Embracing the world: development of historic preservation theory in China since the 1980s

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Embracing the world: development of historic preservation theory in China since the 1980s

Abstract
Since the late 1970s, China entered an unprecedented period of urbanization, and global interaction characterizing the following decade and beyond. Historic preservation was under severe challenges in the wave of large-scale construction, which largely stimulated the development of domestic preservation theory. By ratifying the World Heritage Convention in 1985, China opened its door to the global heritage conservation society. Chinese scholars and preservationists critically accepted the universal preservation principles recognized by international organizations (such as UNESCO and ICOMOS) and responded to the global community integrating the Chinese and East Asian philosophy and experiences. In order to understand the interaction between China and the global society on preservation theory exploration since the 1980s, and build the groundwork for preservation theory development and future international conservation cooperation, the thesis will illustrate China's experience in participating in the global heritage conservation society, creating theoretical interactions, re-framing domestic preservation system, contribution to cultural diversity, and establishing national identity in the global arena. The thesis will interpret the interactions by summarizing, analyzing, and comparing published laws and regulations, international charters and conventions, and landmark scholarly studies in and beyond China.

Keywords
Chinese preservation theory, authenticity, values-centered preservation, cultural diversity, national identity

Disciplines
Historic Preservation and Conservation

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EMBRACING THE WORLD: DEVELOPMENT OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION THEORY IN CHINA SINCE THE 1980S

Xin Li

A THESIS

in

Historic Preservation

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Since the late 1970s, China commenced a new period of economic development, urban construction, and global interaction after a ten-year stagnation from 1966 to 1976. The new era of development and construction has put extensive challenges on preserving historic buildings, districts, cities, villages, and cultural landscapes. In response to the changes and challenges, theoretical research on historic preservation has been rapidly developing in China since the 1980s as Chinese scholars and preservationists re-opened the door to the global heritage conservation society. By joining the World Heritage system and introducing preservation principles recognized by international organizations (such as UNESCO and ICOMOS), China critically accepted universal preservation principles and echoed the global heritage conservation community with its own voice.

China’s theoretical explorations on historic preservation since the 1980s not only contribute to domestic theory building and methodology development but also illustrate how international theoretical interactions have shaped the state’s historic preservation system. Chinese experience can be referential to other countries and regions with unique historical and cultural backgrounds -- especially as for translating, interpreting, utilizing, and modifying universally accepted

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1 China underwent a ten-year political unrest called the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976. During the Cultural Revolution, urban development, historic preservation, education and academic research, and international communication got stagnated. Not until the later 1970s, China gradually recovered from the Cultural Revolution and embraced the outside world again.
preservation conventions and charters, contributing to global theory building with regard to cultural diversity, and reinforcing national identity in a global society.

1.2 Research Statement

In order to fully illustrate the theoretical interactions between China and the global heritage conservation society, reflect on the conflicts and reconciliations between a global discourse (represented by the World Heritage system and relevant international organizations) and national/local contexts with historical and cultural specificity, and gather experience for improving preservation theory building in the future, the thesis will:

(1) explore a narrative on preservation theory development of China’s multi-step procedure to get involved in the global heritage preservation society and create interactions;

(2) reflect on impacts of China interacting with the global heritage conservation society, including the theoretical transitions in domestic preservation theory -- with regard to value debates, heritage typology, and conservation principles -- and China’s changing national identities in the global society.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Documentary Research

By collecting, conceptualizing, assessing, and comparing published laws, regulations, charters, and landmark scholarly studies in and beyond China, the thesis establishes an objective
and systematic description based on solid research of China’s theoretical explorations on historic preservation interacting with the global heritage conservation society.

1.3.2 Narrative Reconstruction

The thesis re-frames current studies on preservation theory development in China into a new narrative with respect to international interactions between China and the global heritage conservation society since the 1980s. The narrative summarizes the interactions of theoretical exploration into multiple progressive phases in chronological order and illustrates each phase with landmark charters, laws and regulations, and scholarly studies.

1.4 Research Framework

The thesis falls into five parts. Part 1 introduces the research background, aims, and methodology. Part 2 describes pre-existing preservation theory in China before ratifying the Convention in the 1980s and highlights the dilemmas in the early 1980s to be addressed in the following decade and beyond. Part 3, as the core of the narrative, examines how China gradually got involved in the global heritage conservation society and learned from international experience since the mid 1980s in three steps: commence by ratifying the World Heritage Convention and joining the World Heritage Commission as a state party; introduce influential preservation theories from well-established international organizations -- including the authenticity debates based on the Venice Charter and values-centered preservation based on the Burra Charter -- and responded to the global discourse based on the Chinese and East Asian context.
1. Introduction

Background. Research Statement. Methodology. Lit Review

2. Pre-existing Preservation Theory till the early 1980s

**Historic Development**
- Preservation ideologies in the early 20th cen.
- Historic Preservation in the 1950s-1960s
- Synthesizing explorations: Cultural Relics Protection Law (1982)

**Three Dilemmas**
- Limit in value debates
- Gap in heritage typology
- Ambiguity in conservation principles

3. Create international Interaction (since 1985)

**Mark the start**
- Embracing the World Heritage system: ratification of the *World Heritage Convention* in 1985

**Introduce preservation theories from international organizations**
- Introducing the *Venice Charter* in 1966 and the critical acceptance on *Authenticity*
  - the Venice Charter
  - the Nara Document
  - Exploring “authenticity” through practice
  - Chinese-based authenticity
- Introducing the *Burra Charter* and the *Values-centered Preservation* in the late 1990s
  - the Burra Charter
  - Expanding values and preservation as a social endeavor

**Echo the World**
  - Adapt the standard preservation principles into a specific country/region
  - Manifest cooperative and interactive relationship between China and the international heritage system
  - Provide a foundation for international co-operations for China’s preservation
- *The Beijing Document (2007)*
  - Contribute to East Asian-based preservation
  - Illustrate cultural diversity

4. From Wen Wu to Heritage

**Expansion in value typologies**;

5. Changing national identity

**National Identity in the World Heritage List**
- A multi-ethnic unified country diversity of Chinese culture & ethnic integration
- Expanding heritage categories: modern heritage, cultural landscape and routes

**Enhancing cultural confidence and national pride**

**Development in conservation principles**

**Conclusion**

Fig 1.1 Research Framework
Part 4 and Part 5 discuss how the theoretical interactions with the international society have impacted China’s preservation theory building and its national identity. Part 4 focuses on how Chinese scholars and preservationists gradually shifted the core concept of historic preservation from “Wen Wu” (or historic relics), a domestic term officially used for cultural conservation before 2005, to “cultural heritage” under the influence of World Heritage discourse. Part 5 explores China’s changing national identity based on World Heritage nominations since the 1980s and provides a heritage political perspective of China’s interaction with the global society.

1.5 Literature Review

Preservation theory development in contemporary China is an increasingly trendy research field. Current studies on laws, regulations, charters, and practical preservation cases in China serve as a solid stepping stone for theory research and narrative reconstruction from different perspectives.

Studies on domestic laws and regulations, such as the Cultural Relics Protection Law (1982, latest revised in 2015), and relevant regulations on specific heritage categories such as Regulation on the Protection of Famous Historical and Cultural Cities, Towns and Village (2008). Domestic laws and regulations illustrate preservation theories by their preservation objectives, definitions of the preserved objects, value statements, conservation principles, etc. They are reliable references for official recognition. “Review Of the Development Of Wen Wu Architecture (cultural relics) Preservation Law and Regulations in China Since 1949” by Prof. Lv Zhou is a representative
study that describes China’s historic preservation by relevant laws and regulations development.2

Domestic debates on landmark international charters, conventions and documents among leading scholars and preservationists in contemporary China, such as Chen Zhihua, Luo Zhewen, Gao Nianhua, Lv Zhou, Guo Zhan, provide critical reflections on universal preservation principles based on the Chinese context. Relevant studies focus on authenticity debates based on the *Venice Charter* (published in 1964, introduced to China in 1986) and the *Nara Document*, value debates based on the *Burra Charter* (first published in 1979, introduced to China in the late 1990s), heritage typology expansion based on the World Heritage List, etc. The studies record the conflicts, discussions, negotiations, and reflections when China got exposed to the global preservation discourse.

International reviews on Chinese preservation principles, especially ones on the landmark documents drafted by China and recognized by international organizations, provide an international perspective to reflect on the interactive theory exploration since the 1980s. For example, Neville Agnew, Martha Demas, and Sharon Sullivan’s paper “the Development of the *China Principles*: a Review to Date” compares the *China Principles*, one of the most important documents that connect China’s own system to international principles, with other well-known charters or guidelines and reflects on China’s preservation theory development based on the reviews of scholars from different countries including America, European countries, and

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Perspectives from critical heritage studies provide deep thoughts on national identities, heritage politics and societal impacts of historic preservation in China that came along with global interactions. As an example, World Heritage Craze in China by Yan Haiming explores the differences between the universally-developed, officially-stated values for the World Heritage system and the narratives in the Chinese media shaped by particular national and local discourse.\(^4\) Heritage Politics in China by Yujie Zhu and Christina Maags sheds light on how Chinese policies have transformed the heritage narratives and cultural practices and how to understand the complex nature of heritage conservation in contemporary China.\(^5\)

In addition, reports and studies of representative preservation projects are essential to understand how theoretical explorations contribute to practical preservation work and illustrate abstract principles with various use cases. The thesis will also refer to representative project reports on heritage restoration, reconstruction, relocation in China since the 1980s.

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2. Preservation Theories in China till the Early 1980s

This section will briefly describe the pre-existing preservation theory development in China before re-opening its door to the global heritage conservation society in the mid 1980s and summarize theoretical dilemmas in China’s preservation field till the early 1980s.6

2.1 Traditional Preservation Ideologies in China

Preservation ideologies in China were deeply rooted in its cultural traditions before modernization. Modernization in China is a long period of transition in the 19th century and the 20th century -- many domestic scholars take 1840, the breakout of the First Opium War, as the start and 1949, when the People’s Republic of China was founded, as the end. During modernization, China became increasingly connected to the outside world, especially to western countries and other east Asian countries, such as Britain, France, Japan, and the United States. Introducing advanced technology and foreign ideologies from the west induced profound changes in Chinese society in the fields of urban planning, architectural design, and historic preservation. Since there was hardly a watershed to separate “tradition” and “modern” during the hundred years of transition, “tradition” in this thesis refers to the architecture or ideologies before 1840 or the ones hardly influenced by foreign countries later than 1840. For example, a pavilion built in the 1930s but largely modeled after an early Qing style in the early 18th century may still be

6 As mentioned in “1.1. Background,” China gradually recovered from the 10-year stagnation of the Cultural Revolution in the late 1970s. There was a short delay between China’s recovery from the aftermath in the 1970s and started to involving in the international historic preservation community in the mid 1980s. Here I use the mid 1980s when China ratified the World Heritage Convention as a milestone. Further explanations can be found in 3.1
considered as traditional. “Modern,” as a contrast, refers to the architecture or ideologies that were highly influenced by other countries (especially western countries) since 1840.

