\(^4\) Besides, since the government encourages institutes to make their own specific regulations for the cultural heritages administrated by them, there are various regulations concerning either one specific type of cultural heritages, such as the *Guojia kaoguyizhi gongyuan guanlibanfa (shixing)* (Temporary methods for the management of the NASP), or a single site, for instance, the *Taiyuanshi Jinyanggucheng yizhi guanli tiaoli* (Taiyuan municipal city regulations for the management of the site of the Jinyang ancient city).

Overall, although the system of historic preservation established by administrative, financial and legal apparatuses seems complete and refined, there are still many hidden disadvantages impeding the operation of this system. The most serious concern is the unreasonable duty for the local government, who are supposed to assume the major responsibility of preservation without sufficient financial income. What’s more, in a national GDP (Gross Domestic Product)-oriented atmosphere, leaders of the local government used to try any means to increase the GDP of their jurisdictions, which inevitably impacts the non-profit affairs like historic preservation.

1.2 What is the NASP

As an in-situ preservation form, the NASP incorporates the feature of park and carries the mission of cultural conservation, public education and archaeological research. Its official definition from the SACH reads:

Special public space that takes significant archaeological sites and their environmental context as main body, that has the function of research, education and recreation, etc. and that is the national model for the preservation and exhibition of archaeological sites.5

The Salalah Recommendation gives “Archaeological Park” the following definition:

An archaeological park is the link between scientific research and the public...It can be termed as a definable area, distinguished by the value of heritage resources and land related to such resources, having the potential to become an interpretive, educational and recreational resource for the public, which should be protected and

5 The State Administration of Cultural Heritage, Guojia kaoguyizhi gongyuan chuangjian ji yunxing guanli zhinan (shixing) (Temporary instructions on the building and management of NASP). Accessed 3/20/2017, http://www.sach.gov.cn/art/2018/1/30/art_1036_146797.html. This definition explains the mission of NASP clearly, but it misses one important premise: the ownership of land. Legally speaking, it is the Socialism public ownership of land in China, which could be divided as the Whole-people ownership and the Collective ownership. The Whole-people ownership means that the land is owned by all the nationals and the government, as the agent of the whole nationals, has the right of this part of land. The Collective ownership refers to that the land is owned by a specific group of people (normally the local villages or communities), thus the collective entities of villages or communities has the right of this kind of land. Generally, the land of downtown are the Whole-people owned while the land of suburbs and rural areas are owned by the collectives. Mostly located at suburbs and rural areas, the land of NASPs are majorly owned by local collective entities. Therefore, the will of central government, the execution of local government and the land-selling of local collective entities are the three major parts involved in the development of NASP.
A personal understanding of the “Archaeological Park” presented by a scholar might be a supplement for the official definition:

- A not-for-profit expression of cultural value with a focus on visitors that includes communication to high museological standards;
- Centred on a core distinctive monument within a sizeable area of cultural landscape that can be zoned for interpretive purposes;
- A large area with a distinct boundary administrated by the park and having a single controlled entry point for visitors;
- Comfortable for visitor, with car parks, landscaped walks, a café and toilets;
- A well marketed focus for tourism;
- Likely to place conservation rather than public service at the core of its purpose.

No matter what the exact definition is, one should easily get the core spirit of the NASP from above descriptions: first of all, the prominent pursuit of the NASP is to preserve the archaeological sites and landscapes of which they are a part, as well as the significant culture conveyed by the sites; second, the NASP is a special public space. Apart from objects of preservation and academic commissions, it also serves the public for recreation and education; third, the NASP holds a high criteria. The nomination of NASP is very selective: among all the archaeological sites around the country, only the

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site that is considered to have both significant cultural and academic value could be designated as the NASP. Meanwhile, all the NASP site must be highly integrated and authentic; fourth, the NASP site enjoys generous benefits: the NASPs (especially the formal NASPs) will have all the favors from financial supports to convenience of polices.

As a national flagship project, the NASP has achieved great performance in a short period. Firstly, this new preservation type protects the relics in and near urban area from threatens of rapid urbanization. Secondly, the NASPs increase public space and green land for the public. Thirdly, the NASPs provide a platform integrating local cultural resources, a stage showing local place’s cultural identity and a channel spreading the idea of preservation among the public. Fourthly, much-needed buffer zones are created for the archaeological sites through the form of NASP, which guarantees sufficient room for scientific excavation and archaeological research.

It is noteworthy that the practice of NASP marks a significant improvement of China’s preservation efforts. First of all, it signifies the shifting of preservation attitude from passiveness to positiveness. Instead of rush remedies used to take previously, the NASP is a practice of preserving in advance, which will prevent many unnecessary losses and produce better results. Secondly, rather than keeping the sphere of preservation limited within the sites themselves as formerly did, the mission of NASP emphasizes and incorporates the context of sites as well. Thirdly, in contrast with the single and isolated objects of preservation, the spirits of NASP become more open and multi-tasked, in other
words, the NASP merges the efforts of preservation into a wide range of concerns, such as economy, education and ecology: it creates a special public space, which could provide scenic landscape, cultivate culture identity, arouse the awareness of historic preservation, as well as earn profits from tourism, etc.

On the other hand, although with bright prospects, this brand-new preservation form has not developed to be a mature system yet, its supporting institutional facilities still need to be improved. The biggest challenge is that the NASP has not a clear legal status for now: it has not been inscribed into any preservation or other laws, which means the operation of the NASP project is not mandatory and could not enjoy the full backing of the law. In fact, this defect, as we will see in the example of Jinyang NASP, partially explains the arbitrary treatment from local government.

Another major limitation flows from the fiscal design. While the NASP is a national policy initiated by the SACH, the central government just allocates a small part of funds, the major responsibility of building and operating a NASP site largely lies upon the local budget. Therefore, it has been a heavy financial burden for the local government, especially for the backward region. As a matter of fact, none NASP site across the country could not make their ends meet. Without stable and substantial financial sources, the NASP is no more than castle in the air. Worse still, some local governments take the NASP as a cash cow or GDP generator, which distorts its real ends viciously.
1.3 The history of NASP

1.3.1 Origin

Although it has been just less than a decade since the establishment of the NASP in China, it took nearly a century for the evolving and emerging of this preservation type. Generally speaking, the NASP was originated from both domestic practice and international influence. For the convenience of analysis, we just simply view the origin of the NASP from the domestic and international perspective respectively, though essentially, both sources worked together.

It should be noted in the beginning that archaeological research will naturally bring with the needs of site conservation, since the excavation could not be done at once and relics must be maintained for further research once they were excavated. Besides, it is the archaeological practices that accumulated experience of preservation and trained the professionals. As a matter of fact, no matter scholars or administrators, almost all the practitioners active in the field of NASP have the background of archaeology.

1. Experience of domestic archaeological practices

Speaking of the origin of NASP, we might need to firstly figure out the root of the Large-scale Heritage Site (abbreviated LHS), which is the direct source of the NASP, in
other words, the history of LHS could be viewed as the prelude of the NASP.

The LHS, as its name indicates, refers to the archaeological site with vast area (from thousands square meters to hundreds of square kilometers). With highly developed ancient civilization accumulated for thousands of years, ruins and relics are widely spread around the land of China, among which about one third are defined as the LHS (1411 out of 4295), including ruins of ancient cities, mausoleum of royal clans, relics of workshops. Starting from scratch and progressing gradually, the origin of LHS is almost a history of preservation in China.8

During the 1920’s and 1930’s, as the introducing of modern archaeological methods, there were many sensational discoveries from the prominent archaeological sites under scientific excavations, which aroused people’s attention on the historical sites, as well as the needs of conserving them properly. Meanwhile, the rampant tomb plundering and antique smuggling in that chaotic period also provoked the public’s appeal to preservation of historical remains.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and the subsequent ending of domestic chaos, a relatively stable political environment had guaranteed the sustainable development of preservation movement. But the massive constructions following the ends of long term turmoil in turn threatened or damaged lots of large-scale constructions.

8 Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage, ed. Dayizhi baohu xingdong genzong yanjiu (Tracking on the large archaeological site protection scheme), (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2016), 9-19.
relics (since most sites were spatially overlapped with modern settlements where constructions were launched). As a provisional remedy when there was no sufficient funds to take systematical measures of preservation, archaeologists were asked to detect and define the extant and potential sphere of relics and ruins, which had built the base for the preservation of archaeological sites.

The Economic Reform since the late 1970’s had turned the preservation efforts into normal track⁹. The 1980’s had witnessed the born of the LCHP (1982), the first basic law of historic preservation, and the Draft of Regulations issued specially for the preservation of large-scale relics and tombs.¹⁰

Along with the economic boom since the 21st century, rapid urbanization and the flourishing of tourism had pushed the large-scale heritages into an unprecedentedly dangerous situation: profit-centered tourism exacerbated the decay of the sites; fake reconstructions and improper renovations catering to tourists ruined the integrity of site and challenged the bottom line of authenticity; urban renew and expansion squeezed out the buffer zone of archaeological sites or even occupied or damaged the sites directly. Meanwhile, more and more formerly unknown relics were uncovered during the

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increasingly massive demolitions or constructions, which were waited to be preserved urgently.

In order to cope with these new situations, the government formulated the system of LHS: the Dayizhi baohu zhuanshangjingfei guanlibanfa (The Administration Methods for the Special Funds on the preservation of LHS), an administrative decree jointly issued by the SACH and the Ministry of Finance in 2005 marked the formal establishment of the LHS and the start of a national-wide special movement for the preservation of LHS. Selecting from the LHS sites, the central government also made a Prominent LHS list, whose members will get financial support each fiscal cycle. Later, this list of Prominent LHS plays a role of reserves that all the present NASP sites are selected from.

2. International influence

As mentioned above, archaeology in modern sense was imported from the West. Similarly, the idea of park, as well as the mature system of archaeological park were also learned from the Westerners. Started in the Victorian England, the urban-park movement had spread the idea of “large, open, well-tended” public space round the world.\textsuperscript{11}

Furthermore, as a response of the damage on the natural environment from increasingly intensive human activities, the 19\textsuperscript{th} century conservation movement, to some extent, had

\textsuperscript{11} Hazel Conway, Public Parks (Buckinghamshire: Shire Publications, 1996), 36.
shed light on the importance of history and nature in human society.\textsuperscript{12} In 1872, the first American National Park, Yellowstone was established. In Britain, the National Trust for the Preservation of Places of Historic and Natural Beauty was founded in 1894.\textsuperscript{13} At the same time, the progress in social science, such as archaeology and anthropology, had promoted the preservation of archaeological site. In 1892, the first prehistoric and cultural reserve, the Casa Grande Ruins was established in the US.\textsuperscript{14}

Another source of China’s NASP is from Japan who started to build its archaeological park in the 1960’s-70’s, such as the Asuka Historical National Government Park built in 1974.\textsuperscript{15} Drawing Japanese experience, China’s “Site Park” (the prototype of NASP) appeared in the 1980’s, such as the Yuanmingyuan Site Park (ruins of royal gardens, listed in the first branch of NASP in 2010).

Apart from ideas of archaeology, park and preservation, Charters and Principles agreed worldwide also play an important role in the emerging of NASP in China. For example, some principles in the Venice Charter, such as the stress of environmental


\textsuperscript{14} It was proclaimed as the National Monument and its management was transferred to the National Park Service in 1918. Accessed 3/20/2017, https://www.nps.gov/cagr/learn/historyculture/index.htm.

settings in the Article 1, inspired the establishment of NASP directly.\textsuperscript{16}

In 2008, ratified by the 16th General Assembly of ICOMOS in Canada, the Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites stated the importance of site interprets and readability, which had been adopted in the preparation of China’s NASP immediately.\textsuperscript{17}

Finally, based on the LHS preservation system and international inspirations, the NASP had been founded. In 2009, the “Liangzhu Convention” was approved by a joint committee constituted by scholars, experts and officials. This convention clearly identified the NASP as one of the major form of preserving LHS for the first time. Then, in the end of 2009, the SACH announced the \textit{Guojia kaoguyizhi gongyuan guanlibanfa (shixing)} (Temporary methods for the management of NASP), which marked the formal establishment of NASP in China.