One important perspective of Chinese traditions in preserving historic constructions is that people tend to focus on paradigmatic building standards - abstract concepts of constructions reflecting etiquette hierarchy and ideal spatial patterns as a social relationship, instead of preserving specific physical objects.⁷

![Fig 2.1 A Traditional Courtyard in Old Peking](https://mts.jk51.com/tushuo/6047236.html)

For example, in a traditional courtyard in Old Peking, the principal room (usually the room in the middle and facing south) is supposed to the highest and the largest. It is usually occupied by the owner, the elderly or the most honorable people. The wings (facing east and west) are

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usually used by younger generation or younger siblings. The daozu (facing north) is for servants or guests. This arrangement shows reverence for the elderly, reflects traditional social order, and illustrates Confucius' etiquettal thinking. When preserving such a courtyard, the architectural materials of each room might be changed, but the order should be preserved -- the principle room should still be the largest and most highly decorative.

Another example is the roof design illustrating etiquettal hierarchy. For instance, in the Forbidden City, the Hall of Supreme Harmony (太和殿), the very principle construction used for ceremonial purposes in the Palaces, has an outstanding double-eave Wudian Roof (重檐庑殿顶) to show its incomparable status; while the Hall of Middle Harmony (中和殿) with a single-eave Cuanjian Roof (单檐攒尖顶) and the Hall of Preserving Harmony (保和殿) with a double-eave Xieshan Roof (重檐歇山顶) are not as central as the Hall of Supreme Harmony. When restoring
these halls, their original materials, architectural paintings, and detailed components can be changed or redesigned, but the paradigmatic building standards, such as the roof type, should be kept.

In addition, a large number of traditional constructions in China were made of wood. Generally speaking, wood structures are perishable and vulnerable to moisture and biological deterioration in outdoor environment. Moreover, wood as a material is relatively easier to work on into different structural and decorative components compared to masonry, which also makes component replacement and reconstruction an easier job compared with masonry constructions. As a result, it is a common practice in traditional restoration to repaint exterior wood surfaces, replace wood components, and reconstruct partial or entire structures. It is acceptable (sometimes even ideal) that a restored construction looks brand new. Furthermore, the Chinese also developed their own traditional craftsmanship for wood structures, such as Caihua (彩画) paintings on exterior surfaces to protect and embellish wood components.8

The unique traditions have largely influenced China’s preservation theory development throughout the 20th century and into the 21st century. These traditions have induced theoretical debates as China introduced foreign principles from the international community since the 1980s.

2.2 Modern Wen Wu Preservation Ideologies in the Early 20th Century

Modern ideologies of “Wen Wu” (historic relics) preservation in China were first developed

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8 Caihua, known as polychromy, is a multiple-colored painting on the exterior structures. Further introduction can be found in 3.2.1.3
in the early 20th century when domestic scholars and architects, such as Liang Sicheng (1901-1972), Lin Huiyin (1904-1955), Liu Dunzhen (1879-1986) introduced modern European-centered preservation theories to China. The term “Wen Wu” was long associate with antique collection, appreciation, and epigraphy, while historic architecture -- not belonging in the category -- was relevant to construction and craftsmanship. It was not until the early 20th century that historic architecture was considered as an art piece or a witness of history worth studying as “Wen Wu” like calligraphy works, inscriptions, or exquisite utensils.

The Guwu Protection Law (or, Antique Protection Law, 1930) and a set of in-depth preservation regulations promulgated by the Nanjing Government of the Republic of China in the 1930s, such as “the Outline of the scope and types of tentative antiquities” (1935), officially included architecture as a category of Wen Wu. The protected Wen Wu architecture included “cities, fortresses, palaces, government offices, academies (shuyuan), residences, gardens, temples, tombs, bridges, gates, and all the other relics” that contained “scientific, historic, or artistic” values. Recognizing the “values” of Wen Wu was an important theoretical breakthrough and the three value types profoundly shaped China’s preservation theory.

The idea that Wen Wu architecture was of historic and scientific values was largely developed by Ying Zao Xue She (YZXS, 营造学社), an academic community led by Zhu Qiqian

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10 Nanjing Government of the Republic of China (1927-1948) was the highest administrative organ representing China established by the Chinese Kuomintang in the 1930s. Later the Nanjing Government was overthrown by the Chinese Communist Party, and the People’s Republic of China was founded by the Communist Party in 1949.
and Liang Sicheng in the 1930s and 1940s. Studying traditional architecture and its construction rules, the YZXS documented more than 2000 historic sites with a scientific methodology in China, largely expanded the understanding of the social, economic, and cultural context in the past, and provided a solid foundation for modern historic preservation.

In addition, Chinese scholars and preservationists also attached importance to the artistic perspective of Wen Wu architecture. Liang Sicheng and Lin Huiyin once highlighted a “sense of architecture” (建筑意) as an analogy to the “sense of poetry” and the “sense of painting” in “Pingjiao Jianzhu Zalv” (平郊建筑杂录) in 1932. The “sense of architecture,” elaborated in poetic and romantic descriptions in this article, laid not only in the beauty of material, shape, construction, and settings, but also in the imaginary association to traditional literature and the feelings and emotions induced by its history. The association to literature and the sense of history are deeply rooted in traditional Chinese culture and aesthetic philosophy.

2.3 Historic Preservation in the 1950s and the Early 1960s

In 1949 when the People’s Republic of China (PRC) was founded, China was faced with great challenges of urban construction after years of wars. With the need of preserving the

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Liang Sicheng (1901-1972) was one of the most important architects, historic preservationists, and urban planners in China in the 20th century. He graduated from the Department of Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania in 1928 and later worked at Dongbei University, Yin Zao Xue She, and Tsinghua University. Lin Huiyin (1904-1955) was a famous architect and poet in China. She was Liang’s wife and assistant. She also graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, majoring in Fine Arts. 
12 Anti-Japanese War (as part of WWII) from 1937 to 1945, the Third Civil Revolutionary War (China’s War of Liberation) from 1946 to 1949.
outstanding history and culture while undergoing urban and rural constructions, Wen Wu preservation became a concern. In the 1950s and the 1960s, preservation theory developed under the influence of the Soviet Union and the combined effort of domestic scholars. Leading domestic scholars, such as Liang Sicheng, established sets of preservation theories based on the Chinese context.

2.3.1 The Influence of the Soviet Union

Since the 1950s, Chinese scholars, such as Liang Sicheng, Luo Zhewen and Xie Chensheng, learned from the preservation theories and heritage regulation system in the Soviet Union through field trips and document translation and adapted them into the Chinese context. The Soviet experience influenced China from several perspectives.

First, the Soviet experience reshaped the aim of historic preservation under a socialist context. In the Soviet Union, historic relics were considered as “properties of all citizens,” serving as “a foundation to create a new socialist culture, a scientific material to explain history and to improve the education in patriotism, and encourage the sense of confidence and self-esteem.” The interpretation of Wen Wu and the ultimate goal of historic preservation were largely adopted by China since the 1950s.

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13 Luo Zhewen (1924—2012) was a famous Chinese scholar on historic preservation. He joined the Ying Zao Xue She in 1940 as a student as well as an assistant of Liang Sicheng. He was also famous for his studies on preserving the Great Wall. Xie Chensheng (1922-) was a famous Chinese scholar on historic preservation. He served in the State Administration of Cultural Heritage after 1949 when the PRC was founded and drafted multiple important preservation laws and regulations such as the Wen Wu Protection Law in 1982.

Second, the Soviet experience improved the Wen Wu protection and management system in China. In the 1950s and 1960s, one of the major advances in the historic preservation field in China was establishing the Wen Wu protection and management system based on the “Wen Wu unit” under the influence of the Soviet Union. A “Wen Wu unit” can be understood as a registered Wen Wu site. The term “unit” (单位) is a typical expression under a Socialism context. In 1961, the State Council of the PRC promulgated the *Provisional Regulations on the Management of Cultural Heritage (the Provisional Regulations, repealed in 1982)*, which became an essential reference for the *Historic Relics Protection Law (1982)* and the juristic basis for historic preservation in China. Although the *Provisional Regulations* were drafted by domestic experts, it was largely influenced by the *Cultural Relics Protection Regulations (1948, repealed in 1976)* of the Soviet Union as for the definition of heritage values, the classification of Wen Wu, the hierarchical registered and management system based on “Wen Wu unit,” etc.15

Last but not the least, the Soviet experience contributed to enhancing the preservation of historic cities. Compared with other countries, the Soviet Union was among the first that systematically established regulations on historic city preservation and urban planning at a national level. Luo Zhewen introduced the Soviet historic city preservation system to China in the 1950s including the “Regulations on the Statistical, Registration, Maintenance and Repair Work Procedures of Architectural Cultural Relics under State Protection,” an important document of

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2.3.2. Liang Sicheng’s Preservation Theory

Liang Sicheng (1901—72) was one of the leading architects and historic preservationists in the 20th century. His preservation theories, shaped by both traditional Chinese culture and modern ideologies, were highly influential in his generation. During Liang’s stay at the YZXS in the 1930s and 1940s, he became a leading figure in preservation theories and principles. After the PRC founded in 1949, Liang expanded his research on urban preservation, pointing out the importance of protecting the settings made up by both Wen Wu and “non-Wen Wu elements.”

Liang explained many historic preservation ideas in his famous work “Restoration and Maintenance of Architectural Heritage” (闲话文物建筑的重修与维护) in 1964, and some points are still frequently cited today. Liang argued that we should “restore the old as old” (整旧如旧) instead of replacing the aged constructions into splendid new ones. Restoration should focus on “transfusing blood and giving injections” and prolonging the lives of old structures instead of “putting on makeup.” Interventions should “seem to be non-existent but actually exist, seem to have nothing to offer but valuable in use, and seem sage and appear slow-witted.” A historic architectural site should be preserved with its settings since “a red flower needs to be

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complemented by its green leaves around.”17 Liang also comprehensively used archaeological studies, historic archives, and other reliable resources to study the history, cultural context, and current condition of an ancient building before creating a preservation plan. In addition, he agreed with adopting modern technology if it caused no harm to the original appearance.18

Compared with the Venice Charter published in the same year, Liang’s theories expressed similar ideas on respecting the original states and the prudence in intervention. However, Liang’s ideas were not exactly the same as the European-centered principles illustrated by the Venice Charter. In his plan for restoring the Caihua of Wan Chuan Temple at Jing Mountain in 1935, he wrote, “as for the principles of restoring antique, preserving the original envelope comes first from an artistic perspective,” and his artistic taste was shaped in traditional Chinese culture and his Beaux-arts training at the University of Pennsylvania in the 1920s.19 As for conservation principles, Liang did not emphasize on preserving material authenticity and differentiating different layers of fabric. Furthermore, he proposed that (partial) reconstruction that reinstated the site to a specific time in its history could be a reasonable solution if the reconstruction was strictly based on credible research materials.

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Caihua, known as polychromy, is a multiple-colored painting on the exterior structures. Further introduction can be found in 3.2.1.3
2.4 Synthesizing Explorations: Cultural Relics Protection Law (1982)

From 1966 to 1976, China underwent the Cultural Revolution. This radical political unrest made stagnate historic preservation and relevant education, academic research, and international communication. Many historic relics were sabotaged. The stagnation gradually ended in the late 1970s. In the early 1980s Chinese scholars and preservationists systematically synthesized the past theoretical and practical explorations into laws and regulations.

The Cultural Relics Protection Law of the People’s Republic of China (or the Wen Wu Protection Law, published 1982) was one of the most important documents providing a juristic basis on historic preservation in reference to the Provisional Regulations (1961, repealed in 1982). It served as a comprehensive synthesis of preservation theories in China till the early 1980s, embodying how China developed modern historic preservation ideologies under the unique historic, philosophical and political context. The Cultural Relics Protection Law (1982) conveyed these ideologies throughout the entire document, especially in its aims of historic preservation, definitions of cultural relics (Wen Wu), values of cultural relics (Wen Wu), conservatism principles, etc.

2.4.1 Aims of Preservation and Values of Wen Wu

Article 1 in the Cultural Relics Protection Law (1982) clarifies its aims as “strengthening state protection of cultural relics, contributing to the development of scientific research, inheriting the splendid historical and cultural legacy of our nation, conducting education in patriotism and in the revolutionary tradition, and building a socialist society with an advanced culture and
ideology.”

Article 2 and Article 7 categorize three value typologies of cultural relics (Wen Wu), namely “historic, artistic, and scientific” values, identical to the *Provisional Regulations (1961)*, and nearly the same as the “Outline of the scope and types of tentative antiquities” (1935) published by the Republic of China and the Soviet preservation regulations published around 1948. Wen Wu is a witness to the development of human kind, reflects productive forces and relationships, social lives, and natural environment, and illustrates precious scientific research value. However, both the *Provisional Regulations (1961)* and the *Cultural Relics Protection Law (1982)* fail to clearly define each value typology.

2.4.2 Wen Wu Categories

There are two kinds of sites in preservation mentioned in the *Cultural Relics Protection Law*, Wen Wu units and famous historic and cultural cities. Article 2 defines Wen Wu protected by the PRC as “Wen Wu units.” Wen Wu units are officially divided into five categories, including both movable cultural relics such as paintings and utensils and immovable ones as architectural constructions. The first category and the second category out of the five are for “immovable cultural relics,” and the last category is also closely relevant to the architecture and urban planning perspectives.

(1) sites of ancient culture, ancient tombs, ancient architectural structures, cave temples and stone carvings that are of historical, artistic or scientific value;

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(2) buildings, memorial sites and memorial objects related to major historical events, revolutionary movements or famous people that are highly memorable or are of great significance for education or for the preservation of historical data.22
(5) Typical material objects reflecting the social system, social production or the life of various nationalities in different historical periods.23

In addition, historic and cultural cities are also an important part in historic preservation. As in Article 8, cities “with an unusual wealth of cultural relics of high historical value and major revolutionary significance” shall be designated as “famous cities of historical and cultural value” once approved by the State Council, and a detailed list of the registered cities was published in the same year.24

2.4.3 Conservation Principles

Article 14 stipulates to keep the cultural relics in their “original states” as the paramount conservation principle when “repairing, preserving, or relocating” them; Article 15 adds that the management agency should safeguard cultural relics and shall not “damage, rebuild, extend or dismantle” them.25 Instead of the conservation principle -- “maintaining the status quo or restoring the original state” -- in the Provisional Regulations (1961), the Cultural Relics Protection Law (1982) highlights only the “original state.”26 However, it was a huge challenge to decide on what the “original state” was in practical projects, and it was not clearly defined in the

Historic Relics Protection Law.

2.5 Dilemmas in Preservation Theory till the Early 1980s

After decades of exploration on historic preservation in the 20th century, China has developed a set of preservation principles, which was largely reflected in the Cultural Relics Protection Law (1982). However, there existed limits, contradictions and ambiguities in that set of historic preservation principles. Three dilemmas became key concerns as China began to embrace the world since the mid 1980s.

Firstly, value debates were limited. Historic preservation focused on the historic, artistic, and scientific values of historic sites, ignoring their societal values. It resulted in a relatively static, museum-like methodology to safeguard the original states of the relics themselves. Compared with the international explorations around the same time, such as the Burra Charter first published in 1979, the theoretical debates in China were weak in non-heritage perspectives, especially for social and spiritual values.

Second, there existed a gap in heritage typology. The registered sites, “Wen Wu unit” and “famous historic and cultural cities,” were limited in spatial scale and the “Wen Wu units” were limited to traditional sites and architectural constructions except for the ones closely related to major revolutionary movements in modern China.

Third, there existed great ambiguity and arbitrariness in conservation principles. The ambiguity of “maintaining the original states” indicated that there lacked a widely-accepted
consensus on how to deal with the interventions, adaptions, and reconstructions during the course of history. For example, it was a common dilemma to choose between keeping the current condition and preserving a reinstated state that prioritized integrated harmony and beauty.
3. Creating International Interaction: Preservation Theory Development since the 1980s

Gradually recovered from the Cultural Revolution since the late 1970s, China entered a new period of development and global interaction in the 1980s. Re-opening its door to the outside world after a long period of domestic stagnation, China connected to international-organization-based preservation systems (UNESCO, ICOMOS, and ICCROM, etc) and participated in global cultural heritage preservation affairs. Historic preservation theory studies in China went under extensive explorations on shaping and re-shaping the universal preservation discourses of the international community under the Chinese context. This section will illustrate China’s multi-step procedure to interact with the global community since the 1980s -- getting involved in the World Heritage Convention (WHC), introduction to foreign preservation theories, and contributing to the global theory building based on the Chinese and East-Asian context.

3.1 Joining the World Heritage System: Ratification of the Convention

The World Heritage system is considered to be discursive and influential in China for its credibility established by the clearly defined, scientifically rational and highly theorized preservation principles after decades of development (under western discourses) and the endorsement by well-established international NGOs for historic preservation, including
ICOMOS, ICCOM, and IUCN.\textsuperscript{27} Joining the \textit{Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention or WHC, first published in 1972)} in 1985 marked a new phase of China participating in the global cultural heritage system. It was also a new commencement of preservation theory studies whereby Chinese scholars and preservationists introduced foreign preservation principles and guidelines that were recognized by international organizations and conveyed as international charters and conventions.

\textbf{3.1.1 World Heritage System and the Convention}

The idea of creating the world heritage system can be traced back to the international heritage conservation movement that emerged after World War I.\textsuperscript{28} After World War II, an international initiative for historic preservation was largely developed and most of the influential international heritage conservation organizations, such as UNESCO (1946), ICCROM (1959), and ICOMOS (1965), were founded during that period of time. In the early 1960s, the multinational rescue of Abu Simbel temples largely provoked the worldwide cooperation on cultural heritage. In 1965, A White House Conference in the U.S.A. first proposed the idea of a “world heritage trust” to “identify, establish, develop and manage the world’s important natural and scenic areas and historic sites for the present and future benefit of the international citizenry.”\textsuperscript{29} These co-operations and subsequent proposals culminated in the World Heritage Convention (WHC).

\textsuperscript{27} Haiming Yan, \textit{World Heritage Craze in China: Universal Discourse, National Culture, and Local Memory} (New York: Berghahn Books, 2018), 9
The *WHC* was first adopted by the UNESCO's General Conference in 1972 to protect the world's natural and cultural heritages. It came into force in 1975 when 20 nations ratified it. The WHC in the 1970s and 1980s were supposed to serve as an ideal universal-standard model. It maintained that “it is incumbent on international community as a whole” under the narrative of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) -- “cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity.”30 While at the same time, the WHC largely adopted the Euro-centered preservation principles, especially the ones in the *Venice Charter (ICOMOS, 1964)* including the definitions of “monument,” “site,” and authenticity principles.31

### 3.1.2 China Joining the WHC

The prelude of China joining the WHC can be traced back to Hou Renzhi’s visit to the George Washington University in the U.S.A. in 1984.32 During his visit, Hou was introduced to the WHC concepts by American scholars. He expressed great interest in the Convention and proposed to ratify the WHC as a delegate of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference with three other influential scholars -- Yang Hanxi, Zheng Xiaoxie and Luo Zhewen -- as cosigners from ecology, architecture, urban planning, and historic preservation fields.33

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32 Hou Renzhi (1911-2013) was one of the most established historic geographers in China. He was also a leading character in historic urban preservation. He was one of the advocates to establish the “famous historic and cultural cities” preservation system in 1982.
33 Yang Hanxi (1918-2010) was a famous ecologist, forest scientist, and scholar in natural heritage conservation. Zheng Xiaoxie (1916-2017) was China's famous urban planner, architect, and historic preservationist. He had rich experience in urban conservation.
They argued that ratifying the WHC could help to “promote this international cultural cooperation that is beneficial for all human-kind.”\textsuperscript{34} The proposal was later approved.

After ratifying as a State Party of the WHC in 1985, China took an active part in World Heritage affairs. In 1986, China submitted a preliminary list of 28 heritage sites to the World Heritage Committee. In 1987, six of the nominated sites were inscribed in the World Heritage List.\textsuperscript{35} In 1988, Bernard Feilden, Jukka Jokilehto, and Carlo Giantomssi came to China and conducted on-site assessment of China’s World Heritage preservation as representatives of UNESCO. They came up with a conclusion that, from their perspectives, there existed a great gap between China and the western countries with respect to preservation theories, preservation technology (e.g. material analysis and conservation), and social participation.\textsuperscript{36} From then on, China started to realize the gaps (or differences) in preservation theories in and beyond China and proactively got exposed to the foreign preservation theories recognized by international charters and conventions.

3.2 \textit{Introducing Preservation Theories from International Organizations}

As China embraced the World Heritage system, Chinese scholars and preservationists introduced foreign preservation theories into China, especially the widely-accepted international documents established by professional organizations for historic preservation (such as ICOMOS).

\textsuperscript{34} Haiming Yan, \textit{World Heritage Craze in China: Universal Discourse, National Culture, and Local Memory}, 49.
\textsuperscript{35} These six sites are the Forbidden City, the Great Wall, Mount Taishan, Pekingman Site at Zhoukoudian, Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor, Mogao Caves.
Like the WHC in the 1980s, these international preservation principles were of profound western influence. These western-based principles helped to address some of the dilemmas in China but also conflicted with some pre-existing preservation theories. This section will focus on the introduction of two important theoretical concepts and illustrate the critical acceptance of international preservation theories into the Chinese context: introducing “authenticity” principles based on the *Venice Charter* and introducing the values-centered framework based on the *Burra Charter*.

### 3.2.1 Introducing the Venice Charter and the Critical Acceptance on Authenticity

#### 3.2.1.1 Introducing the Venice Charter

The *Venice Charter*, published by ICOMOS in 1964, codified internationally accepted principles and standards of monument conservation. It is considered to be one of the most influential international documents in the historic preservation field till today. The *Venice Charter* was first introduced to China in 1986, about one year later than China ratifying the WHC and 22 years after its first publication. It was among the most influential international documents in China’s preservation field since the 1980s and induced heated debates and profound transition in preservation theories.

The first Chinese version of the *Venice Charter* was translated by Prof. Chen Zhihua at Tsinghua University in 1986, published in *World Architecture*, an influential architectural professional magazine in China. The translated version highlighted the principles of safeguarding
the authenticity and the integrity of monuments and historic sites. “Authenticity” here mainly referred to the design, material, workmanship, and setting of the monuments possessing artistic or historic values. Since historic monuments were “not only great works of art” but also “modest works of the past which have acquired cultural significance with the passing of time,” protecting their authenticity in a scientific method and with a modest attitude could help to preserve history with significance.37 The translation also introduced multiple conservation principles to safeguard authenticity:

(1) “The process of restoration... is based on respect for original material and authentic documents. It must stop at the point where conjecture begins, and in this case moreover any extra work which is indispensable must be distinct from the architectural composition and must bear a contemporary stamp.” (Article 9)
(2) “Replacements of missing parts must integrate harmoniously with the whole, but at the same time must be distinguishable from the original so that restoration does not falsify the artistic of historic evidence.” (Article 12)
(3) “Additions cannot be allowed except in so far as they do not detract from the interesting parts of the building, its traditional setting, the balance of its composition and its relation with its surroundings.” (Article 13)
(4) “All reconstruction work should however be ruled out ‘a priori’. Only anastylosis, that is to say, the reassembling of existing but dismembered parts can be permitted.” (Article 14)38

Safeguarding authenticity in the *Venice Charter* referred not only to protect the monument’s states in a specific historic time, but to preserve the condition after having been subjected to treatments or adoptions during the course of its history. In addition, the *Charter* called for respect for original materials, authentic documents, and a strict attitude towards reconstruction.