### 1.3.2 Development

Promoted by the SACH, the amount of NASPs has increased steadily and its social influence has also been enlarged. In 2010, the SACH announced the first batch of the


\textsuperscript{17} Chinese Academy of Cultural Heritage, ed. \textit{Guojia kaogu yizhi gongyuan shiyong shouce} (The Handbook of NASP), (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2015), 11.
NASP, including 12 formal NASP sites and 23 NASP Preparing sites. The second batch of NASP were nominated in 2013, 12 formal sites (of which 11 sites were raised from the preparing list of the first batch) and 31 preparing sites were elected. In the end of 2017, 12 formal (8 sites were selected from the second batch preparing list) and 32 preparing sites had been inscribed in the list of the third batch of NASP.

As of 2018, there are in total 36 formal and 67 preparing NASP sites, which are located across the country and their proximate date are spanned from the Stone Age (e.g. the Zhoukoudian NASP) to the Late Imperial period (e.g. the Mingzhongdu huanggucheng NASP). Some of them are also the UNESCO World Heritage Sites (e.g. the Yuanmingyuan NASP) or part of the World Heritage (e.g. Beiting gucheng NASP). Moreover, members in the formal NASP list found the Union of NASP and meet each year, through which they discuss future development, potential cooperation and exchange experience with each other.

In fact, it is the local government, as the direct manager of the site, that played a dominant role in the exploring the development of NASP. Many local governments, based on their own specific conditions, designed featured developmental mode for the sites administrated by them. For instance, in order to improve the readability of the site, the Jinsha NASP built an in-situ museum which covered the whole area of detected and potential relics. They also produced a musical theater which exhibit the simulating everyday life of ancient people living on the site 3000 years ago; the government of
Xi’an municipal city introduced private capital group to substantiate funds for the building of the Daminggong NASP; the committee of Liangzhu site spent several years on revising the planning of the Liangzhu NASP back and forth in order to coordinate the benefits of various stakeholders.18

Meanwhile, the central government, represented as the SACH plays the role of supervisor and organizer: each site is supposed to report the up-to-date situation to the SACH who will make a final review every year. Besides, the SACH also supplies necessary support for the sites in need, such as organizing workshops and conventions for employee training, police Q & A, experience communicating, etc.

Chapter 2: The City of Jinyang

2.1 Topography

Located at the southwest suburbs of Taiyuan (the current capital of Shanxi province), Jinyang was a lost city once thrived in the early and middle period of Chinese history. From its favored geographical location, one might read some sort of historical and cultural implications.

With the highest elevation in North China, the Shanxi Plateau is the portal and protective screen of the North China Plain whose fertile soil once nourished the essence
of Chinese civilization in the history. In the middle of the Shanxi Plateau, it is the Taiyuan Basin, a relatively isolated valley circled by the Lüliang Mountains in the west and Taihang Mountains in the east. Located at the northwest brim of the Taiyuan Basin, Jinyang is right in the heart of the Shanxi Plateau, which as if the key of portal, is a critical strategic point in North China.

Rooming into the micro environment, Jinyang is a city surrounded by hills and rivers: to the west is the Western Hills and to the east is the Fen River (the major river running northeast to southwest in the Shanxi province), there are also several seasonal creeks running from the valley of Western Hills. Along with the stretching of Western Hills, the terrain of Jinyang is tilting from the west to the east. The site of Jinyang is located at the plain of alluvial fan flushed by the north-south-running Fen River and the west-east-running creeks from Western Hills. As a river on the plain of the Taiyuan Basin, the channel of Fen River is not stable and its swaying left and right in the history once impacted the form of Jinyang significantly. The original channel of Fen River in the time of Jinyang was about one miles west to its current position. While the Western Hills is the ideal place of mountain resort, temples and mausoleum or cemetery, the Fen River provides sufficient water for living and irrigation. Besides, both the Western Hills and Fen River are strong nature barricades protecting the city from invaders during the wartime.

It is believed that this geographical condition has set up the basic tune for Jinyang in
the history. With steppes in the north and cultivated fields in the south, Jinyang was the hub of corridors linking the nomadism and agricultural civilization in the history. It was through those corridors within the Shanxi Plateau that the mobile pastoralism nomads or semi-nomads living on the grasslands of the north and the sedentary farmers working on the agricultural plains in the south contacted with each other. As the stage where various ethnic groups and different culture meet and mingle, Jinyang had bred rich and splendid civilizations in the past. Besides, as we will see in the following section, this city has a close association with wars: the most evident instance — it might be born with military consideration and was finally destroyed in the war.

Map 3. Topography of Jinyang
Source: Drawn by author (Relief image cropped from https://maps-for-free.com, accessed 3/20/2017)
2.2 Overview of history

Jinyang has a history of nearly 1,500 years (c.a. 500 BCE-979 CE), which starts from the middle of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty — a chaotic period that the chronicles recorded in received historical texts started from, and ends in the beginning of the Song Dynasty (the conquer of Jinyang marked the beginning of a unified Song Dynasty). As far as I’m concerned, the history of Jinyang could be roughly divided as four stages: establishment (c.a. 500-200 BCE), development (c.a. 200 BCE-400 CE), climax(c.a. 400-800 CE), decline and demolition (c.a. 800-1000 CE).

2.2.1 Establishment (c.a. 500-200 BCE)

The early history of Jinyang is vague and disputable and it is hard to tell when is the exact beginning of the settlement in Jinyang. However, extant archaeological surveys show little relics earlier than the Eastern Zhou period (770- 255 BCE) in the area.

19 It should be mentioned that there are divergent interpretations about the location of Jinyang in its early period. Jinyang literally means “the north of Jin river”, but it remains controversial about the location of “Jin river”. Normally, the “Jin river" refers to a creek two miles to the south of current Jinyang site. But some scholars cast doubts on it. They believe the “Jin river” should originally refer to a river hundreds miles south of current Jinyang site, and then its name was transferred to the creek two miles to the south of current Jinyang site. See: Yanwu Gu, “Jindu (The capital of Jin),” Rizhilu jishi (Collected commentaries on “Records of daily study”) compiled by Huang rucheng, annotated by Luan Baoqun and Lü Zongli (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006), 1855-1856.
of Jinyang. Considering the earliest rammed earth of the city wall was built in the Eastern Zhou period, we might surmise that this city was, more or less, built at the same time if we would take the construction of city wall as a sign of the commencement of the city.

Compared with the area of present city Xi’an and Luoyang, namely the so called Central Plain area, Jinyang at that time remained a relatively remote town in the north, but it once made an impressive debut in the history: according to received textual records, it was built as a military base by the Zhao clan in the middle of Eastern Zhou period (c.a. 500 BCE), which had protected the Zhao clan from defeating and provided strong supports for them to build their own states.

### 2.2.2 Development (c.a. 200 BCE-400 CE)

Jinyang had developed to be a major city in North China over hundreds years. In 248 BCE, Zhao state’s Jinyang was taken by the Qin State who had then conquered all the other states and built the first unified dynasty of Imperial China. Since its early stage, Jinyang had always been the capital of its surrounding area until it was demolished.

Along with increasingly massive southward migration of nomadic tribes after the 1st century CE, Jinyang, as the bridgehead neighboring with the nomads and a node on their

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20 See the following section.
southward migration path, had become the core of the vortex, where various ethnic
groups met, fought, and communicated with each other.

2.2.3 Climax (c.a. 400-800 CE)

As the result of interactions among diverse ethnic groups, the 4th to 8th century had
seen many monumental events associated with Jinyang. In 396 CE, the Tuoba clan of the
Xianbei people (Proto-Mongols) took the city of Jinyang. Assisted by the strong base of
Jinyang, they then unified the North China in the following decades.

Colluded with the Governor of Jinyang, Erzhu Rong, the chief of a local nomadic
tribe near Jinyang, overthrew the courts of Tuoba clan in the year of 528 CE. Leaving a
puppet emperor on the thrown in Luoyang, they manipulated the state affairs back to
Jinyang. Six years later, Gao Huan, a warlord with Xianbei ethnic background, defeated
the Erzhu clan and raised his own puppet emperor, but still controlled the courts remotely
in Jinyang. Gao Huan’s descendants finally killed the puppet emperor and founded the
Northern Qi Dynasty, of which Jinyang was one of the twin-capital cities.

Li Yuan and his sons, who were founders of the Tang Dynasty (one of the most
prosperous and influential dynasty in Chinese history), also made their fortune from
Jinyang.\footnote{By convention, Chinese Dynasties takes the name of place where the ruling family originated from} Marching from Jinyang, they eventually unified the whole nation, for which
reason rulers of the Tang Dynasty viewed Jinyang as the cradle of their regime and took it as the Northern Capital.

According to the historical records, in the heyday of Jinyang (the middle Tang period, c.a. 650-750 CE), there once were three connective walled outer-cities: a major city in the west of the Fen River, a minor city in the east, and a middle city spanning the Fen River and uniting the two cities on both sides of the Fen River.

During the An–Shi Rebellion (755-763 CE), a devastating insurgency almost destroyed the Tang Dynasty, again, like the protection of the Zhao clan hundreds of years ago, it was the arduous resisting against the rebels in Jinyang that kept the state from further turmoil and threat.

2.2.4  Decline and Demolition (c.a. 800-1000 CE)

As the collapse of Tang Dynasty, the world turned into turmoil, Jinyang again showed its inherent feature — solid strategic and military base in chaotic years, which in turn courted the demolition of this city when the turmoil was about to end. Known as the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms, this period had witnessed the favor brought by Jinyang to the warlords, who, generation by generation, not only took Jinyang as the

(i.e. toponym) as the titulary of the Dynasty: Tang is a classical phrase referring to the land of Jinyang and its surrounding area.
capital of their regional regime but also had it be a reliable base that supported their campaigns all around and carried them to the hegemony.

In 979 CE, founders of the Song Dynasty (another long-life dynasty following the Tang dynasty) finally conquered Jinyang with a significant cost. Due to the stubborn resistance and imminent threat of Jinyang, the Emperor of Song ordered to relocate the residences and burn this city all. Even so, Jinyang still kept annoying the emperor, who then commanded the local officials dig out the riverbank near Jinyang; the erupting flow flooded and destroyed this city completely.

2.3 Archaeological discoveries

Without sufficient archaeological evidence, suggestions about the past of Jinyang would be no more than circumstances and speculations. During the 50’s and 60’s of the 20th century, archaeologists once did several simple surveys in Jinyang, but they just find out the position of part of the city walls. When discussing the history of Jinyang, scholars mainly relied on textual records scattered in various books, which like many other historical records of ancient cities, are fragmental and contradict with each other.

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22 Predecessors used to cast off and rival with the central court with the base in Jinyang, besides, Jinyang was only 200 miles north to the capital of Song.
23 See: Xie and Zhang, 1962.
However, as new archeological discoveries continuously came out, especially a series of extensive excavations launched after the year of 2000, our recognitions of this perplexing city kept being refreshed. The progress of archaeological works at Jinyang is promoted by the economic development and governmental supports recent years. The Archaeological Research Institute of Taiyuan is the direct institute responsible for the investigations and excavations in the Jinyang site. A special institute for the archaeological work at Jinyang, the Jinyang Archaeological Working Team, was established in 2011. Since then, regular and systematical archaeological works were launched, through which the veil of this site is uncovering gradually.