Once introduced, the *Venice Charter* set off heated discussions on “authenticity” and

“original states.” Scholars and preservationists in China showed great interest in formulating a clearly defined, scientifically rational and theorized statement for conservation principles, addressing the ambiguity in the Cultural Relic Preservation Law (1982), and guiding practical restoration projects. Compared with the vague expression as “maintain the original state” in the Cultural Relics Protection Law, “authenticity” principles in the Venice Charter represented the very idea of “scientific rationalization and theorization.”

“Authenticity” seemed to be a key to the question. However, it was far from a panacea.

A number of scholars, such as Gao Nianhua, argued that the Euro-centered concept of “authenticity” was incompatible with the Chinese context because of the difference in architectural materials. Monuments in the west, or to say European countries, are more likely to be made of masonry instead of wood. They are more durable and stable and likely to carry more valid historic information. However, traditional Chinese architecture is essentially made of perishable and fragile materials, embodying “a sort of in-built obsolescence.” Periodic repainting, component replacement and even reconstruction were largely acceptable as traditional practices. As a result, the strict requirements of material authenticity, distinguishable replacement and limits on reconstruction in the Venice Charter may hardly fit the wood structure conservation

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Some other scholars, such as Ma Bingjian, argued that the monuments in the west would usually stand-alone -- a church or a temple would have only one single architectural construction. If the construction was demolished, the whole site got destroyed. However, many historic relics in China were composed of group(s) of constructions. A single construction might be plain, but a group of constructions could create a rich spatial character and reflect Chinese culture. In addition, it is also a traditional practice to create interactions among buildings and water, stone or plants and demonstrate traditional landscape aesthetics. Each construction in its settings (both architecture and landscape) served as a note in a song. As a result, instead of safeguarding material authenticity of every single construction as the Venice Charter, Chinese preservationists tend to have a more flexible attitude towards reconstruction and restoration and preserve the integrate context of the whole settings. As an example, when Chen Congzhou worked on the restoration project at Yu Garden, a traditional private garden in Shanghai, in the 1950s and 1980s, he chose to reconstruct the East Part of the garden and recreate the waterscape and the stonescape to complete the integrated context and the spatial sequence. The reconstructed context illustrated the interaction among different constructions and landscape.

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44 Detailed explanations can be found in 2.1

45 Chen Congzhou (1918—2000) was an established scholar on historic preservation and traditional garden conservation.
elements with regard to traditional landscape aesthetics -- for example, the spatial interaction between the waterscape and the Jiusi Xuan, a pavilion in the middle part of the garden.

3.2.1.2 Introducing the Nara Document

The debates on the Euro-centered discourse and the authenticity principles in the *Venice Charter* emerged worldwide in the last decade in the 20th century. The *Nara Document on Authenticity (1994)* provided deep reflections on assessing values and authenticity under global cultural diversity based on the Nara Conference.⁴⁶ The *Nara Document*, conceived in the spirit of the *Venice Charter* and extended the understanding of authenticity, arguing that authenticity had no fixed criteria and it might be decided according to the specific nature of a site’s heritage values and “the credibility and truthfulness of related information sources.”⁴⁷

The Ise Shrine case in Japan, presented at the Nara Conference, became one of the most iconic examples worldwide illustrating an “Eastern approach” to safeguard the authenticity in counter to the Euro-centric approach. The kami (diety) of the Ise Shrine has been periodically moved from its existing place to an adjacent site every 20 years over the past 13 centuries. The 20-year cycle of dismantling and reconstructing the structures, known as *Shikinen sengu*, preserves the highly skilled traditional craftsmanship, traditional methods of construction as well as relevant rituals by continuing using them.⁴⁸ Although the Ise Shrine case turns out to be an exceptional case based on the religious belief of Shinto, a Japanese indigenous religion, and may fail to exemplify the Eastern preservation method, it still serves as a representative case on how traditional culture could be transmitted beyond material authenticity.

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⁴⁶ The Nara Conference was held by the Government of Japan in Nara, Japan in cooperation with UNESCO, ICCROM and ICOMOS in 1994.
Given the homology of traditional Japanese and Chinese architecture in architectural materials, craftsmanship, and cultural philosophy, the Nara Document served as an important reference for China. Based on both the Venice Charter and the Nara Document, China critically accepted the concept of “authenticity” within Chinese context through extensive theoretical and practical explorations.

3.1.2.3 Exploring “Authenticity” through Practice

Considering the cultural, historical, and technical specificity, Chinese preservationists went through multiple practical explorations to define “authenticity” in the Chinese context. The explorations varied in architectural materials (masonry, wood, etc.) and conservation strategies (restoration, reconstruction, relocation, etc.) Among the explorations, Simatai Great Wall (司马台长城) Restoration Project (1986-88), Liuhe Tower (六和塔) Restoration Project (1989-92), Hu Xueyan Residence (胡雪岩故居) Restoration Project (2000-01), Zhang Fei Temple (张飞庙) Relocation Project (2002-03), and Caihua (彩画) conservation are representative examples. They illustrate authenticity debates with regard to different technical strategies including component reinforcement and replacement, reconstruction, relocation, and traditional craftsmanship.

Simatai Great Wall & Liuhe Tower: authenticity debates with respect to structural reinforcement and component replacement

Simatai is a tourism-focused section of the Great Wall lying in the north of the Beijing City. In 1986, Wang Shiren and his team designed its preservation plan and the restoration project was completed in 1988. Wang largely adapted the authenticity principles in the Venice Charter in this
masonry-focused restoration case. He rejected the pre-existing idea of interpreting the “original state” as a complete and stylistic unity and avoided large-scale reconstruction. Instead, he illustrated the site as a modest work of the past that presented the vicissitudes of frontier history. According to this interpretation, Wang preserved the aged appearance only by reinforcing the unstable structures with steel frames and supporting posts (Fig 3.2 -3.3). The detailed design enhanced the historic style and character while at the same time stood “distinguishable from the original works” -- in line with the Venice Charter. The switch from a stylistic-restoration tendency to a structural-reinforcement strategy was a breakthrough. Wang stated that the project established specific principles “with full respect to the international principles.”

Fig 3.2 Simatai Great Wall After Restoration

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Fig 3.3 Steel Frame Supports and Reinforcements for the Simatai Great Wall

Liuhe Tower is a seven-story (appears to be thirteen-story) tower with a brick core and a wood envelope surrounding the core. It was located in adjunct to the West Lake in Hangzhou and designated as a national register in 1961. The tower was faced with serious stability problems, especially the wood structure deterioration in the 1980s. The Liuhe Tower project was conducted by Prof. Chen Zhuhua and Prof. Guo Daiheng at Tsinghua University in 1988 and completed in 1992. Based on the Cultural Relics Protection Law (1982) and the Venice Charter, the team set up “minimal intervention” as the basic principle. The team reinforced parts of the structure with distinguishable and reversible treatments -- such as using the metal belt to strengthen the
connection between the wood eaves and the brick tower core -- and kept the old and new elements in harmony (Fig 3.5). However, although the team did their best to change as little fabric as possible, there were still a large number of wood components to be replaced. The replaced wood components were not as “distinguishable” and “reversible” as the strengthened connections. The Liuhe Temple Project was an important exploration to apply the Venice Charter to wood structure conservation. Chinese scholars accepted minor intervention, distinguishable replacement, and reversible treatment as general principles but with exceptions for specific materials. The challenge of wood structure conservation caught concern as an important research field for China’s preservation studies.

Fig 3.4 Historic Photo of the Liuhe Tower

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Hu Xueyan Residence: authenticity debates in reconstruction

Hu Xueyan Residence, located in Hangzhou City, was home of Hu Xuyuan, one of the richest merchants in Late Qing Dynasty. The courtyards were largely damaged in the 20th century and less than half of the constructions remained in 2000. Hu Xueyan Residence Restoration was one of the most representative cases in China in the early 21st century. The project preserved the character and construction details of the courtyards and the landscape in the past (largely in the Late Qing Dynasty) based on solid and scientific studies. Compared with the Venice Charter, the project adopted flexible strategies on reconstruction and prioritized the integrity of the whole context over the material authenticity of a single structure; while compared with traditional ideologies, the restoration and reconstruction were strictly based on solid on-site documentation.
and archaeological discoveries, extensive historic documents and photos, series of traditional craftsmanship studies and Late Qing history studies. In Gao Nianhua’s project report, he challenged the *Venice Charter* for that the European-centered principles might not fit the Chinese context, especially for wood structure reconstruction. Luo Zhewen, a leading character in Chinese historic preservation and one of the cosigners proposing to ratify the WHC, spoke highly of the project and Gao’s critique, arguing that reconstructions preserving original layout and paradigmatic building standard, original structural and material design, and original craftsmanship did fulfill the historic, artistic, and scientific values. They were highly reasonable and acceptable even though not strictly safeguarding material authenticity.\(^{51}\)

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Zhang Fei Temple: preserve authenticity as much as possible in relocation

Zhang Fei Temple was located in Yunyang town, Chongqing City along the Yangze River, within the submerged area of the Three Gorges Dam. After extensive discussions, Zhang Fei Temple was relocated upriver together with the Yunyang town in 2002. The relocation was conducted by Prof. Lv Zhou. It addressed multiple issues including preserving original wood structures, roof constructions, paintings, wood and masonry decorations, furniture, and cliff carvings and plants in its surrounding. In order to precisely preserve as much historic information as possible, preservationists documented and coded nearly every component before dismantling the Temple. After transporting the dismantled components to the new site, preservationists re-assembled them according to their codes and the documentation records.

Fig 3.7 Re-assemble the Wood Structure of the Zhang Fei Temple
(Yuhua Zhu, “Study on the Conservation of the Relocation of Zhangfei Temple in Chong-qing City”, 51)

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Relocating Zhang Fei Temple was an important exploration on preserving every detail in traditional wood structures. It provided new perspectives on how to preserve as much authenticity as possible in relocation projects.

*Caihua Conservation: authenticity debates with regard to traditional craftsmanship*

Caihua (彩画) conservation is a representative case for authenticity debates with regard to the differences between universal principles and Chinese traditions. Caihua, also known as polychromy, is a multiple-colored painting on the surface of wood structures. It not only serves as decoration but also a protective layer to prevent wood components from being directly exposed to sunshine, moisture and biological deterioration. Since Caihua is directly exposed to the outdoor environment, protecting underlying wood structures, instead of the decorative use, is its major function.\(^5^3\) As a result, Caihua in exterior space is always considered less important than the components under protection, and it is a traditional practice to remove original Caihua layer and periodically repaint new one. In addition, there have been strict standards of Caihua painting since Ming Dynasty (around 14\(^{th}\) cen. to the 17\(^{th}\) cen.) with regard to its content, color, size and ratio, etc. The paintings can be of mass production and craftsmen have limited space for creative design. Repainting Caihua has limited impact on its historic information. In contrast, artists in the west may spend years to accomplish polychromy paintings on building constructions, such as fresco paintings. These paintings are always considered as unique artworks instead of sacrificial protective layers, which is remarkably different from Caihua paintings in China.

\(^{53}\) For the Caihua exposed to interior space where the underlying wood structures are less vulnerable, the painting may be considered more as a decorative artwork rather than a protective layer.
The traditional method of Caihua conservation - removing the original ones and periodically repainting new ones on the components - conflicts with the universal authenticity principles in the *Venice Charter*. Chinese scholars and preservationists have explored how to apply western fresco conservation techniques to Caihua paintings since the 1980s. They soon realized that these western techniques might not fit the Chinese context because Caihua was losing its main function as a protective layer. They started to develop Caihua conservation strategies according to the current condition and the cultural significance of the painting based on both Chinese and western conservation methods. For example, for the original Caihua on constructions with an extremely long history -- usually no later in Yuan Dynasty (around the 14th cen.) -- if the paintings have largely deteriorated and there remain few reliable records, preservationists are supposed to
preserve the surface as-it-is without repainting Caihua; for the original Caihua on historic constructions in Ming or Qing Dynasty (around the late 14th cen. to the early 20th cen.), if the paintings have minorly or partially deteriorated and there exist reliable records, preservationists may repaint the damaged part strictly according to the original pattern; for Caihua of extremely high cultural significance -- usually the ones in interior space -- preservationists could treat it as an artwork with western fresco conservation techniques.54

3.1.2.4 Summary: Chinese-based Authenticity

By extensive theoretical and practical explorations on restoration, reconstruction, relocation, and craftsmanship conservation in the Chinese context, China is developing its own interpretations on “authenticity” based on the uniform application of the Venice Charter, but with proper adaption, verification and recognition especially with respect to the cultural, historical, and technical specificity of construction materials, architectural planning ideologies, and traditional craftsmanship. The expanding and deepening understanding of “authenticity” in the Chinese context also induce scientific but flexible guidelines with regard to various situations that are highly relevant to Chinese/ East-Asian heritage preservation issues such as surface painting, reconstruction, and relocation. The theoretical and practical explorations of “authenticity” in China respond to the value debates of global cultural diversity based on the Nara Document.

3.2.2 Introducing the Burra Charter and the Values-centered Preservation

3.2.2.1 Values-centered Preservation and the Burra Charter

In addition to the authenticity debates, values-centered ideas introduced in the late 1990s are also influential to Chinese preservation theory development. “Values” refer to “different qualities, characteristics, meanings or perceptions of the things we wish to conserve.” The origins of values-centered preservation can be traced back to Alois Riegl (1858-1904), an Austrian art historian who outlined the typology of distinct heritage values including both commemorative values (e.g., age value, historic value) and present-day values (e.g., use value, newness value, and relative art value). His studies highlighted the contradictions and complexities of the historic preservation practice. With decades of development, scholars from different backgrounds have largely broadened the field’s ability to recognize, discern, document and act on the dynamism of multiple value typologies, including both curatorial perspective (historic and artistic values of heritage places) and societal perspective.

The Burra Charter published by Australia ICOMOS in 1979 (with later updates) formulates the current theoretical framework of the values-centered approach to realize multiple values and integrate the engagement of different stakeholders. Based on the Venice Charter, the Burra Charter defines “cultural significance” as a bundle of values (aesthetic, historic, scientific, or social values, etc.) for past, present and future generations and considers qualities retaining the

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“cultural significant” as the core of historic preservation. What is more, it provides a practical framework to separate, sort, classify and address the conflicted and complex phenomena through value analysis among different stakeholders. Although the Charter is originally Australia-based, its “values-centered” approach has been widely accepted for heritage conservation and management around the world in the late 20th century.

Moving beyond the conservation-centered preservation, the Burra Charter illustrates a global trend in historic preservation in the last two decades in the 20th century that values and valuing process have been “threaded through various spheres of conservation and play an enormous role as we endeavor to integrate the field.”

3.2.2.2 Introducing the Burra Charter

The Burra Charter was first introduced to China in the late 1990s as China compiled an “Outline of Chinese Cultural Relics Protection” from 1997 to 2000. The Australia Heritage Commission (AHC) was invited to help compile the Outline with the recommendation of the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI). After three years of cooperation, ICOMOS China adopted the Outline under the influence of the values-centered preservation and the Burra Charter in 2000, and the Outline was renamed the Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China (the China Principles).

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Wang Shiren, one of the leading drafters of the Outline, systematically introduced the framework, concepts, guidelines and conservation methods in the Burra Charter in 1999. In “A new aspect of Wenwu conservation - brief comments on Australian Burra Charter,” Wang highlighted the “values-centered” ideas in the Burra Charter as an extension of the Venice Charter based on a cultural diversity discourse. He argued that since different countries might have different cultural background and heritage typologies, the public could have different attitudes toward heritage values. The Venice Charter was far from enough to provide substantive guidelines to many countries, and these countries needed to draft their charters/outlines under their own context. When introducing the Burra Charter, Wang took it as a referential theoretical and practical framework to develop substantive guidelines in a specific country while keeping in line with the international-organization-based preservation system.

In this article, Wang listed three new concepts, namely “places,” “fabric,” and “cultural significance.” He illustrated the interrelationship of these three concepts and took the cultural significance evaluation as a key to address preservation dilemmas in China. Wang summarized that:

“Based on the new concepts, some difficult problems in historic preservation may be spontaneously solved. For example, how to address the contradictions in practical conservation work, how to decide on the priorities, how to make the most reasonable choice when faced with multiple options, ‘restoring the old as old’ or ‘refreshing the old as new’, maintaining the current status or preserving the state in its historic time, how to decide on the relocation, reconstruction, and rehabilitation, etc. All these questions could depend on the evaluation of the ‘cultural significance’ of the ‘place’. If the evaluation were clear and reasonable,

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how to preserve the components and constructions would also be clear.”

Wang also introduced three guidelines of the *Burra Charter* -- namely “Cultural Significance,” “Conservation Policy,” and “Procedures for Undertaking Studies & Reports” -- and the four conservation methods -- maintenance, preservation, restoration, and reconstruction. He spoke highly of the operability of the *Burra Charter* framework in practical work. He also compared the *Burra Charter* with Chinese preservation conventions, such as the differences and the similarities of the four conservation methods in the *Burra Charter* and conservation practice in China in the 1990s.

Jin Hongkui, another drafter of the *Outline*, illustrated the *Burra Charter* and the values-centered preservation experience in Australia into six guidelines, highlighting value assessment, compatible use/reuse, and public opinions.61 His summary echoed the limit in value debates and indicated that heritage conservation could be considered as a social endeavor that involved public engagement.

Yang Xiaozhou, a Ph.D. candidate at Tianjin University, also provided critical reflections on the *Burra Charter*. In “Critical thinking triggered by re-interpretation of the Burra Charter,” Yang marked out the contradictions in conservation principles between the newly-introduced social value and the pre-existing historic/artistic/scientific values, the potential neglect of the

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61 The six guidelines are: (1) value assessment is the basis for cultural heritage preservation; (2) it is a principle to find ‘compatible’ uses for cultural heritage; (3) fully respect public opinions; (4) find a way out to properly resolve the contradiction between preservation and development; (5) the extension in temporal scale of archeology; and (6) let a heritage site tells its own story.

surroundings and contexts, and the lack of legislative management and judicial supervision under governmental agencies.\textsuperscript{62} Yang’s challenges reflected the hesitation and critical thinking when accepting the values-centered theories, especially towards the expanding value typologies and the multiple-stakeholder participation beyond governmental agencies and professionals, indicating that contradictions and negotiations would be increasingly important in future historic preservation theory in China.

3.2.2.3 Summary: Expanding Values and Preservation as a Social Endeavor

As historic preservation gradually went beyond technical conservation perspective, introducing the \textit{Burra Charter} and the values-centered theory in the late 1990s helped Chinese scholars and preservationists broaden their horizons to the outside world and expand their understanding of value typology as well as heritage typology based on “cultural significance.” In addition, the \textit{Burra Charter} provided them with a theoretical framework to address historic preservation as a social endeavor. From then on, there have been increasing studies in China focusing on expanding social-economic value and cultural value, stakeholder participation, heritage management and decision-making processes. Re-framing preservation theories into a values-centered discourse, heritage studies in the new century have been increasingly complex and interdisciplinary, and preservation professionals have recognized that greater cohesion and connection are in need in the preservation field.

The direct theoretical outcome of introducing the \textit{Burra Charter} was the release of the first

version of the *China Principles* in 2000. Most of the practical explorations on the values-centered framework in China were directly guided by the *China Principles* instead of the *Burra Charter*, but introducing the *Burra Charter* and the values-centered approach in the 1990s still marked an important transition in China’s historic preservation field.

### 3.3 Echoing the World: the China Principles and the Beijing Document

Exposed to the international-organization-based preservation theories since the mid 1980s, Chinese scholars and preservationists critically accepted the foreign concepts and principles such as “authenticity,” “values,” and “cultural significance” by the turn of the century. Echoing the global society, they summarized the theoretical explorations as principles or guidelines, improved the preservation theoretical framework in China and contributed to global theory building in response to cultural diversity. This section will illustrate how Chinese theoretical explorations echoed the world via two representative documents drafted by China and recognized by international organizations, the *China Principles (2000, revised 2015)* and the *Beijing Document (2007).*

#### 3.3.1 Manifesting Interactive relationship: the China Principles

The *Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China* (the *China Principles*) is a “underlying document in the field of cultural heritage conservation in China” and a comprehensive synthesis summarizing the theoretical explorations since China embraced the
It was first promulgated by ICOMOS China in 2000, authorized by the State Administration for Cultural Heritage (SACH), translated into English by the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI), and later revised in 2015 with the help of GCI. Collaboratively developed by the SACH, the GCI, and the Australia Heritage Commission (AHC) over three years (1997-2000), the China Principles exhibits strong continuity with past conservation practice in China, while at the same time critically accepts the preservation principles from international organizations, especially the values-centered framework.

The release of the China Principles echoed the world by manifesting the cooperative and interactive relationship between China and the international heritage system and expanding the exploration of adapting the standard preservation principles into a specific country/region. It officially claimed an important accomplishment that China’s cultural conservation was “geared to international standard” and established an international level of reputation. In addition, the China Principles provided a foundation for international co-operations on theoretical studies and conservation projects relevant to heritage in China.

3.3.1.1 China’s Burra Charter

The China Principles was drafted mainly based on the Historic Relics Protection Law, the Venice Charter, and the Burra Charter. It established a comprehensive heritage conservation

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system that “encompasses understanding the values of a site, the principles of conserving it, and basic standards of conservation practice.” Since the *China Principles* was highly influenced by the *Burra Charter* especially for its planning methodology and rigorous assessment procedure, it is often called China’s *Burra Charter* in the international society.