Map 4. Topography of the Jinyang site
Source: Drawn by author (DEM data downloaded from ALOS Global Digital Surface Model)
2.3.1 Relics in the Jinyang site

Constituted by visible remains and archaeological finds underground, the site of Jinyang is the physical body of the Jinyang NASP. Following is an introduction of the Jinyang site and a review on the progress of its archaeological field works.25

1. Discoveries of the city walls and moats

As mentioned above, the first and foremost task for archaeologists is to find out the outline of the city, which is not only aimed at defining a clear and accurate archaeological working area but also providing a reliable reference for devising the preservation plan.

Since the elevation of Jinyang is declined gradually from the west to the east, while there is no visible trace for other three sides of the city wall, some relics of the west wall still left on the ground, which is a remarkable reference for detecting other parts of the city wall. Some names of local places also indicate the position of city walls, such as

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25 This summary is majorly rooted in two published scholarships: one is a special issue dedicated to the archaeological works at Jinyang by the journal Wenwu Shijie (no.5, 2014. hereafter abbreviated as WWSJ); the other is an official archaeological report from the site of Jinyang which not only reviewed and summarized all the previous works but also focused on the No.1 ruins of complex (Jinyanggucheng yihaojianzhu jizhi, hereafter abbreviated as YH). While most content of two books is overlapped essentially, they are also complementary to each other in some cases. The footnotes only indicate the pages of YH and did not point out the place of same content in WWSJ.
*Nanchengjiao cun* (the village of the south city corner), *Dongchengjiao cun* (the village of the east city corner), *Chengqiangdi* (the field of city wall), etc.

The currently confirmed shape of Jinyang is almost rectangular, which is measured roughly 4780 meters from west to east, 3750 meters from north to south, about 20 km square, tilting 18 degrees southwest.²⁶

Map 5. Archaeological discoveries in the Jinyang site  
Source: Drawn by author

²⁶ *WWSJ*, 8.
The west wall is about 3750 meters in length, 18-20 meters in width. There are 630 meters of rammed earth that still stand on the ground; others are buried 0.5-1.5 meters beneath the ground.27

![Figure 1. West wall relics on the ground, view from north to south](source: WWSJ, 4)

The south wall is about 4700 meters in length, 18-20 meters in width. Most of the south wall is buried underground, only the southwest part remains on the ground which is about 530 meters long and 1.5 meters high. The depth of burying is increasing as heading to the east.28 Two long openings on the south wall where no rammed earth has been detected, are measured 300 meters and 460 meters respectively from west to east.29

27 YH, 7.
28 For example, the rammed earth was detected at the depth of 6.2 meters at the point of 1500 meters east of the southwest corner, while the depth of burying is 13 meters at the point of 3700 meters.
29 YH, 8.
The east wall is about 2700 meters in length, 18-20 meters in width, burying 9-13 meters underground, and is paralleled with the west wall.\textsuperscript{30}

Impeded by the occupation of modern expressway and the erosion of Fengyu Sand Creek, only a small part of the north wall was found. In the northwest corner, the rammed earth of 560 meters with the width of 18-22 meters were buried half a meter underground; on the east end, only 50 meters rammed earth were detected 6 meters underground.\textsuperscript{31}

In order to find out the city gate and study the change of city wall over time,

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid. 8-9.
detailed excavations of several sections of the west wall had been done. Although no gate had been detected yet except one suspicious opening <1> (here and after this number indicates its corresponding position on Figure 5), the structure and date of the west wall were revealed clearly.\textsuperscript{32}

The northwest corner was excavated first. Archaeologists inferred from objects incorporated in the rammed earth that this part of wall was built sometime from the Han to the Jin Dynasty, and repaired in the Tang Dynasty.\textsuperscript{33}

About 1500 meters south of the northwest corner, one section of rammed earth was excavated carefully, through which two major constructions and the patches of different period were presented (see figure 3). <2> The earlier structure was believed to be built during the period of Eastern Zhou, and its relics were 7.9 meters in width, 0.1-0.2 meters in depth.\textsuperscript{34} Next to the west side of the earlier rammed earth, it was the later period remains, which was the main body of extant rammed earth. Dated no earlier than the Northern Dynasties (386-581 CE), this part of rammed earth was 15 meters in width and 0.1 meters in depth. Besides, on the west of later period relics, there were also patches

\textsuperscript{32} This opening is right in the middle position of the west wall and it was recorded in gazetteer as “\textit{Shuichuangmen}” (Water window gate), but excavations found no relics of the gate. However, archaeologists concluded that this area once was flushed by water, and human activities also disturbed seriously. (\textit{YH}, p.13).

\textsuperscript{33} \textit{YH}, 10.

\textsuperscript{34} It is worth to note that the excavation had not reached the fresh earth which means there might be already human activities before the construction of Eastern Zhou city wall.
that was added on sometimes around the Tang-Five Dynasties (618-960 CE).  

Roughly 2800 meters south of the northwest corner, archaeologists had excavated another section of rammed earth, which shows some differences with the north section regarding its date and structure. The rammed earth was constituted by the part of No.1-7 which were divided into four periods (see figure 4). With the No.1 rammed earth as the core, the whole structure was developed on two sides at the same time during the later three periods. No.1 is the earliest and were built during the Han-Jin period; Next on each side of the No.1 is No.2 and No.5 respectively, which are rammed earth of Northern Dynasties; built during Sui-Middle Tang, the next period rammed earth are No.3 and No.6; the most outside are No.4 and No.7, which were built during Late Tang and Five Dynasties.

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35 *YH*, 11.
36 Ibid., 214-215; for detailed analysis of the rammed earth, see: *YH*, 24-45.
The relics of city moat were detected on each side of the city wall except the north, but only the middle part of the west moat was excavated which was 8 meters west away from the west wall. The moat was dated as two periods, the channel of early period is about 40 meters wide and buried 7.5 meters underground, the later period riverbed is about 37.4 meters and 4.5 meters to the ground. The date of moat was no later than Tang and was kept being used until Ming-Qing period.\(^\text{37}\)

According to the textual records, during the early and middle Tang period, namely the heyday of Jinyang, a city east of the Fen River and a city crossing the river and connecting two cities on each side of the river were built successively.\(^\text{38}\) However,

\(^{37}\) Ibid., 11.

\(^{38}\) “[The city] at the east of Fen River is East City, which was built by Chief Secretary Li Ji. There was a middle city between [east and west] two cities, which was built in the reign of Empress Wu in order to connect the east city.” (“Treatise on Geography”, New Book of Tang); “At that time, the prefecture city was divided into west and east two cities by the Fen River, Shenqing [built walls] across the river and connected the walls [of two cities], merging them into one.” (“Biography of Cui Shenqing,” New Book of Tang).
archaeologists did not work on detecting the middle and east city since these parts were buried deeply and the high-level underground water table made troubles for drilling holes and extracting the sample of earth. But by comparing the length of detected city walls and the length recorded in the documents, they find that there is deficiency between these two kind of data which are both from isolated sources. They believe this deficiency indicates the possibility of the existence of the middle and west city that have not been found yet.39

Based on the analysis of the sample of earth from one drilling hole in the southeast of the city, archaeologists believed this area might once be the riverbed of Fen River.40

2. Discoveries inside the city walls

Discoveries within the city show even more complicated form and structure.

The No.1 ruins of complex are 12 meters away from the west wall, 1270 meters away

39 WWSJ, 18. I believe the statement of middle and east city is not convincing. First of all, there are mainly two sources of the length records, one is from “Treatise on Geography”, New Book of Tang, the other is from Yuanhe Maps and Records of Prefectures and Counties, which are contradict to each other. The author here followed the first records but did not clarify the reason. Second, it did not state that the whole length included the so-called middle and east city according to either records, so it is too rush to make the suggestion.

40 YH, 16. I think just one sample might not be enough to prove the existence of former channel. Also, it is still not clear that if the Fen River just have one old channel or have multiple former channels, nor if the detected channel is the one during Tang period.
from the southeast corner, and buried underground as deeply as 1.8 meters. Its whole structure is rectangular and it is paralleled with the west and south city wall. <6>

According to the unearthed objects and the painted wall, this complex might be a temple with central hall, courtyard, and corridor. Ruins are divided into two periods. The first period was built and used during the Late Tang, then abandoned in the Five Dynasties. Only the left corridor and doorway could be discerned. The second period has a more specific dating: ca. 949-980. Remains of this term are in relatively good conditions. Buildings stood on a platform, which was paved with bricks and surrounded by well-designed water inlet and outlet. With a central axis layout, the central hall of 3 bays by 2 located on the axis with a front porch and two back room on each side. There were also east and west corridors in front of the central hall.41

41 Ibid., 63-64, 220-221. The report also mentioned it might be the two-courtyard structure, but just the front courtyard was excavated. Archaeologists were not able to continue the excavation since modern constructions might occupy the position of back courtyard.
Beside the complex, there was a ditch going through the west wall from west to east and was cut by a modern sewer at the place that several meters east away from the
city wall. An iron fence was set in the entrance.\textsuperscript{42} The ditch was believed being completed once only during the Tang period. Its structure appears to be similar with the records in \textit{Yingzao fashi} (Building standards).\textsuperscript{43}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{ditch_and_fence.png}
\caption{Relics of the ditch and iron fence}
\label{fig:ditch_details}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 45-47.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid. 216.

Around the ditch and No.1 complex, there were five houses that were excavated. Those houses were disordered in layout and their constructions were simple
and crude. Considering the facts that they were located closely with the city wall and almost each house has stoves that might be used for forging weapons, archaeologists inferred that those houses might be barracks during the war between Northern Han and Northern Song.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid. 220. It is worth to note that those stoves are widely distributed throughout the earth layer of Northern Han and the beginning of Northern Song. (See: \textit{WWSJ}, 24)
Another interesting point is that there were ashes of pillars left on the stone bases in almost all buildings. The relics of walls also appeared the trace of once being burned by fierce fire. These hints echoed with the documental records that Jinyang was burned down when the Song Emperor Taizong conquered it.\textsuperscript{45}

The No.2 ruins of complex has two parts, the east and the west.\textsuperscript{46} The west part was defined as part of a large temple, which might be built at Tang and destroyed at the beginning of Song. It was an enclosed compound with three courtyards and several halls of 3 bays. The whole structure has a central axis, buildings on the left and right are symmetrical. But halls on the central axis had not been excavated since they were under modern roads.

100 meters to the east is another part, which was divided into three periods ranging from Han to Tang. Remains of three terms from the earliest to the latest overlaid one by one. Relics of the first term (the Han Dynasty) are mainly some houses and wells; the second term (the Wei-Jin-Northern Dynasties) uncovered houses and an extensive cellar; remains of the third term (the Eastern Wei-Tang Dynasties) appear to be a well-designed compound.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 221.