The *China Principles (2000)* and its revised version have largely been geared to the international theoretical framework and preservation procedure, but still reflect the Chinese context with regard to the value typologies, conservation principles, conservation and management process, and the conservation methods. For example, for conservation and management process, the *China Principles* suggests a six-step sequence similar to the *Burra Charter*, while at the same time reflects the institutional structure in China featuring the governmental authority at all levels (national, provincial, and local) in preservation management. As for conservation principles, the *China Principles* states to preserve the “historic condition” as modification of preserving “the original state” in the *Cultural Relics Protection Law (1982)*, while adopting international principles such as authenticity and integrity. As for conservation methods, the *China Principles (2015)* highlights relocation (Article 29), treatment of the setting (Article 30), architectural painting (Article 31), wall paintings (Article 32), painted statuary (Article 33), and heritage routes and canals (Article 39), etc -- those that are highly relevant to heritage preservation in the Chinese and East Asian context. The principles

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66 The six steps in the China Principles are identification and investigation; assessment; formal proclamation as an officially protected site and its level of protection; preparation of a conservation master plan; implementation of the master plan; and periodic review of the plan and its implementation.
on conservation methods of architecture paintings and cultural routes are highly instructive in and beyond China and serve as theoretical principles for international cooperation on relevant preservation projects.

3.3.1.2 International Cooperation Based on the China Principles

The *China Principles* has been applied to international cooperation in Chinese heritage preservation even before it officially published in 2000. As trans-national World Heritage nomination becoming increasingly popular and important in the recent decade -- such as the Silk Road across China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and other Asian countries -- the *China Principles* may play an increasingly important role in international cooperation in and beyond China. This section will share the experience of applying the *China Principles* at the Mogao Grottoes Conservation Program around the turn of the century, illustrating how the *China Principles* has improved international cooperation.

The Mogao Grottoes is a World Heritage Site on the Silk Road, located near the ancient town of Dunhuang in Gansu Province in northwestern China. It contains about five hundred Buddhist caves excavated into cliff face, decorated with thousands of wall paintings and polychromed sculptures. It is considered to be “the largest and most magnificent body of Buddhist art in China.”68 The cooperative work based on the *China Principles* at the Mogao Grottoes fell into several projects including the wall painting conservation planning in Cave 85 (cooperator: the Dunhuang Academy (DA) and the GCI) and the Site and Regional Master

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Planning (cooperator: the DA, the GCI, and the AHC). Both projects were carried out based on the *China Principles*.  

The Wall Painting Conservation Planning in Cave 85 started in 1997 in parallel to compiling the *China Principles*. With the combined effort of the DA and the GCI, the conservation followed a values-centered assessment procedure established when drafting the *Principles*, including investigation, value/existing condition/management context assessment, statement of goals, conservation method design, and periodic review.

The Master Planning (2001-2010, by the DA, the GCI, and the AHC) Project was started in 1999, and largely revised in 2001 and 2002 after the promulgation of the *China Principles*. The compilation involved six steps undertaken in the following order based on the *China Principles*: investigation and research, value assessment, assessment of existing conditions and management context, statement of goals and principles, and determine the specific goals for 2001-2010. Then the planning team created eight sub-strategies in response to the general statement of goals and visitor management, one of the sub-strategies, was considered to be an important component of the master plan.  

The DA, the GCI, and the AHC carried out multiple sub-studies based on the values-centered framework and sub-strategies. For example, the GCI and the DA led specific...
studies on the technical mechanisms leading to wall painting decay under conditions of elevated humidity in response to visitors, serving as an important support for both the condition assessment and the visitor management plan. The AHC also participated in the visitor management plan and provided reliable studies on visitor survey methodology. Further cooperation among China, the GCI, and Australia was all built on the framework of the China Principles and the Master Plan (and its updates).

With the methodology outlined in the China Principles, various professions and technical staff in and beyond China were well organized and cooperated efficiently with each other, which further promoted the standardization and scientification of domestic and international heritage conservation work.

3.3.1.3 International Reflections on the China Principles

Since the first release in 2000 and the later publication of the bilingual edition, the China Principles has attracted interest and concerns among professionals beyond China. A number of international reviews have appeared world wide, comparing the China Principles with other well-known charters or guidelines and providing reflections from international perspectives. Many leading scholars, such as Brian Egloff, William Logan, Ken Taylor, Jean-Louis Luxen, Donna Strahan, agree that the China Principles fulfills “a need for methodological guidelines

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within the law in China.” It aligns with international charters and serves as a good example of “the sense of common responsibility towards the heritage of different cultures.”72

Ken Taylor, a professor at Australian National University, mentions that the China Principles does “take the Burra Charter approach to identification and conservation of values, and merge it with the American experience to create a coherent set of guidelines for China within a framework of laws.” He highlights the use of the terms “authenticity” and “setting” in the China Principles and considers it as evidence of China gearing to the international discourse.73

Jean-Louis Luxen, a former secretary-general of ICOMOS who later translated the China Principles into French in around 2005, once cited the publication of the Principles as a major event in the writing of charters and guidelines. He praises the China Principles to be a remarkable overview of heritage conservation practice at an international level, with a contribution that derives from “the wealth and diversity of Chinese heritage and its long traditions of preservation and restoration,” and a fine illustration of cultural exchanges by the interactive cooperation with the GCI and the AHC.74 Besides, Luxen also indicates that the China Principles is not restricted to preserving Chinese sites, and it could serve to inspire other countries to draw up their own principles.

Apart from the praise and the recognition, scholars also challenge the *China Principles* mainly from three perspectives. First, the absence of social value and the gap in heritage types with regards to the 2000 edition -- these limits have been revised in the latest edition. Second, systematic training in understanding and applying the *China Principles* would be in need. Third, the “bureaucratic” management framework lacking social engagement and the compromise of the minimum intervention principle “in relation to governmental priorities” may impede the application of the *China Principles* -- this is a complex issue rooted in the uniqueness of China’s institutional organization and the rapid urban development.\(^5\)

3.3.2 Contributing to East Asian-based Preservation: the Beijing Document

The *International Symposium on the Concepts and Practices of Conservation and Restoration of Historic Buildings in East Asia (the Beijing Document, 2007)* and the *Beijing Memorandum on the Conservation of Caihua in East Asia (the Beijing Memorandum, 2008)* contribute to the world heritage conservation theory building on authenticity debates and cultural diversity as an extension of the *Venice Charter* and the *Nara Document* under East-Asian context. Both documents provide deep reflections on applying universal conservation standards in specific countries/ regions with particular cultural traditions in conservation, insisting that “any restoration must fully recognize the specificity of a heritage resource and guarantee that its historical, tangible and intangible aspects be retained in the process of conservation and restoration”.\(^6\)

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3.3.2.1 Concerns of Authenticity in East-Asian Context

The *Beijing Document* was promulgated in response to UNESCO’s evaluation on the restoration projects of three World Heritage Sites in Beijing, China. Before the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, three World Heritage Sites -- the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, and the Temple of Heaven -- were restored based on historic archives in the mid-Qing Dynasty. Several buildings were reconstructed and Caihua on certain exterior structures was repainted according to historic documentation. Although the Chinese government insisted that the restoration strictly abided by the principles of authenticity and integrity, UNSECO contended that the projects violated these principles -- especially the newly-painted Caihua. A UNESCO report (Decision : 30 COM 7B.63) stated that the restoration works were “carried out in a hasty manner, lack of documentary, evidence and clearly formulated principles to guide the conservation works,” requested China to provide the World Heritage Committee with a report “clarifying what documentary evidence is being used for the restoration of the polychromy (Caihua) within the three World Heritage properties,” and encouraged China to “make explicit the philosophical framework being used for conservation decisions on the property.”

Historic Buildings in East Asia” was held in Beijing. The symposium addressed UNESCO’s concern with regard to authenticity for the large-scale restoration and traditional craftsmanship in the Chinese and East Asian context. As a consequence, the Beijing Document was promulgated in 2007, summarizing the key ideas in the symposium.

3.3.2.2 Authenticity under Cultural Diversity

Highlighting “cultural diversity,” the Beijing Document reclaims the definition of “authenticity” that is highly relevant to the East-Asian context based on the Nara Document, the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the WHC, and the China Principles.

“Authenticity can be interpreted as the credibility and truthfulness of the information sources... When feasible, due respect should be placed on the continuity of traditional practices, for example when repainting of surfaces has become necessary. The principles are highly relevant for monuments in East-Asian context.”

Then the Beijing Document illustrates the principles on the “treatment of painted surfaces on wood” and “reconstruction” that are highly relevant for monument conservation in East-Asian context. As for the painted surfaces:

“Architectural surfaces also form the protective layers of a historic building. The best way to care for these surfaces is through regular maintenance... the richness of such surfaces is founded in the variety of cultural expressions, aesthetic achievements, and the diversity of materials and techniques used from ancient times until the present... It should therefore be the primary concern in conservation to retain as much of the material authenticity of the surfaces as possible... Appropriate traditional technology and craftsmanship should be used whenever feasible.”

80 The same as above.
As for “reconstruction”:

“Generally, a building that no longer survives should not be reconstructed... Partial reconstruction may be taken into consideration when justified by site integrity, protection and/or stabilization. However, reconstruction should not be considered when the current state of a site has acquired significance in its own right, or when the documentary or physical remains give insufficient information for the purpose of reconstruction... In any case, decision on reconstruction should be taken as a result of consultation with the communities concerned.”

The *Beijing Document* addresses the authenticity debates in the East Asian context in response to the UNSECO concerns, contributes to the world preservation theory building, and provides practical guidelines to architectural painting conservation and reconstruction. It illustrates China echoing the world by negotiation -- instead of rejecting the universal preservation principles, it improves the theoretical framework to an in-depth level with regard to cultural diversity.

### 3.3.2.3 Further Contributions on Ensuring Authenticity in East Asia

The *Beijing Document* serves as an important reference for authenticity debates and conservation methodology exploration in East Asia. In 2008 when the World Heritage Committee acknowledged China’s effort in the *Beijing Document*, it reiterated its request that China should “carry out a comparative study on the restoration of polychromy (Caihua) and ways to ensure its authenticity within East Asia in collaboration with countries such as Japan, Korea, and Vietnam” in order to “strengthen the theoretical framework for conservation decision-making, notably in

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relation to the authenticity of World Heritage properties."

In response to the World Heritage Committee, China organized another forum, “the International Seminar on Conservation of Painted Surfaces on Wooden Structures in East Asia,” in late 2008. With over 50 members from 14 countries involved, the seminar further illustrated the *Beijing Document* by reviewing the values of Caihua and reconsidering its conservation based on the authenticity and integrity principles and East Asian traditions. The *Beijing Memorandum on the Conservation of Caihua in East Asia (the Beijing Memorandum)* was promulgated in 2008 based on the seminar. It fortifies the core concepts of authenticity and integrity in the East Asian context and highlights the proper Caihua conservation techniques and international cooperation, serving as an important theoretical and practical guideline with regard to “the diversity of cultural contexts, traditions, and value systems.”

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4. From Wen Wu to Heritage

With increasing interactions since the mid 1980s, Chinese scholars and preservationists have gradually shifted the core concept of historic preservation theories from “Wen Wu” (or historic relics) to “cultural heritage” under the influence of World Heritage discourse. Yan Haiming defined three phases of the transition in China after the PRC was founded: cultural relics phase (1949-1985), transitional phase (1985-2005), and cultural heritage phase (2005 to now), marked by 1985 when China ratified the World Heritage Convention and 2005 when “Circular on Strengthening the Protection for Cultural Heritage” was issued by the State Council, using “cultural heritage” as the official term for cultural conservation for the first time.\textsuperscript{84} The term “Wen Wu” is still in use today, but largely limited to movable artifacts in museums or preserved at other places.

Compared with “Wen Wu” conservation, “cultural heritage” conservation is more extensive in value typology and heritage categories, and more scientific and objective in conservation principles. Using “cultural heritage” as the primary term re-frames and expands the past historic preservation studies into a concept with increasing domestic complexity and closer international connections, shedding light on addressing the theoretical dilemmas in the Cultural Relics Protection Law in the early 1980s.