\textsuperscript{46} The excavation of No.2 ruins of complex started since 2012 and might still under working. Its official reports have not been published yet, one of the reliable source is a simple and short news report posted on \textit{Zhongguo wenwu bao} by archaeologists from the site of Jinyang. Accessed 3/20/2017, \url{http://www.ccrnews.com.cn/index.php/Zhuanlanzhuankan/content/id/62719.html}. 
It is an important discovery that a fragment of the stone stele with characters like “即隸之晉陽宮” (It is the Jinyang Palace of the Sui Dynasty) was found, which indicates the place where it was uncovered (namely the west part) or its surrounding area might be the site of the Jinyang Palace of the Sui Dynasty. Moving forward, if the position of Jinyang Palace could be confirmed, the evolution of palaces and imperial cities within Jinyang would be readily revealed since their spatial relation had been well-documented in various historical records.\(^{47}\)

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\(^{47}\) For example, recorded in the national gazetteer compiled in late Tang (\textit{Yuanhe Maps and Records of Prefectures and Counties}, Vol.13): “There were three more cities within the city, one of which is named Grand Brightness City, namely the ancient Jinyang city…… the city (Grand Brightness City) was four zhang (each zhang roughly equals 3 meters) in height and four li (each li roughly equals 535 meters) in circumference. Another city bordered Grand Brightness City on the south side, connected Storehouse City on the west side, neighbors Prefecture City (Jinyang city wall) on north side. Eastern Wei Emperor Xiaojing built Jinyang Palace here, Sui Emperor Wen change its name to New City, Emperor Yang rebuilt Jinyang Palace, this city was four zhang in height, twelve Li in circumference. Another city connected New City on east side, bordered Prefecture City on west and north side, which was built in the sixteenth year of Kaihuang period (596 CE), and now named Storehouse City, it is four zhang in height, eighteen li in circumference.”
There are also several sections of the rammed earth detected within the city, but their date and usage are remains unclear.\textsuperscript{48}

With a local name that is same with one of the former inner city in the history and relics of rammed earth left on the ground, \textit{Damingcheng} was believed to be one of the possible significant relics. Although current investigation shows that the rammed earth was built in the transition between Yuan and Ming, there was still rammed earth under the layer of Yuan-Ming that had not been excavated. Therefore, the possibility of the

\textsuperscript{48} YH, 13. The rammed earth detected in “\textit{Changyandi}” (The place of field and weir) was inferred to be walls of Jinyang Palace or walled wards.
earlier imperial palace or inner city could not be excluded.\textsuperscript{49}

Similarly, excavations in Dadiantai <8> and Xiaodiantai <9> are not complete and could not solve the question that whether there are important relics as their local names indicate. There is a group of Eastern Zhou tombs excavated from Xiaodiantai, which might prove that it was little human activity there as early as the Eastern Zhou period. Also, some hints around \textit{Xiaodiantai} (such as unearthed architecture components, a fine stone Buddhist statue as well as relics of early period rammed earth) suggest this place might be potential location of important relics.\textsuperscript{50}

3. Future excavations

It is expect that the future filed works in the Jinyang site will get break through on the following questions:

- The position and amount of city gates in different period of history;
- What is exactly about the so-called Tang middle and east city, as well as the channel changing of the Fen River;
- Jinyang’s inside form and evolution process, especially palaces, inner cities, wards, roads. With the highest terrain in the site, the northeast area is expected to

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 12.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 14-15. For the unearthed statue, see Li, 2001.
be the position of prominent structures, excavations of No.2 complex seems have revealed some traces, are there more?

- Special attentions should be paid on some discoveries that are conflicted with textural records or missed in documents, for which might lead us to something new about the site and the history it conveys, such as the length of city walls, the inner city in the *Damingcheng* area that was dated Yuan-Ming period.

### 2.3.2 Relics around the Jinyang site

Relics in the vicinity of Jinyang are beyond the Jinyang site and do not physically belong to the Jinyang NASP, but still, they are also highly related with this city because they reflect the past about Jinyang comprehensively and are helpful to learn about the Jinyang NASP. For instance, tombs reside the past residents of the city and relics of temples conveys the essence of art in this area.
About 6 miles northwest away from the Jinyang site, at the foot of the Western Hill, there is a tomb with the highest standard and the most splendid funerary objects among the existing uncovered tombs of the Jin State (1033-349 BCE). Its owner might be Zhao Jianzi (Minister Zhao, ?-476 BCE), who once commanded to build the city of Jinyang.
according to historical texts.\textsuperscript{51} A large amount of exquisite luxuries and ritual objects had been excavated from the tomb, including a set of seven bronze tripods and a separate funerary pit with 17 chariots and 44 horses, which not only show the honorable social status of the tomb owner but also reflect the prominence of Jinyang then.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure9}
\caption{Aerial of the tomb of the Minister Zhao of the Jin State}
\label{fig:9}
\end{figure}


\textsuperscript{51} Zhenggang Tao, Yi Hou, and Chuanfu Qu, \textit{Taiyuan jinguo zhaoping mu} (The tomb of the Lord of the Zhao State in Taiyuan), (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1996), 5.
No matter in terms of quantity or quality, the most impressive relics are almost all come from the Northern Dynasties when was the heyday of Jinyang as discussed before.
For example, speaking of tombs, there are: the tomb of Xu Xianxiu (502-571 CE, an senior general serving the Northern Wei, Eastern Wei and Eastern Qi Dynasties) and the tomb of Lou Rui (531-570 CE, brother of the Empress), where fantastic murals depicting the everyday life of the Xianbei nobles were fund; the tomb of Yu Hong (533-592 CE, chief of the North People with Central Asia background, once in charge of the commerce traversing China and Central Asia, and finally settled down in Jinyang), from which the exquisite and exotic sarcophagus were excavated.52

Figure 11. Mural painting in the Tomb of Xu Xianxiu depicting the banquet of tomb owner
Source: Accessed 7/29/2018, https://www.wikiwand.com/zh-hans/%E5%BE%90%E6%98%BE%E7%A7%80%E5%A2%93

52 See: Taiyuanshi Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo, Bei Qi Xu Xianxiu mu (The tomb of Xu Xianxiu of Northern Qi), (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2005), 1-152; Shanxisheng Kaogu Yanjiusuo and Taiyuanshi Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo, Bei Qi Dong’an wang Lou Rui mu (The tomb of Lou Rui, Prince of Dong’an, of Northern Qi), (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), 1-123; Qingjie Zhang, Hongxia Chang, Xingmin Zhang and Aiguo Li, “Taiyuan Suidai Yu Hong mu qingli jianbao (Brief report on the excavation of the tomb of Yu Hong of the Sui in Taiyuan),” Wenwu, no.1 (2001): 27-52.
Figure 12. Yu Hong’s marble sarcophagus with Zoroastrianism decorations  

As for the temples, there are the Buddhist cave temple of Tianlongshan (Mount of heavenly dragon), which was damaged badly, but many of the its sculptures are scattered in museums around the world as whose collections of essence; Tongzi si (Temple of the lad), a temple complex where one of the earliest existing pagoda — Randengta (Pagoda of the Dipamkara Buddha) and carved Buddhist caves with Thousand Buddha images as well as seriously eroded relics of giant Buddha sculptures are located; Kaihuasi (Temples of enlightening), which is also a temple complex with a heavily restored giant sculptures of Buddha.53

Most of the ancient temples of this area are only remains left, but the Jin Shrine is a well-preserved and long-term used religious complex. With an long history of more than 2,000 years, it is one of the most prominent complex and famous tourist site in North China, whose main hall, the Sage Mother Hall, is “the second-largest building of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127 CE) extant in China and the oldest timber-frame hall of this scale not associated with Buddhism or Daoism”. The whole complex preserved the gem of Chinese ancient architecture as well as evidence of religious life.

Figure 13. Heavily restored Buddhism statue in Kailuasi
Source: Accessed 7/29/2018, https://www.wikiwand.com/zh-hans/%E8%92%99%E5%B1%B1%E5%A4%A7%E4%BD%9B

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2.4 Historical significance

While received texts recorded the history Jinyang, physical remains in and around the Jinyang site weaved a web of valuable relics which renders the vivid and various profiles about the past of the city. Both together remind us the historical significance of the Jinyang site.

The Jinyang site is a rare sample that the relics in the early and middle period of Chinese history remain relatively integrated. Unlike many other ancient cities whose remains had been eroded by intensive human activities for they have been overlaid with metropolis throughout the history, remains of Jinyang was disrupted less since it was abandoned abruptly and lost in the history then. Thus, it is the integrity and continuity of
remains that brought unparalleled value to the Jinyang site. For example, the two sections of west wall is the first case showing the constructions of city wall through Eastern Zhou to Northern Song. Besides, as scholars discussed, there were three high tides of city wall constructions during the early period: Waring States, Wei-Jin-Southern and Northern Dynasties, Late Tang and Five Dynasties.\textsuperscript{56} Undergoing all the three stages, walls of Jinyang are unarguably a perfect example for the study of ancient city wall constructions as well as the history of wars.

The Jinyang site is a natural museum exhibiting the history with genuine remains. For instance, the site illustrates the evolution of historical urban form: the Fringe-belt theory of the Conzen school classified city wall as “fixation line”, which is an important indicator for the transition of city form.\textsuperscript{57} In the site of Jinyang, while the earliest rammed earth of the north section is dated Eastern Zhou, the south section was defined to be built firstly at Han-Jin (about 500 years later than the Eastern Zhou), which indicates that the city wall might be enlarged sometime from the Eastern Zhou to the Han-Jin period. Notably, some received historical texts recording the wars and constructions in Jinyang could be verified and complementary with the physical evidences found by excavations.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{56} See: Liu, 1992; Otagi, 1992.
\textsuperscript{58} For example, the Zhao clan defeated the siege of Jinyang led by the Zhi clan and then wiped out the
The Jinyang site also holds mirror to the highlights of Chinese history, for which it not only provides a context to closely touch upon, if not be immersed in, the past for the nostalgists, but more importantly, sheds light on crucial concerns of Chinese history, such as questions of how the Chinese and the Chinese culture was formed in the history: existing excavations in and around the site show Jinyang’s dominant and excellent Buddhist feature during the Northern and Tang Dynasties, such as the No.1 and No.2 ruins of complexes, unearthed Buddhist architecture tiles, Buddhist stone statues and temples in the Western Hills, which in fact are strong evidence indicating the transmission of Buddhism and the evolution of Buddhism arts in the history of China. Moreover, as discussed above, discoveries in and around the Jinyang site keep refreshing our recognitions about the past of Jinyang. Considering the extant insufficient archaeological field works in Jinyang, it is a site with great potentiality to find significant new discoveries under a more thorough and painstaking research.

All in all, the Jinyang site is a treasure full of fundamental historical and cultural meanings. It is the prominent significance that made this site inscribed in the list of first batch of NASP Preparing site.

Zhi clan, which was viewed as the sign of the starting of Waring States; during Western Jin, Commandant of Bing Prefecture Liu Kun rebuilt or enlarge the city wall for defending the nomadic; Eastern Wei and Northern Qi took Jinyang as military base; a series of fierce wars and sieges happened in Jinyang during the Five Dynasties.
Chapter 3: The Jinyang NASP

3.1 The past of the Jinyang NASP

As discussed in chapter 1, it is promoted mutually between the development of NASP and the archaeological progress. On the one hand, the archaeological discoveries in and around Jinyang improve people’s recognitions about this city and provide the site with the qualification of being inscribed in the NASP Preparing list; on the other hand, the site’s archaeological works are boosted by making it a NASP (even though it is only a NASP Preparing site).

In the early period of pre-NASP, the significance of Jinyang had not been realized by the public for a long term mostly due to the lagged archaeological works. It was not until the 1960’s that the preliminary archaeological survey had been done in the site of Jinyang, whereby the area of site was roughly estimated. In 1990’s, excavations of a group of tombs stimulated people’s interests of this city. Meanwhile, the arousing study of the Xianbei people and culture in 1990’s lifted the veil of secrecy covering on the Jinyang site gradually. In the 21st century, the past of Jinyang impressed the public through a series of stunning discoveries from remains of the Northern Dynasties (such as Yu Hong’s tomb).
Accordingly, refreshed impressions on the significance of Jinyang brought further impetus for the preservation of the site. In 2001, the site of Jinyang was nominated as one of the fifth batch MHNL (Major Heritages in the National Level); in 2006, it was selected to be the Top 100 LHS; and finally, in 2010, it became the first batch of NASP Preparing project.

More importantly, the listing and building of NASP expedites the archaeological progress of the site significantly. A group of experts that is responsible for the archaeological works in the site of Jinyang specially — the archaeological team of Jinyang site — was formed in 2011, since when the archaeological works had been regularized. Moreover, almost all the important excavations and discoveries, as introduced in chapter 2, such as the determination of the city walls and moats, the discovery and excavation of the No.1 and No.2 complex, are all completed after the site was enrolled in the NASP Preparing list.

3.2 The extant situation of the Jinyang NASP

Majorly referred to the detected rammed earth, the government had defined a specific area as a stable sphere of the Jinyang NASP, in which development and constructions are supposed to be strictly controlled in order to ensure the safety of the
site. However, the Jinyang site is now threatening by the surrounding urbanization, and more directly, the aggressive restorations within the site.

While mega-cities like Beijing and Shanghai are exhausted with cooling down their over-heated urban explosions, the massive urbanization in Taiyuan just begins: from 2015 to 2020, about 173 shantytowns (over 200,000 households) will be entirely pulled down and reconstructed. Located right on the way of Taiyuan's urban expansion, the Jinyang site and its vicinity, where were formerly remote suburbs, is converting to a prime location. (see *The Master Plan of Taiyuan Metropolis 2016-2030* in Appendix III)

To the north of the Jinyang site, it is the Jinyang lake area. With scenic vistas (lakes, rivers and mountains) and abundant cultural resources, this place is planned as the city’s new center of culture and business. The Jinyang lake, originally an artificial reservoir for the nearby power plant and aquaculture, is now transforming to a vast ecological park. To the southwest of the Jinyang lake, it was the Taiyuan Chemical Factory, which is now adapting to an industrial heritage park. To the southeast, a novel stadium (built as the major arena for the Second Session of the National Youth Games which is a national sporting event valued by the local government and will be held in 2019) and a new campus of one of Taiyuan's best high school (Chengcheng Middle School) are erecting.

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To the major degree of constructions surrounding the Jinyang Lake, without any doubt, are real estate projects, most of which are luxurious apartments. To the west is the Western Hills where popular tourism spots are located, such as the Jin Shrine, the Grand Statue of Buddha. There are also a large botanical garden and several apartment towers between the Jinyang site and the Western Hills. To the east is the Fen river as well as a planned river front park. To the south is the new center of the Jinyuan district, one of Taiyuan’s six urban districts. Centered with Jinyuan district’s government office building, this place is rising to be the downtown of southwestern Taiyuan, which is used to be called “Jinyuan new town”. Besides, avenues, boulevards, hospitals, schools, all the other infrastructures and supporting facilities are also under constructing.

Looking around the Jinyang site, a new urban center is emerging. Although the government had taken some measures to prevent negative impacts on the site, such as limiting the height of new buildings (for current standard, the limitation for the west of the lake is 100 meters, for the east is 50 meters), one still cannot help to worry if there would be potential threats for the site considering constructions around the site are as massive as such a great scale and the hustling-bustling prospect of this area planned and prompted by the local government.
The extant landscape of the site itself could be viewed as a hybrid of three parts: modern villages, heavily restored “ancient town” and archaeological site. (refer to Map 5 and Appendix II)

The Jinyang site is located on several modern villages, which is combined by villagers’ houses, plant nurseries, vegetable fields and several small chemical factories. The chemical factories will be closed or moved away soon or later, but how to deal with the relationship with local residents is one of the most tricky part for the government. As
mentioned before, some villagers built their house right on the remains of city walls
(strong rammed earth is the ideal base for the houses, see figure 7). Every now and then,
there are also fragments of tiles or Buddhist statues founded in villagers’ courtyards.

Although villagers might not have a clear idea about how significant the place where
they have lived for generations is, it is undeniable that their life are closely associated
with the land under their feet. Compared with the surrounding area, villages on the
Jinyang site looks dilapidated. One of the most important reasons is that this place is
strictly controlled by the government for the ends of preservation, which kept villagers
from earning profits through developing their land like nearby villages outside the site
did.

Figure 16. A corner of one of the villages located at the Jinyang site
Source: Image by author
In the southwestern part of the Jinyang site, a heavily restored "ancient town" breaks the serene of the Jinyang site. After Jinyang was demolished in the 10th century, a county seat was moved to the place of the Jinyang site in 1370’s. This town was the first major stop if one would like to head to the west or southwest from Taiyuan in the years before automobiles and trains thrived. Like many other county towns of the Ming-Qing period (c.a. 14th-20th century), basic constructions of a typical county seat — city walls, gates, drum tower, government offices, a series of shrines and temples — were continuously built and re-built in the following centuries. Through a woodcut map printed in 1826 and an blurry Aerial photo made in 1940’s, we may have a general sense about the original landscape of this old town.
But the ancient form of this town had been largely damaged in modern times: most of the city walls were leveled off; dwellers built their houses on the base of walls; nearly half of the old houses, shrines and temples were demolished, the rests were occupied by schools, workshops, or government offices.
However, since being appointed as the mayor of Taiyuan in the beginning of 2013, Mr. Geng, in the name of preservation, immediately pushed on a radical transforming plan with the ambition of restoring this town to what it originally looks like during the Ming-Qing period. As of June, 2017, as much as 3,010 houses inside the town had been pulled down and almost all of the original residents had been moved out of their home. The city walls and gates were re-established, many disappeared old houses, shrines, temples were rebuilt, streets and lanes were adapted to the so-called Ming-Qing style.\textsuperscript{60} It is now in fact a replica of the historical town but with no actual people living in it.

\textsuperscript{60} Chunsheng Wang, “Ming Taiyuan Xiancheng de Qianshi jinsheng (The previous incarnation and this life of the Ming Taiyuan town),” \textit{Taiyuan Daily} (Taiyuan, Shanxi), Nov. 13th, 2017.
Furthermore, reconstructions are not limited within the town, the government is mobilizing dwellers surrounding the town to make way for the impending further renovations. The city moat which had been filled in many decades ago will be re-dug and re-made. Besides, the government also set up a buffer zone, extending at least one mile away from the restored city walls, within which any construction or decoration not matching the so-called Ming-Qing style will be scrubbed away.\textsuperscript{61}

![Figure 19. The restored gate of the Taiyuan county town (restoration in progress, shot on 9/2/2016)](https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_1524577)

Without re-constructions fully completed, the government’s impatient active operations might betray the real end of its restoring plan: building prestige projects to substantiate tourism economy. During the Lantern Festival of 2018 (one of the most

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.
important traditional Chinese Festival, when people used to watch exhibitions of lanterns and paradise with families and friends), decorated by various fancy neon lights, a Lighting Carnival was held on the newly restored city walls. Visitors were charged 8$ for daytime touring, 15$ for nighttime. Besides, with the vision of building the “city lounge”, the Taiyuan government cooperated with the Oriental Pearl Media, a leading cultural industry operator from Shanghai, to develop more cultural and touring projects based on this restored town.62

Figure 20. The Lighting Carnival held on the newly restored city walls of the Taiyuan county town during the Lantern Festival of 2018 (shot on 1/11/2018)

Remains on the ground and invisible relics underlying are the components of the archaeological site, which constitutes the major body of the Jinyang NASP. Unfortunately, these real ancient gems are overwhelmed by the pell-mell urbanization of surrounding area and the heavily restored Ming-Qing town within the site. Without well-planned green space nor available public facilities, one could hardly associate this place with the notion of park; even worse, lacking of special measure of conservation and interpretation, the archaeological site is siting amongst sprawled weeds, decayed villages and cloud of constructing dusts. Besides, there are bunch of crucial questions concerning not only the remarkable past of Jinyang, but also how the Jinyang site should be interpreted to the public — one of the core requirement for the NASP — that are still waiting to be answered by further research.

Even with the standard of a normal archaeological site, the Jinyang site might not be qualified from the perspective of preservation, let along it was supposed to be part of an national flagship preservation project. Obviously, there are many difficulties for the Jinyang site to overcome before becoming a formal NASP.
3.3 Challenges for the building of Jinyang NASP

Being selected in the NASP Preparing list as early as 2010, the Jinyang site still did not upgrade to be a formal NASP despite more than half of the sites in the same Preparing list had already complete their promotions. The biggest obstacle might come from the local government, who is so dedicated to developing new zones and restoring the Ming-Qing town that invests insufficient energy and founds into the building of NASP.
The increasingly escalating urbanization that the local government is devoted impacts unavoidably on the site, for example, the value of earth soared due to the urban development, which increases the cost of building NASP.

The heavily restored constructions set up seriously negative examples. Catering to the taste of tourism market, those fake re-constructions not only thrust into the NASP site’s original fabric abruptly, but also mislead visitors about the real past of Jinyang: the restored Ming-Qing town only represents, even if it is qualified, a very late and short part of history, while the essence of Jinyang’s past, buried and forgotten, will be harder to be noticed for the existence of these fake reconstructions.

Another immediate concern about the fake reconstructions is that it will ruin the authenticity and integrity of the site. Although the local chief, Mayor Geng, kept claiming the renovation and restoration projects were sticking to the rule of “Regenerating as what they had been”, this rule itself is not equal to the principle of authenticity because authenticity does not mean original form and materials.\(^{63}\) The value of heritages lies in the value of culture and art imbedded in the objects, these value could not be copied through simple reproducing the original structure with similar materials.\(^{64}\) Let along it remains questionable how strictly the reconstructions had clung to this rule.

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\(^{64}\) Zhou Lü, “Zhongguo wenwu baohu yuanze de fazhan yu yanbian (The development and evolution
Moreover, the tourism-oriented fake reconstructions will harm the value of genuine relics, the resulting over-heated constructions and economy are also not friendly for the fragile heritages. Besides, it would be very dangerous that once the path dependence of developing the economy by any means established, after all, the number of GDP ascend incrementally but the damaging of heritage is irreversible.

Apart from challenges mentioned above, there are two common difficulties for the building of NASP in China. One is to deal with earthen relics. Unlike ruins mainly constituted by stone and relics that remain visible (such as the Athens and Persepolis), there are nothing left except soil and dust in most of the NASP sites in China (it is hard for wood structures, namely the traditionally main building materials of Chinese constructions, to be preserved for a long term). Therefore, it is difficult to interpret or exhibit the earthen remains which are lack of appropriate readability. What’s more, compared with wood or stone, earthen relics are too fragile to be conserved: sunshine, rains, wind, etc., there are too many factors that are hard to be controlled and prone to damage the site irreversibly. The other crux of the matter is to coordinate the benefits among different stakeholders, including residents living on and around the relics, state or personal owned companies or factories, etc. The planning of NASP will affect the stakeholders to a various degree and it is very knotty to satisfy each side.
In terms of the common challenges, however, the Jinyang site still has some advantages compared with many other NASPs. Unlike the sites located at the downtown area, such as the ancient capital of thousands years like Xi’an, Luoyang where relationships of stakeholders are far more complicated than that of the Jinyang site (there are only scattered villages, plant nurseries, vegetable fields and several small chemical factories). Therefore, it should be easier to implement the plan of the NASP. Considering this favored condition and the historical significance of Jinyang site, one might ask why the Taiyuan government still positively developed the new districts and created an fake “ancient town” rather than built the NASP with the highest priority?