4.1 Expansion in Value Typologies

The value typology transition from the three basic values (historic, artistic, and scientific) to a “3+2” paradigm (historic, artistic, scientific + social and cultural values) illustrates the shift from Wen Wu to Heritage as China gears to a values-centered methodology. The three major value types (historic, artistic, and scientific) were first mentioned in Outline of the Scope and Types of Tentative Antiquities (1935) in the Republic of China. After the People’s Republic of China was founded in 1949, scholars and preservationists inherited the three value types as official typologies in preservation law and regulations, including the Provisional Regulations (1961) and the Cultural Relics Protection Law (1982). The historic value stands for the value to be a witness to history; the artistic value to embody “the artistic creativity, aesthetic preference, and representative style of a particular period in history;” and the scientific value to manifest as “physical evidence of human creativity and achievements in science and technology, as well as the creative process itself.” All three values are closely relevant to safeguarding the physical status of Wen Wu with a static, museum-like, professional-led methodology.

As China gradually engaged in the world society, scholars started to recognize the social and societal values and considered preservation as a social endeavor. There emerged increasing concerns on expanding the value typologies in order to define and assess wide-ranging heritage

subjects, especially when introducing the values-centered preservation system in the late 1990s. For example, Lv Zhou once argued for a “cultural value” as the value for “the relationship of Wen Wu to the culture in a specific area, or the role of Wen Wu in cultural development and inheritance” and an “emotional value” as the character that could “evoke in certain people a sense of nostalgia because of the close relation to local culture, history or environment.”

Although the defined value typologies in the first edition of the China Principles (2000) were still limited to the three basic types, consistent with the Cultural Relics Protection Law (1982), the Principles did reflect the explorations on value debates from social and cultural perspectives. When compiling the China Principles, the first draft, completed in January 1998, adopted the term “cultural value” to encompass both the inherent values of Wen Wu (historic, scientific, and artistic values) and the present-day use values (memorial value, cognition value, aesthetic value, and the use value for public service). The published version in 2000 removed the definition of “cultural value,” while recognizing Wen Wu’s role of social and economic benefits. It proposed to make full use of “the social benefits of Wen Wu in cities, towns, and communities” as a part of local social life or the symbol of the area.

The multiplicity of heritage values, especially the socio-economic aspects were formally recognized in 2015 when revising the China Principles. The social and cultural values were added to the “official” value typologies in Article 3, expanding the traditional three major values

to the “3 + 2” paradigm currently used today.  

“Values. The heritage values of a site are its historic, artistic, and scientific values, as well as its social and cultural values. Social value encompasses memory, emotion and education. Cultural value comprises cultural diversity, the continuation of traditions, and essential components of intangible cultural heritage. Cultural landscapes and heritage routes and canals may also have important natural values.”92 (Article 3)

As for further explanations, social value is the value that “society derives from the educational benefit that comes from the dissemination of information about the site, the continuation of intangible associations, as well as the social cohesion it may create.”93 Cultural value is complex and rich in meaning. It derives from three types of values: the “diversity” revealed through “ethnic culture, regional culture, or religious culture,” the “nature, landscape and setting that have been imbued with cultural attributes,” and/or a site’s “intangible heritage.”94

Adding “social value” and “cultural value” to the revised China Principles was a response to both international impacts and the social-economic developments in contemporary China. The notion of “social value” not only reflects the dynamic relationship with global heritage studies from social and societal perspectives but also the mass urbanization and widespread demolition of historic sites in China in the last few decades. It also mirrors the increasing domestic awareness of the importance of historic preservation among the general public. The notion of “cultural value” is largely shaped by new heritage types in both domestic and international preservation fields, such as cultural landscapes and cultural routes, where “the intangible dimensions of the

91 Kuanghan Li, “the Contemporary Values behind Chinese Heritage,” in Values in Heritage Management (GCI, 2019), 99.
places are critical in defining their heritage value.”

Chinese scholars have mixed reactions to concepts of “social value” and “cultural value.” For example, Guo Zhan, a prominent heritage professional in contemporary China, argues that social value is a “derivative effect of the three basic intrinsic values” and it is susceptible to subjective assessment. Assigning the ambiguous “social value” equal importance as the three basic values may result in “biased and possibly destructive results” manipulated by capital, irrational political power, and/or even extremist forces. Guo also argues that “cultural value,” as a manifestation of cultural diversity and intangible cultural heritage, is largely overlapped with “social value.”

Though controversial, the current “3 + 2” paradigm -- with the three basic values (historic, artistic, and scientific) under an “intellectual and secular” discourse and two newly-expanded values (social and cultural) under a “situation and contextual” discourse -- reflects “the duality of the tangible built form and the intangible dimension.” The expanding value typology illustrates the theoretical explorations in China to shift from “Wen Wu” conservation to heritage conservation discourse in response to the increasingly wide spectrum of international heritage studies and value debates today.

95 Kuanghan Li, “the Contemporary Values behind Chinese Heritage,” in Values in Heritage Management (GCI, 2019), 103. Many cultural landscape and cultural routes in China are typical examples of the heritages whose intangible dimension is critical in value statement.
4.2 Expansion in Heritage Categories

New heritage categories were developed along with the Wen Wu-to-heritage transition. According to the *Historic Relics Protection Law (1982)*, the protected sites were limited to “Wen Wu units” and Famous Historical and Cultural Cities. The Wen Wu units were focused on ancient sites and revolutionary movement relics. Since the 1980s, heritage typologies have been largely expanded in spatial scale, in temporal scale, and from landmark to various mundane sites.

In terms of spatial scale, China has created a robust and systematic registered system of “Wen Wu Unit” - “Historic District” - “Famous Historical and Cultural Cities/ Towns/ Villages” to cover heritages of various spatial scales. In addition, there have been exhaustive studies and increasing regulations on cultural landscapes and cultural routes on a regional scale, such as studies on preserving the Grand Canal across cities and provinces.

In terms of temporal scale, Chinese scholars and preservationists have gone beyond ancient heritage and revolutionary movement sites. Industrial Heritage was officially recognized as a new category in 2006 in “Wuxi Recommendation on Protecting Industrial Heritage during Fast Economic Development;” and Twentieth-Century Heritage got recognized in 2008 in “Circular on Strengthening the Protection of Twentieth-Century Heritage.” Studies on industrial heritage and twentieth-century heritage include all kinds of modernized constructions such as residential buildings, educational structures, mine settings, transportation facilities, etc.

Beyond landmark conservation, a variety of mundane sites have been protected. Mundane

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99 Revolutionary movement relics are the monuments relevant to the Democratic Revolution in China from 1840 to 1949.
sites with cultural significance witness local social development and vividly illustrate cultural diversity. As an example, vernacular heritage, illustrating everyday life by architecture and landscape, was officially recognized as a new heritage type since “Circular on Strengthening the Protection of Vernacular Architecture” was issued in 2007.

The expansion in heritage typology in China was largely shaped by the global context. Yan Haiming listed six new heritage types officially emerging in global organization and in China in around the last two decades. (Table 4.1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>World (international org.)</th>
<th>China</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vernacular Heritage</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twentieth-Century Heritage</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underwater Heritage</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2009 (renamed from Underwater Relics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Heritage</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intangible Heritage</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Routes Heritage</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4.1, the intervals between official sanctions of international organizations and China is getting increasingly shorter. “Cultural Routes Heritage,” recognized by ICOMOS in 2008 by issuing “Charter on Cultural Routes,” was officially adopted by China in “Wuxi Recommendation on the Protection of Cultural Routes Heritage” in the next year and quickly became one of the hottest concepts in domestic heritage studies. The intervals between the official sanctions indicate an increasingly close connection between China and the international

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community during the Wen Wu-to-heritage transition.

4.3 Development in Conservation Principles

Along with the Wen Wu-to-heritage transition, domestic conservation principles have developed from preserving the “original state” to a Chinese-based explanation of authenticity and integrity. Explorations on conservation principles, especially the authenticity debates, have been largely introduced in 3.2.1. Conservation principles in the revised China Principles are the latest summary of the outcomes of this transition. These principles follow preserving the “historic condition of a site embodies its values” as an essential guideline, and “authenticity” and “integrity” as basic requirements. Through good conservation practice, the historic and cultural contexts of a site and its cultural traditions can be preserved and retained for the future.\textsuperscript{101}

Due to the complexity of “historic condition,” the China Principles (2015) lists eight types of existing conditions that must be preserved and six that could be reinstated to the historic conditions. For example, where there are “no physical remains to reveal the original condition of a small number of missing or altered components” but the original condition can be determined after “scientific investigation and comparison with components of the same type and period,”

\textsuperscript{101} The “historic condition” refers to:

i. The condition prior to any conservation interventions.

ii. The condition after having been subjected to treatments, adaptations, or reconstructions during the course of its history and which interventions are judged to have significance, including a ruined state that reveals important historical attributes.

iii. The reinstated condition after restoration of elements that were partially collapsed, buried, deformed, incorrectly placed, or braced, where the original components and form of the structure exist.

iv. The historic condition of a setting that is of significance to the site.

In complex situations, scientific investigation should be undertaken to determine the historic condition. “Article 9,” in The China Principles, 2015.
reinstating the site to its historic condition is permitted.\footnote{102}{“Article 9,” in \textit{The China Principles}, 2015.}

Authenticity covers “form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions, technology and management systems, setting and location, language and other forms of intangible heritage, spirit and feelings.”\footnote{103}{“Article 10,” in \textit{The China Principles}, 2015.} The continuation of “long-established cultural traditions associated with a particular site” is also a means of retaining its authenticity.\footnote{104}{“Article 10,” in \textit{The China Principles}, 2015.} In line with universal standards, authenticity principle is fulfilled when not reconstructing “sites that are no longer extant;” making the repaired or restored parts distinguishable; keeping detailed records of the restoration process and providing “permanent signage indicating the date of intervention;” conserving a site in situ. However, when coming across specific construction materials and craftsmanship with respect to the historical and cultural traditions in China, such as reconstruction and Caihua conservation, the universal authenticity principles may be improved or modified according to relevant documents and guidelines, such as the \textit{Beijing Document}.\footnote{102}{“Article 9,” in \textit{The China Principles}, 2015.} \footnote{103}{“Article 10,” in \textit{The China Principles}, 2015.} \footnote{104}{“Article 10,” in \textit{The China Principles}, 2015.}
5. Changing National Identity

With about 5000 years of vicissitudes, Chinese civilization has always kept to its original root. Cultural heritage, as a record of the long history, represents the unique cultural identity of the Chinese nation. This section will focus on the changing national identity as China gets increasingly involved in the global heritage conservation society. It will scrutinize how the World Heritage inscription reflects the changing national identity since 1987, when Chinese heritage sites first appeared on the list. It will also introduce how cultural heritage serves as a medium of identity politics and cultural symbolism and enhances cultural confidence and national pride in China.

5.1 National Identity in the World Heritage List

Since ratifying the WHC in 1985, China has been increasingly engaged in the World Heritage system. As of April 1, 2021, fifty-five sites in China have been listed on the World Heritage List (WHL), tied for first place with Italy with the most number of listed sites. The expanding WHL represents China and Chinese culture on the international stage and illustrates China’s changing national identity in the global community. Table 5.1 lists all the cultural heritage and natural and cultural heritage in China in-scripted on the List since 1987 and several trends can be observed.