Under the one-man-rule political circumstance in China, the local chief plays an important role in the decisions of government, especially when he or she has a strong personality. Known for iron fist and radical plans, it is the current Mayor of Taiyuan, Mr. Geng, who majorly directed the changes in and around the Jinyang site. In the following chapter, we will try to find a synthesized answer about the stagnation of Jinyang NASP from him.
Chapter 4: Mayor Geng and the Triple Dilemmas of Historic Preservation

4.1 Mayor Geng

Hitting headlines and featuring magazine covers, Geng (full name Geng Yanbo) is a star Communist official. A documentary recorded his stories in Datong (*The Chinese Mayor*) had won award on the 2015 Sundance Film Festival, which also brought him with international attentions. With extraordinary audacity, iron fist and strong executive ability, Geng brings sweeping changes to each city he governs, which in turn courts disputable criticism to himself.
The media mocked him as Geng Chaichai (Geng smash-smash); those whose houses were demolished in Geng’s projects but not get satisfied compensation curse him badly on the internet forum; contractors called him “Mad Geng” because under the strict supervision from Geng who knows well about their tricky ideas of jerry buildings, there is no leeway to take advantage of and make extra profits; Geng’s colleagues and subordinates could hardly endure working with him since they had to always push
themselves hard in order to catch up with his schedule; some scholars and elites blamed him for what he is doing is damaging relics rather than protecting; Geng’s wife had to remind him frequently: “don’t you want to live?” because she always watched her husband keeping working from 5:30 am to midnight. Most of the common citizens preferred to calling him Lao Geng (literally means “revered old Geng”, an appellation expressing intimate relationship in the Chinese context) because they had never contacted a mayor as closely as Geng: denizens would easily find their mayor with mudded shoes on various construction sites and would immediately get things done or at least proceeded ahead in Geng’s office on-site.

Then, why the public has such contrasting opinions on him? What does this controversial official do at all? A comprehensive review on his personal history might be helpful for reaching the reasons.65

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4.1.1 The biography of Geng

In 1958, Geng was born into a peasant family in Heshun, a rural county in the Taihang Mountain, whose mountainous environment might bring up his staunch nature. Like most of his contemporaries, instead of getting a formal college education, he got the first job (clerical worker in the local Communist media) in the age of 18 (1976). After accomplishing an education of on-the-job training, he was moved to Jinzhong (1978), a city one level higher than Heshun. Five years later (1983), ranking 2nd out of more than 300 candidates, he passed the exam for admission of college which is aimed for training future cadres. At the school, with the major of Chinese, he once had a dream of becoming a journalist, or a writer, his classmates also said Geng was a dedicated student of Chinese
classics who could be able to recite many classics exactly as it reads. This obsession of traditional culture might sow the seeds of his confidence on culture projects in his future career. After graduation (1985), he was appointed as the secretary of the Jinzhong municipal party committee, where is the corridors of power and thus a good channel that would lead him to higher positions. In 1987, he was promoted as the Deputy Section Chief, which means he had entered the "tenure-tracked" ranking officials (ranking 10th among all officials). Rather than rocket-style promotions, Mr. Geng, step by step, kept climbing-up in the political pyramid.

Six years after (1993), Geng started the next chapter of his career life: being appointed as the Deputy Party Chief of the Lingshi county when he was 35 years old — the second youngest local leader in Shanxi province at that time. Soon, in 1995, he was appointed as the Mayor of the Lingshi county, the second in command of the county (preceded only by the Party Chief). Since then, apart from two years of office duty (2004-2006), Geng had always been the local head and working in the frontline. In 1997, the old town of neighbor county Pingyao was inscribed into the list of World Heritage, by which its economy was spurred significantly, while in his jurisdiction, Geng also renovated the old town and the Wang Family Compound to attract visitors. Besides, he also carried out large-scale constructions in Lingshi: consolidating the embankment of the Fen River.
In 2000, he was promoted as the Party Chief of the Yuci city (the seat of the Jinzhong municipal city and later became the Yuci district of the Jinzhong municipal city; it is in the same administrative level but more prominent than normal county, and it is one level lower than the municipal city). In Yuci, he renovated the old town of Yuci and built it as a celebrated tourist site.

In 2004, Geng was moved to the provincial government at the capital, Taiyuan, where he was appointed as the Deputy Secretary-General of the provincial government. In 2006, supported by his former colleague and leader in the Jinzhong municipal city, Shen Weichen, who was then just appointed as the Party Chief of the Taiyuan municipal
city, Geng was elected as the Deputy Mayor of Taiyuan and in charge of the affairs of urban constructions. Within just two years, Geng prompted the urban constructions of this poor and dirty city significantly: the overpass was firstly erected in Taiyuan, some key roads were reformed to be express way.

In 2008, Geng was moved to the Datong municipal city where he was appointed as the Mayor of Datong. In this declining industrial town 300 miles north of Taiyuan, Geng launched a radical construction movement. Rendered by the media, Geng’s method of renovating historical towns was named as the “Datong Mode” which is featured with
massive demolitions of dilapidated shatters, complete relocating of original residents and renovating of historical towns and attractive tourist sites.

Figure 26. The massive demolitions and renovations Geng had made in Datong

When Geng was preparing to start a new five year term of Mayor or Party Chief in Datong, he was unexpectedly moved back to Taiyuan and appointed as the Mayor of Taiyuan in 2013. The massive petition against this sudden order of his transfer launched by the local people once shocked the nation.

Building subways, circled overpasses and express way, relocating and renovating shanty towns, the massive urbanization and urban renovation of Taiyuan under the management of Geng these years had brought impressive changes to this old industrial
city, more grand plan is in progress. (see the Master Plan of Taiyuan Metropolis 2016-2030 in Appendix III)

Figure 27. The newly completed overpass in Taiyuan

As both the law and the convention of bureaucracy in current China, Geng was supposed to retire in the age of 60 (namely the year of 2018) in his present rank of official (Bureau Chief, the fifth rank, see Appendix IV), but after the end of his last term in 2017, instead of being moved to be a secondary position and waiting to retire as routines, he was continued to be elected as the Mayor of Taiyuan, which seems the on-going massive urban construction still needs him.
Although the place in charged by him became increasingly prominent, the way he governed seldom changed. His methods in every office he took have an evident feature of being committed to do two things: one is renovating historic relics and transforming them into tourist spots; the other is taking high leverage and saddling the government with heavy debts to construct and improve the local infrastructures.

This scheme seems perfect in terms of drawing local GDP: tourism economy, but the way to realize it is bumpy. Resistance can be traced to three factors. First, vital interests of various groups and individuals, such as institutions, companies, local
authorities or commoners, are inevitably involved in Geng’s unprecedentedly massive demolitions and constructions. They will watch him closely for their own benefits no matter whether their sacrifice will be worth in the long run or for the whole city, making it hard for Geng to take a single step. Second, municipal debts spending on massive constructions had soared at an alarming rate, weighing heavily on the local government's finance. Another major impediment comes from preservationist, from whose perspective, the tourist-economy-oriented preservation projects had caused irreversible damages on historic relics.

4.2 The triple dilemmas of historic preservation

Taking Geng’s case as an example, following is an analysis of the plights of historic preservation in China from the dimension of government, social and individual respectively.

4.2.1 The dimension of government

Mayor Geng once told to the reporter: “What I am doing is transferring the impossibilities in the (political) system into possibilities”, some architecture historians

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66 The Chinese Mayor, directed by Hao Zhou (Jan. 28, 2015; Sundace). Accessed 7/29/2018,
can’t understand why an official like Geng who keeps creating fake renovations and jeopardizing the authenticity and integrity of real antiques seriously had not been punished, but rather, promoted all the way to the mayor of a provincial capital; some of Geng’s supporters believe that Geng is a rarely outstanding leader because he works hard and does actual things in a bureaucratic system whose officials used to do best by doing nothing.

Putting the debates aside, one might be curious about what a political system it is in China? Why this system could make Mayor Geng feel hard to move even a single step whereas on the other hand, this system not only tolerates his incorrigible violations but also rewards him with trust and higher positions?

It is of no doubt that political system concerning the making and operating of law and policy is very important in the running of state apparatus. Then, how the top-down design of bureaucracy affect the Jinyang NASP or much more broadly, the overall historic preservation system in China?

To answer that question, the analytical framework developed by Professor Zhou Li-An will be introduced, of which there are two core conceptions.67


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHJIVDTl6IQ.
The first concept is “Administrative Subcontract”, which describes the governance structure of Chinese government: unlike the Weberian bureaucracy, nor a pure outsourcing subcontract, but an ideal type between them, administrative subcontract outlines the logic and structure of China's governance which is featured with three points:

- subcontracting of administrative affairs to lower-level governments, together with quantitative target-setting and top-down division and delegation;
- budgetary and fiscal subcontracting under which lower-level governments or agencies rely largely on self-finance;
- outcome-oriented appraisals and evaluation.\(^{68}\)

From the perspective of transaction cost economics, Professor Zhou believes that the balance between people’s quality requirement of public service provided by the government (i.e. important factors concerning the risks of governance) and government’s cost of public service supplying (i.e. cost of fiscal budget and management of agencies) determine the adoption of administrative subcontract and the degree of subcontracting.\(^{69}\)

Compared with the demanding areas such as economic growth, historic preservation is now a public service with less pressure of public requirement, thus it is subcontracted to the local governments and the expenditure on preservation matters from the central government is very limited. Furthermore, this kind of subcontract follows the rule of

\(^{68}\) Zhou, “The administrative subcontract”, 36.

\(^{69}\) Ibid, 54.
“Jurisdiction-Based Administration”, which means the local government should bear all the responsibilities and costs of historic preservation. Meanwhile, the local heads on the one hand, are equipped with absolute discretion and strong power in execution, on the other hand, should take the whole responsibilities as the representative and leader of the local government. This political arrangement explains Mayor Geng’s one-man rule and the significant pressure borne by him.

The second concept of Professor Zhou’s analytical framework is “Political Tournament”. If the “Administrative Subcontract” summarizes the vertical structure of China’s governance, then the “Political Tournament” depicts its horizontal operational form: officials’ competition for promotions based on the evaluation of measurable indices, such as GDP growth, FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) attraction, fiscal revenue.

Two features of the political tournament are very worth to note. First of all, officials’ KPI (Key Performance Indicator) must be quantitative and measurable, only by which could the fairness of the tournament be guaranteed. Otherwise, subjective factors will inevitably courts collusion and corruption that will make the game meaningless. Furthermore, in current officialdom of China, due to the significant information asymmetry between the top and down, simple, clear, universal and quantitative indices are the only choice to evaluate officials.
Secondly, considering the limitation of energy and ability, incentives of the tournament must be differentiated by high-powered and low-powered. No wonder areas like economic growth will be high-powered incentives and occupy the high priority of officials’ schedules while the cultural domain will be low-powered.

The political tournament is competitive and cruel. First of all, only the winner could enter the next round of competition for promotions. Secondly, there are hardline limitations for officials’ ages, which usually means the officer must retire if not be promoted to a higher rank of position in a certain age. Thirdly, no matter will or not, all the officials have to be involved in the competition, except for dropping the job, but that is normally impossible because of the great disparity of salaries and benefits between official and none-official. Therefore, officials in this game will either be promoted for achieving hard evaluation indices (GDP, FDI, etc.) or fall to be a mediocre officer without real power.

Mayor Geng, for example, was once the second youngest local leader (36 years old, Deputy Department Chief, 8th ranked official) in Shanxi province, which means he had more opportunity to be promoted, and this was a great advantage for his career life. When he was promoted, rank by rank, to the Mayor of Datong (Bureau Chief, 5th ranked official) in the age of 50 years old, the incoming term (normally five years) would be critical for his following career life, since the age limitation of both his extant rank and the higher rank (Deputy Ministry Chief, 4th ranked official) is 60 years old, which means
if he could not be promoted to a higher ranked position in the next five years, then he would lose the opportunity of promotions forever. However, it is normally a significant leap and the promotion from the rank of Bureau Chief to Deputy Ministry Chief is very hard, because the later one is appointed by the central government rather than the provincial government. With regard to this, for himself and the political tournament he was involved, Geng must race against the time to finish those projects launched by him and present stunning quantitative achievements before the ending of his term if he would like to win the game and be promoted again. What’s more, even if Mayor Geng deems his mission as creating happiness for citizens like an ideal Confucian official that he cherishes, the first thing he needs to do, in current circumstances, is to secure his official position and keeping pursuing higher positions, only by which could he get the power and discretion to realize what he wants to.

Combining the vertical administrative subcontract and horizontal promotion competition, Professor Zhou’s analytical framework could be viewed as a 2 by 2 matrix.
While the vertical coordinate distinguishes high and low degrees of administrative subcontracting, the horizontal axis differentiates high-powered and low-powered incentives of the political tournament. The vertical and horizontal dimensions are complementary. It is the vertical administrative subcontract that conferred local officials necessary real power and discretion that is convenient for competing with each other by any means, while with high-powered promotions and fiscal incentives as well as accountability pressures, subcontractors in the horizontal competition will in turn make full use of actual control rights to realize the indices of promotion appraisals.

 Apparently, historic preservation, as one of the culture affairs that exert less pressure on requirement of public service and thus have low-powered incentives, is located at the upper-left quadrant. In contrast, areas with both high-powered incentives and high degree of subcontracting (such as Investment attraction, Social stability) occupy the upper-right quadrant.
section. Areas like national defense, foreign affairs are highly associated with governance crisis and not suitable for the Jurisdiction-Based Administration will be in the lower-left part. The lower-right grid is blank because there is no public domains with both low subcontracting degree and high-powered incentives identified in China (low subcontracting and high-powered incentives is fundamentally conflicted).

Admittedly, the thriving of China’s economic has, to some extent, demonstrated the reasonability and effectiveness of this institutional design. However, this kind of political arrangement is in fact contradictory with the multiple responsibilities of government’s public service, and the intensive competition of promotion distorts local heads’ official duty. Therefore, it imposes immeasurable harm on China’s historic preservation.

Firstly, instead of fully-funded budget, competitive staff salaries and benefits, this political structure featured with the Jurisdiction-Based Administration, self-founded budget, high-powered incentives, drives local officials to focus on measurable hard evaluation indices (such as GDP growth, fiscal revenue, FDI attraction) but ignore unmeasurable soft evaluation indices including the quality and achievements of historic preservation. Mayor Geng’s obsession of infrastructures and tourism is a good example.

Secondly, without strict regulations and procedures necessary to maintain fairness, social justice and serious public accountability, this institutional design essentially encourages local heads’ radical innovations and connives their selectively concern on civil benefits. Under the pressure of outcome-oriented and quantitative-indices-based
evaluation, local heads who have absolutely free discretions, are usually inclined to achieve higher numbers by any cost. In fact, Mayor Geng is not an occasional case, there are always officials who “invented” personalized controversial development model, which in most cases, blur the boundary between innovation and violation.\(^{70}\)

It should be mentioned, however, as Professor Zhou noted, his analytical framework did not include the concern of “political factors behind the administrative system, such as the sources of government power and legitimacy, political parties and interest groups, in order to make the explorations contractible and focused.”\(^{71}\)

### 4.2.2 The dimension of society

In the social dimension, the dilemma of preservation is mainly caused by unbalanced economic development. First of all, over-stressed economic development

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\(^{71}\) Zhou, “The administrative subcontract,” 66.
impedes the progress of other sectors in the society. China’s economy has entered the passage of high-speed growth since the Chinese economic reform in the late 1970’s, but the economic growth emphasizing on scale and speed is at the cost of sacrificing environment, culture, social justice, etc.\footnote{See: Brandt and Rawski, \textit{China’s Great Economic Transformation}, 246-288.}

Besides, the regional imbalance of economic development also imposes threat on historic preservation. Places with geographical and political advantages (normally the coastal region) have a preponderant share of the national economy while paradoxically, areas falling behind in economy (normally the middle and western region) keep most of the precious historical relics. However, when the backward areas bent on boosting their economy at all costs in order to share the benefits of development, the preservation of historical relics will be challenged seriously.

Located at Shanxi, an impoverished province, the cities in charged by Geng are all coal-mining-boom town. Over the decades, thousands of tons of coals produced by rampant mining have been transporting to the developed East China, guaranteeing whose supplying of energy while those towns themselves are choking in soot.

Notwithstanding their old form are almost integrated (mainly because the poor residents could not afford tearing down old structures and building new ones), the old towns are heavily deteriorated: densely populated decrepit houses, narrow and unpaved
muddy lanes, violative constructions encroaching public space, being lack of sewer and clean water. Indeed, it is necessary to renovate the old and crammed structures: not only for protecting historic relics but also for improving citizen’s living standards. Moreover, with resources depleted and economy stagnated, polluted cities crave clean and substantial industries to improve the quality of development.

But the local government could not be able to finance renovations nor upgrading projects. Mayor Geng, however, works out a way to resolve the financial woes. With the cooperation of real estate developers or other social capitals, Geng relocates the original residents to government subsidized new apartments, through which not only the relics could be kept from further erosion by dwellers, but also will improve residents’ living conditions. Then, a clean and tidy tourist site constituted by renovated and restored historical constructions will be built to attract visitors. Meanwhile, the tourism will create more jobs for the local people and increase government’s revenue. Apart from exploiting culture resources, Mayor Geng is also committed to construct infrastructures, such as road, expressway, overpass, bridge, subway, etc. With high leverage, Geng revs up investment on grandiose projects. It is expected by him that developed infrastructures will solidify the base of local economy and pave the way to draw outside capital and businesses.

Yin Xian’s example might elaborate on how complicated it is among economic development, historic preservation and regional disparity. As a leading cultural and
historical scholar, he knows well that some of Geng’s renovations could not stand the test of serious academic standards, but as a local resident, he said:

I do not have the heart to see the relics of Datong damaged intentionally or unintentionally and the deterioration of citizens’ living environment; I do not have the heart to see the increasingly marginalized status of Datong.73

Apparently, he still tilts towards supporting Mayor Geng, with whom together expects a better future of his hometown based upon the latter-day antiques created by Geng.

4.2.3 The dimension of individual

Various individuals involved in historic preservation all fall into respective plight. Despite with absolute power gripped in hand, officials also bear heavy duty at the same time. For instance, it is the power endorsed by the government and the Communist Party that supported Mayor Geng’s tough commands and strong executions, while on the other hand, it is him that was supposed to be accounted for any problems occurred in his jurisdiction.

In addition, Geng has to face with the competitive tournament of promotions, as well as deal with public discussions: an official like him who has launched so many

73 Lu, “Zhengyi Geng Yanbo (Geng Yanbo in controversy)”.

92
massive projects, needs to endlessly demonstrate to the public especially to his political opponents that his scheme is on the right track and he has not degenerated into corruptions (given the obscured entanglement, there is a high incidence of corruptions between officials in charge and businessmen, especially, Geng’s former direct leader, the imprisoned former Party Chief of Taiyuan, Shen Weichen, of whom Geng is the protege, was charged for corruptions in the culture construction projects of Taiyuan). Bearing with heavy pressure, Geng works so hard that fainted several times in the office on-site.

Historic preservation is a deep concern of scholars and elites, who are the majors that appreciate the value of heritages and actively push for backlashes against undermining of precious relics. But it seems their oppositions seldom work. Two factors might account for this phenomenon: firstly, scholars' opinions are not as important as GDP index in the evaluation determining promotions, blunting officials’ enthusiasm on considering them seriously; more importantly, scholars’ suggestions might be too focused on the preservation and heritages to have a comprehensive consideration on the interests of all stakeholders.

Again, looking no further than the case of Geng, many architecture historians (mostly non-local), from their professional perspectives, appeal for stopping Geng’s renovation of ancient structures by pointing out how fake and clumsy Geng’s constructions were, but none of them had ever considered the benefits of those original residents, some of whom might eager to be relocated to a larger and newer house through
Geng's project. No surprise, drawing none echo from local residents, scholars’ intervention had not formed solid hindrance for Geng’s pace. Although it is certainly right that the preservation of heritages is not supposed to be compromised, Geng’s case proved that without the agreement of all stakeholders, especially the support from local residents, any rightful proposal would be no more than wishful thinking.

As the social group involved in historic preservation most directly, the local residents, however, seems not zealous in historical relics. Instead, the vulnerability of property ownership is their top concern. Being anxious about potential asset seizure and focusing on their own benefits, citizens could not carve out more energy to participate in preservation affairs. Furthermore, for the majority of denizens, it is now less demanded for heritages compared with other public issues like food safety, public health, as a result, the public pressure pushing preservation forward is limited. In the example of Mayor Geng, asking about residents’ relocations account for over 70% of the questions on the official online channel of Direct-to-Local Leaders, some of them are curious about whether and when their house will be demolished and where they will be relocated, others are inquiring the reimbursement that they could get from the government for their relocation, but none of them question about if their mayor's demolitions and reconstructions will impact historical relics that just around them.74

4.2.4 Triple dilemmas

In fact, the case of Mayor Geng is a typical example that projects the dilemmas of historic preservation in China. Moreover, Geng's extraordinary energy, audacity and
ability, along with his ambitious plans and the resulting heated debates have magnified the multiple plights underlying preservation matters. Viewing through the prism of Mayor Geng’s case, we may understand better how the system of historic preservation works in China.

Hypothetically, the system of preservation might be viewed as a triangle constituted by three sectors from government, society and individual respectively. Ideally, these three components should be cooperative and complementary, constructing a firm triangle to support historic preservation. However, as reflected by the case of Mayor Geng, each of the three parts is full of contradictions and the this triangle as a whole is not stable.

Featured with administrative subcontract and political tournament, the current mechanism of government has resulted in the inveterate GDP-oriented developmental model in which historic preservation unfortunately played a role destined to be sacrificed. Moreover, without a sound legal system and tolerant media environment or any other effective supervising system and correcting mechanism, various activities or policies threatening and jeopardizing heritages could not be effectively curbed.

On the society side, the lopsided economic development makes cultural development fall into a vicious circle, undermining the social environment of cultivating preservation consciousness. Furthermore, the regional discrepancy increases the difficulty of coordinated development, impeding the reaching of social consensus on preservation issues.
Zooming in to individuals, competing for evaluation indices, officials could not make the developmental scheme from the perspective of historic preservation; without complete recognizing and full support from the masses, scholars’ appeal to preserving heritages sounds pale and whose professional suggestions are not valued properly; most of the general people who are anxious for fending the property ownership of themselves feel nonchalant about historic preservation.

Obviously, not only each dimension is full of cruces, but also the triangle as a system is beset with difficulties that keep the join force formed from the three dimensions. Pulling together plights from the government, society, and individuals, the preservation practices are under triple dilemmas.