First, China is increasingly emphasizing the heritage sites pertaining to ethnic minorities, highlighting the diversity of Chinese culture and the ethnic integration as a multi-ethnic unified
country. Among the 19 cultural (and natural and cultural) sites designated in the 1980s and 1990s, there were only two sites closely relevant to ethnic minorities, the Potala Palace and the Old Town of Lijiang. While today, among the 40 sites, China has six sites directly relevant to minorities or their histories in China, including Tibetan in the west (the Historic Ensemble of the Potala Palace, inscribed 1994), Koguryo and Korean history in the northeast (Capital Cities and Tombs of the Ancient Koguryo Kingdom, inscribed 2004), Mongolian in the north (Site of Xanadu, inscribed 2012), and multiple ethnic minorities in the southwest such as Hani, Nani, and Bai (Old Town of Lijiang, inscribed 1997; Cultural Landscape of Honghe Hani Rice Terraces, inscribed 2003; Tusi Sites, inscribed 2015). Furthermore, China also included the Silk Road as a world heritage in 2014. The Silk Road not only pertains to ethnic minorities in northwest China but also illustrates the close friendship between China and other nations.

Instead of merely describing the heritage relevant to ethnic minorities sites as their own property, Chinese interpretations also articulate the cultural exchanges between the majority (Han people) and the minority peoples and the multi-ethnic unified nature of China’s history. For example, the UNESCO interpreted the significance of the Potala Palace for it “symbolizes Tibetan Buddhism and its central role in the traditional administration of Tibet,” while China also emphasizes that its first construction by Sontsan Gambo for his bride Wen Cheng, a Han princess in Tang Dynasty, as well as its reconstruction under the political influence of the central

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105 These sites do not count the Imperial Palaces of the Ming and Qing Dynasties in Beijing and Shenyang, the Mountain Resort and its Outlying Temples, etc. Although these palaces and resorts were largely shaped by the Manchu people, while during their history with cultural significance, the Manchu people could hardly be considered as an ethnic minority.
Second, China is illustrating its cultural diversity by expanding its heritage typology. In the 1980s and 1990s, the designated heritages were concentrated in building complexes, grottoes, tombs and mausoleums, archaeological remains, and famous mountains with cultural significance. However, as China reshaped its value debates and expanding heritage typology in the Wen Wu-to-heritage transition, it is assessing heritage sites from broader perspectives including archaeological, sociological, anthropological studies with regard to cultural diversity. With expanding new heritage categories in both temporal scale and spatial scale as gearing to the universal discourse, China nominated increasing number of modern heritage (Historic Centre of Macao, inscribed 2005; Kaiping Diaolou and Villages, inscribed 2007; Kulangsu, inscribed 2017), cultural landscape (West Lake Cultural Landscape of Hangzhou, inscribed 2011; Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art Cultural Landscape, inscribed 2016), and cultural routes (Silk Roads, inscribed 2014; The Grand Canal, inscribed 2014) for the World Heritage List. The diversity of heritage categories not only illustrates the international trends, but also portrays the richness of Chinese culture.

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107 In China, some mountains are not only famous for their natural environment, but also for their cultural context that is closely relevant to Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. (Some are even more famous for their cultural context). The cultural significance is largely reflected in the architecture in the mountains. Mount Taishan (inscribed 1987), Mount Wudang (inscribed 1994), Mount Emei (inscribed 1996), Mount Wuyi (inscribed 1999), Mount Wutai (inscribed 2009) all belong to such a category.
Table 5.1 Cultural Heritage (and Natural and Cultural Heritage) in China on the WHL\textsuperscript{108}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year of Inscripti on</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Heritage type</th>
<th>ethnic minorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imperial Palaces of the Ming and Qing Dynasties in Beijing and Shenyang</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>(i)(iii)(iv)(vi)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mogao Caves</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peking Man Site at Zhoukoudian</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>(iii)(vi)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Great Wall</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancient Building Complex in the Wudang Mountains</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>(i)(ii)(vi)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td>Tibetian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Ensemble of the Potala Palace, Lhasa</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>(i)(iv)(vi)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Resort and its Outlying Temples, Chengde</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>(ii)(iv)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple and Cemetery of Confucius and the Kong Family Mansion in Qufu</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>(i)(iv)(vi)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lushan National Park</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Emei Scenic Area, including Leshan Giant Buddha Scenic Area</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>(iv)(vi)(x)</td>
<td>Natural &amp; cultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancient City of Ping Yao</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>(ii)(iii)(iv)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical Gardens of Suzhou</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Town of Lijiang</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>(ii)(iv)(v)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Palace, an Imperial Garden in Beijing</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>(i)(ii)(iii)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Criteria: To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must be of outstanding universal value and meet at least one out of ten selection criteria. The criteria can be found: https://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year of Inscripti on</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Heritage type</th>
<th>ethnic minorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temple of Heaven: an Imperial Sacrificial Altar in Beijing</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>(i)(ii)(iii)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dazu Rock Carvings</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>(i)(ii)(iii)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Wuyi</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>(iii)(vi)(vii)(x)</td>
<td>Natural &amp; cultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancient Villages in Southern Anhui – Xidi and Hongcun</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>(iii)(iv)(v)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longmen Grottoes</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>(i)(ii)(iii)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mount Qingcheng and the Dujiangyanan Irrigation System</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>(ii)(iv)(vi)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yungang Grottoes</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)</td>
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<td>Capital Cities and Tombs of the Ancient Koguryo Kingdom</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td>Closely relevant to Koguryo (Korean) history</td>
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<td>Historic Centre of Macao</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td>Modern architecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yin Xu</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaiping Diaolou and Villages</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>(ii)(iii)(iv)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td>Modern architecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fujian Tulou</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>(iii)(iv)(v)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mount Wutai</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Historic Monuments of Dengfeng in “The Centre of Heaven and Earth”</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>(iii)(vi)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Year of Inscripton</td>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Heritage type</td>
<td>ethnic minorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Lake Cultural Landscape of Hangzhou</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>(ii)(iii)(vi)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
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<td>Cultural landscape</td>
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<tr>
<td>Site of Xanadu</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>(ii)(iii)(iv)(vi)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td>Closely relevant to Mongolian history</td>
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<td>Cultural landscape</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hani</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Landscape of Honghe Hani Rice Terraces</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>(iii)(v)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural landscape</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor (China &amp; Kazakhstan &amp; Kyrgyzstan)</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>(ii)(iii)(v)(vi)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td>Across countries</td>
</tr>
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<td>The Grand Canal</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>(i)(iii)(iv)(vi)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tusi Sites</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>(ii)(iii)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td>Multiple ethnic minorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art Cultural Landscape</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>(iii)(vi)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural landscape</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kulangsu, a Historic International Settlement</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>(ii)(iv)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td>Modern architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeological Ruins of Liangzhu City</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>(iii)(iv)</td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As China presents its cultural sites of expanding categories in the global arena, especially the cultural landscape in the recent decades, it is always challenging to address the conflicts of the Chinese context and the international discourse. For example, as the West Lake nomination project started in 1999, Chinese scholars struggled to define its values and significance appropriately until it was finally listed as a World Heritage in 2011. The West Lake is a representative carrier of Chinese traditional landscape aesthetics and philosophies shaped by the mixed influence of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. Scholars re-framed the highly abstract aesthetics into a systematical narrative from broad contexts to detailed designs -- from the symbiotic relationship of the Hangzhou city and the West Lake, the harmonious combination of waterscape and surrounding mountains, to the carefully-designed interactions among temples, pagodas, pavilions, gardens and landscape (lake and mountains). In addition to this systematic framework, Chinese scholars also highlighted some traditional Chinese landscape concepts such as “changing scenes as moving steps” (移步换景), a beauty laying in the interactions between man and landscape, and the connections between design concepts and traditional literature, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. Moreover, scholars argued that the landscape aesthetics represented by the West Lake was widely spread to other parts of China and other countries in East Asia such as Japan and Korea. Finally, the re-framed interpretation with both international discourse and Chinese concepts got recognized by UNESCO.

The 12-year effort on nominating the West Lake and refining the interpretation indicates that the gap of cultural background is not easy to cover. There is a long way to go to negotiate
universal principles and local discourse when engaged in the global community. It is not only a challenge for China, but for all the countries and regions with unique historical and cultural backgrounds.


5.2 Cultural Confidence and National Pride

In recent years, cultural heritage conservation has received unprecedented attention in China’s public sphere. President Xi Jinping and the central government regard heritage conservation as one of the principal strategies to strengthen cultural confidence, promote national pride, improve cultural development, and create national cultural soft power.\textsuperscript{109} Representing the

\textsuperscript{109} Cultural confidence is the recognition of a nation, a country, a political party of its own cultural value, and its firm confidence in the vitality of its culture. It is among “the four matters of confidence” raised up by President Xi Jinping - confident in our chosen path, confident in our guiding theories, confident in our political system, and confident in our culture. It is based on the cultural needs of the people, serves to inherit excellent traditional culture and promote
unique cultural identity of the Chinese nation, cultural heritage “contains our most profound cultural pursuits and provides us with abundant nourishment for existence and development” -- as President Xi Jinping said at the Paris UNESCO headquarters in 2014.110

Promoting Chinese heritage domestically and internationally has been reflected in the “World Heritage boom” and the establishment of national parks. World Heritage not only serves as a global recognition that Chinese culture contributes to all mankind, but also generates nationalistic sentiments and pride, evokes passions and affections among citizens, and provides national narratives of cultural superiority.111 The rapid pace of World Heritage nomination embodies China’s cultural-political enthusiasm for establishing national identity in the global arena as a sovereign nation with cultural influence and soft power.112 Establishing national parks is one of the recent attempts to strengthen cultural confidence and promote excellent traditional Chinese culture and revolutionary history. In 2019, the State Council issued the “Construction Proposal for National Parks of the Great Wall, the Long March, and the Grand Canal,” marking a further improvement of cultural route conservation at a national level.113 The Great Wall, the
Long March, and the Grand Canal serve as cultural symbolism to represent Chinese history and national identity.

Moreover, China is taking an increasingly active part as a state party of the WHC in the global arena, entailing its responsibility for heritage conservation of all humankind. China is establishing increasingly interactive cooperation with international organizations and educational institutes in the United States, Europe, Australia, East Asia, Central Asia, etc., holding international symposiums and seminars, and participating in international heritage conservation projects beyond China. China continues to contribute to global preservation theory building and practical explorations based on its constantly updated experience under the Chinese and East Asian context.
Conclusion

There is a phrase in China, “the more national, the more global.” It reflects China’s increasingly open attitude to sharing its culture in the global society. With a multi-step procedure to create theoretical interactions with the global preservation society since the 1980s, Chinese scholars and preservationists proactively translated, interpreted, discussed and modified universal preservation conventions and charters under the Chinese context. China critically accepted universal conservation principles, improved domestic preservation theory, promoted national identity and contributed to global heritage conservation and cultural diversity. It was a challenging process with conflict, debate, negotiation, and collaboration when interacting with global organizations and shaping the state heritage preservation theory system. Chinese experience may be referential to other countries and regions with unique cultural backgrounds.

The interactions between China and the global society will continue. So will domestic and international studies on preservation theory beyond national boundaries. If every country is able to preserve its heritage and illustrate the cultural significance to the world, we might add to cultural diversity and fulfill our vision of cultural prosperity for all humankind.
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