Figure 30. The triple dilemmas of historic preservation
Source: Image by author
Chapter 5: The Future of Jinyang NASP

5.1 Reviews on the Jinyang NASP

Discussions about the dilemmas of historic preservation in China with the example of Mayor Geng shed new light on the form of NASP. In my opinion, the NASP project (and the LHS project as well), to some extent, could be viewed as a remedy of the current administrative defect. The central government used to take the "campaign governance" — specially-purposed projects isolated with routine matters of the government — to enhance the administration of areas that are ignored by the local government but still important for the public. Since the SACH could not afford full founds of supporting the local governments nor impose pressure of evaluation indices to urge the local governments to pay more attention on the preservation of large-scale archaeological sites, it “invents" the NASP, a novel project in the preservation system. With a small amount of introducing money cost, the SACH encourages the local governments to raise the major part of founds of building the NASP by honoring the sites with state credited authenticity (selecting and inscribing into the NASP list) and delivering the convenience of policies.

However, even with all kinds of rewards on the NASP projects, the local officials still need to weigh what is the most important evaluation indices among multiple tasks.
imposed, because their energy and the administrative resources that they could manipulate are, after all, limited. Unfortunately, in current China, culture projects, as a less demanded area of the public and soft evaluation indices in the bureaucratic system, used to be sacrificed or compromised. In this respect, it is natural that some of the local government chose to cooperate with real estate developers or commercial companies to build the NASP, such as the The Daming Palace NASP of Xi’an, the Sui-Tang Luoyang City NASP of Luoyang. In these cases, the NASP is not only a cultural project, but also a tool of cashing in culture resources and a way to fulfilling the requirement of economic growth, a fundamental evaluation indices for local chiefs.

In this critical moment of Taiyuan’s urbanization, a city covered under rubble and debris needs Mayor Geng to fix it up, he of course has no more energy and resource to spend on the Jinyang NASP. Furthermore, as a largely buried site with difficult readabilities, it is obvious that the value and resource of the Jinyang site could not be cashed in readily, which discourages Mr. Geng’s motivation to develop it with a high priority.

5.2 Suggestions for the future of Jinyang NASP

Surviving thousands of years of change, the magnificence of Jinyang site remains. We must not lose the core values, authenticity that have made the Jinyang site
so special. In terms of improving a specific project like the Jinyang NASP, there are several practical measures worth to take.

First of all, enhancing the research of the site. Solid research results are not only the basis of preservation but also the only reliable source of discovering and recognizing the value of the site. We now only have a very general knowledge about the site, many crucial questions are still waited to be answered through in-depth study, such as the evolution of its inside structure, the relationship among various layer of relics, etc. Excavations of the northwest section of the site needs to be done with painstaking attention to detail since the relics of significant royal or ritual complexes are most likely located there. Furthermore, it is meaningful that put the study of the Jinyang site within the background of the macro progress of Chinese history because a broader view will lead to a more thorough understanding on the site's significance, especially the perspective of how the interaction among various ethnic groups or diversified culture influence the constructions of the city if not the whole nation.

Secondly, improving the site’s readability. As mentioned before, constituted by no more than earth and dust, this site has no prominent eye-catching landscapes, it is thus necessary to find a proper way that is easy to be understood to interpret the site to the public. However, this does not means reconstructions, which might be the most quick and vivid form though, would be a choice, since restoring constructions will ruin the authenticity and integrity of the site. No reconstructions should be the bottom line that
must be insisted in the Jinyang site. In fact, many other large-scale earthen NASP had explored a lot on improving their readability which could be learnt from. For example, building a museum beside the site and hold theme exhibitions with uncovered objects from the site; immersing visitors in the scene of past with the help of digital methods (3D digital model, story-telling films).

Thirdly, advancing connections and interactions between the site and the public, which will increase people’s knowledge on the past, cultivate the public’s cultural confidence, and thus arouse people’s awareness of historic preservation. Ideally, the Jinyang NASP will not be just a leisure and recreational place for denizens as normal parks are, but also be a space nurturing cultural identity. Managers of the Jinyang site had already hosted several open house to communicate with the public. Besides, as the thriving of mobile internet and SNS (social network service), it becomes easier to motivate people’s enthusiasm on the site. For instance, we could build the on line community with the theme of preserving the Jinyang NASP, where users could post their ideas about the site and discuss the site with others, share the moments on the site or pictures of the relics they took with their family or friends.
Last but not least, it is hoped that the local government will transfer their focus from the fake reconstructions of the Ming-Qing town to the genuine heritages on the Jinyang site as soon as possible, after all, the Jinyang NASP is still at the preparing phase, more investment including both money and energy is needed to build a formal NASP.

About 800 years ago, when a poet, Yuan Haowen (1190-1257) who were living in the age of turmoil, passed by and saw the ruins of Jinyang, he wrote down the following verse: “When the peace and settlement comes again, it will be witnessed once more that the government reconstruct Jinyang.”75

75 Haowen Yuan, “Writing on Passing by the Ancient Relics of Jinyang,” Yuan Haowen Quanji (The complete works of Yuan Haowen), (Taiyuan: Shanxi guji chubanshe, 2004): 91.
In the eyes of the poet, the sign of the reviving of a prominent ancient city marks the beginning of a golden age. Of course, the ancient poet’s idea of “reconstruction” is not encouraged from modern preservation perspective, rather, what should be reconstructed is the cultural awareness, only by which historic preservation will be sustainable. Nonetheless, similar with the poet, I hope that the day when a well-preserved Jinyang site marks the beginning of an era will come soon and that in this golden era, culture is prosperous and heritages are valued.
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Appendix III: The Master Plan of Taiyuan Metropolis (2016-2030)
Adapted from plan of government which could be found at:
Spatial Structure

Central Metropolis

Groups

Improving Center of the Metropolis

Cultivating Center of the Metropolis

Center of Sub-District or Groups

New Town

Axis of Metropolis Development

Axis of Technology and Culture

Belt of Industry Development

Corridor of Ecology
Appendix IV: Mayor Geng’s Footprints of Official Duties and Records of Promotions
Acronyms

FDI: Foreign Direct Investment
GDP: Gross Domestic Product
LHS: Large-scale Heritage Site
LPCH: The People’s Republic of China’s Law of Preservation of Culture Heritage
MHNL: Major Heritages in the National Level
NASP: National Archaeological Site Park
SACH: State Administration of Cultural Heritage
WWSJ: Wenwushijie
YH: Jinyanggucheng yihaojianzhuzhi jizhi
Changyandi 場堰地
“即隋之晉陽宮” (it is the Jinyang Palace of the Sui Dynasty)
An-Shi Rebellion 安史之亂
Beiting gucheng 北庭故城
Bingzhou 并州
Chengcheng Middle School 成成中學
Chengqiangdi 城牆地
Chengziya 城子崖
Dadiantai 大殿臺
Damingcheng 大明城
Daminggong 大明宮
Dayizhi baohu zhuanxiangjingfei guanlibanfa 大遺址保護專項經費管理辦法
Dayizhi 大遺址
Dongchengjiao cun 東城角村
Erzhu Rong 爾朱榮
Fen River: 汾水
Fengyu Sand Creek 風峪沙河
Fuchu 副處
Fuke 副科
Futing 副廳
Gao Huan 高歡
Geng Yanbo 耿彥波
Guojia kaogu yizhi gongyuan 國家考古遺址公園

考古遺址公園 (NASP)
Guojia kaoguyizhi gongyuan guanlibanfa (shixing) 國家考古遺址公園管理辦法 (試行)
Han Binghua 韓炳華
Hengshui 衡水
Heshun 和順
Jin River: 晉水
Jin 晉
Jinci 晉祠
Jinsha 金沙
Jinyang 晉陽
Jinyuan district 晉源區
Jinyuan New Town 晉源新城
Jinyuan 晉源
Jinzhou 晉中
Jinzhou/yuci 晉中/榆次
Kaihuasi 開化寺
Keyuan 科員
Han 漢
Li Yuan 李淵
li 里
Liangzhu 良渚
Lingshi 靈石
Lou Rui 婁睿
Lüliang 呂梁
Luoyang 洛陽
Mingzhongdu huanggucheng 明中都皇故城
Nanchengjiao cun 南城角村
Pingyao 平遙
Qiu He 仇和
Quanguo zhongdian wenwu baohu 全国重点文物保护单位
Randengta 燃燈塔
Sanming 三明
Shen Weichen 申維晨
Shijie wenhua yichan 世界文化遗产
Shuichuangmen 水窗門
Song 宋
Taihang 太行
Taiyuan 太原
Taiyuanshi Jinyanggucheng yizhi 太原市晉陽古城管理條例
Tang 唐
Tianlongshan 天龍山
Tongzi Temple 童子寺
Wang Family Compound 王家大院
Wenwu 文物
Wenwuguji 文物古迹
Wenwuju 文物局
Xi’an 西安
Xianbei 鮮卑
Xiaodiantai 小殿臺
Xu Xianxiu 徐顯秀
Yin Xian 殷憲
Yingzao fashi 營造法式
Yinxu 殷墟
Yizhi gongyuan 遺址公園
Yu Hong 虞弘
Yuan Haowen 元好問
Yuanmingyuan 圓明園
zhang 丈
Zhao Jianzi 趙簡子
Zhengchu 正處
Zhengke 正科
## Index

### A

Administrative Subcontract ..... 82, 83, 86, 87, 95

Archaeological discoveries ......................... 2, 26

archaeological sites ........ 1, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 17, 97

authenticity ................. 11, 81, 97, 98, 99, 100

### C

central government 1, 4, 5, 12, 15, 18, 58, 83, 85, 97

Chinese history .......... 1, 19, 23, 24, 54, 55, 100

context............................... 6, 17, 55, 72

conventions.............................. 5, 15

cultural awareness.............................. 102

cultural heritage ..................... 4, 5, 6

cultural implications.............................. 19

### D

demolition................................. 1, 11, 22, 25, 76, 80, 93

dilemmas.............................. 2, 3, 71, 95, 96

dimension......................... 2, 3, 80, 81, 86, 89, 91, 96

Dynasty.............................. 9, 22, 23, 24, 25, 43, 52

excavation.............................. 9, 10, 17, 32, 46, 55, 57, 99

### F

flagship................................. 8, 16

### G

GDP................................. 6, 18, 84, 85, 88, 92, 95, 99

### H

heritage .......... 7, 10, 11, 13, 15, 58, 74, 92, 93, 95, 96, 98, 99, 101, 102

historic preservation... 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 17, 71, 80, 81, 83, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 95, 96, 97, 100, 102
I

in-situ......................................................1, 6, 15

integrity ........................................11, 54, 81,100

J

Jinyang .. 1, 2, 3, 6, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28,
29, 30, 31, 32, 37, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52,
53, 55, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 70,
71, 72, 73, 85, 103

Jurisdiction-Based Administration .......4, 83, 87

L

local government... 2, 5, 6, 17, 21, 62, 63, 70, 72,
73, 74, 84, 87, 95, 103, 104, 108

M

Mayor Geng

Geng ...2, 3, 75, 77, 79, 85, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93,
95, 96, 98, 100, 101

N

NASP

National Archaeological Site Park 1, 2, 3, 4, 6,
7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19,
20, 21, 30, 50, 59, 60, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74,
85, 100, 101, 102

P

Political Tournament .....................84, 85, 86, 95

promotions ...................... 78, 88, 89, 90, 91, 97

public space ..................... 1, 2, 7, 9, 14, 20, 95

R

readability .................. 1, 15, 17, 72, 74

restoring

restoration.........................2, 67, 69, 73, 74

revenue...............................5, 74, 88, 92, 95

ruins 11, 12, 15, 31, 38, 40, 41, 42, 46, 47, 58, 72

S
SACH

State Administration of Cultural Heritage 4, 7,
13, 16, 18, 21, 71, 72, 100
sustainable ..............................................10, 102

T

tourism.......................8, 11, 17, 59, 66, 69, 88, 90, 99