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Heritage Management, Tourism, and Governance in China

Managing the Past to Serve the Present

 Springer

Chapter 2

Historical Background

Tangible objects have served both cosmological and political purposes in China since the Zhou dynastic era (approximately 1,000–250 BCE). In order to assert their own legitimacy, rulers typically would display the bronze and jade ritual objects as well as court seals, scrolls, and tax records of either their ancestors or those whom they had defeated. For the same reason, rulers would attempt to monopolize production of these objects (Elliot and Shambaugh 2005: 5–6). What we now know as “heritage objects” were thus originally collected, preserved, and displayed in China for contemporary political purposes, not because they reflected the past per se or for their aesthetic value. Instead, these imperial objects were believed to enable a communicative link with heaven (see Chang 1983). For example, following their conquest of the Song capital of Kaifeng in 1127 AD, the Jurchen, a seminomadic group from Manchuria, looted the imperial warehouses of art, furniture, scrolls, paintings, musical instruments, and even clothing, all of which they transported to their own capital, present-day Beijing, where they established the Jin Dynasty. The Jurchen capital was in turn conquered by the Mongolian leader Genghis Khan in 1234 AD, who named the city Dadu and built a palace on the site of what is now Beihai Park (Elliot and Shambaugh 2005: 24–28). Similarly, when Zhu Yuanzhang, founder of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), overthrew the Mongolian Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368), his forces seized control of an imperial collection that contained artifacts dating from the ninth-century Tang. After this, he ordered the destruction of the Yuan palaces in Beijing and transported these artifacts to his new capital at Nanjing, only to have the third Ming Emperor, Zhu Di, shift the capital back to Beijing in 1421, following the construction of the Forbidden City between 1406 and 1420.

This chapter describes the development of archeology, heritage, and museums in China. By way of introduction, we review the purpose and methods of traditional historiography, the cultivation of an interest among elites in the past during the Song, Ming, and Qing eras, the role of cultural heritage in the late Qing and Republican periods, and the place of history and heritage in the civil war between Communists and Nationalists. We also introduce the key concept of *jingdian* (“scenic spot”) and discuss their role in the development of a national class of literati and scholars dating back to at least the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644).

As these examples show, as each succeeding group overthrew existing rulers, they would seek to capture the material objects of authority, at times destroy the built space of those whom they had defeated, and relocate the center of power. This is a pattern that would continue until the 1911 Revolution, when the new Nationalist government led by the revolutionary hero Dr. Sun Yat-sen moved the capital from Beijing to Nanjing. This also illustrates how what we refer to as “China” has not been a fixed territorial space. Instead, the territory of this entity has shifted with each conquest, expanding and contracting, while the center of power has followed each conqueror. Chinese archeologists have identified as many as 13 different dynastic capitals, ranging from Beijing, Nanjing, and Xian to Datong, Kaifeng, and Luoyang.

This also demonstrates the political importance of material culture in China for thousands of years. Objects from the past were important because they were believed to legitimize new rulers. However, although field archeology is relatively new in China, the study of past dynasties through an analysis of their material artifacts is not, dating back to the Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD). What K.C. Chang termed an antiquarian interest in the past can be traced to two key works, the *Kaogutu* (1092) by Lu Dalin (1046–1092) and the *Bogutu* (1107) by Wang Fu (1079–1126). These were catalogues that provided drawings and descriptions of bronze and jade objects from previous eras, including private as well as imperial collections (Chang 1981: 156–158).¹

Similarly, travel as an exercise in experiential learning and enjoyment dates back to at least Confucius (551–479 BCE), who spent much of his adult life traveling between states in search of a just ruler to serve. Tellingly, the roots of the Chinese term for travel (*luyou*) are not in physical exertion and work (*travail*) as in Romance languages but in fun, companionship, and entertainment (Han 2006: 83). Beginning in the late Tang Dynasty (618–907) and continuing during the Song Dynasty, well-to-do literati traveled to famous sites. These sites, variously known as *jingshen* (scenic spots), *fengjing qu* (“wind and scenes”), and *mingshen qu* (famous sites), date as far back as the Qin Dynasty (Nyiri 2006: 7). By the sixteenth century, a canon of such sites had emerged. These were visited to confirm interpretations handed down by Tang and Song era predecessors, primarily through written and visual markers (Strassberg 1994). For example, sites would typically be characterized as resembling animals, people, or other objects and marked by poetry or at times by literal inscriptions carved on rocks. There was little if any focus on personal interpretation; sites were judged on the extent to which they fulfilled and confirmed a shared interpretation: “Views – even in their names – encompassed not only a particular aspect of a scenic spot, but also the appropriate circumstances of viewing, which could include season, time of the day, weather and the spectator’s mood” (Nyiri 2006: 9).

Completely absent from this Chinese approach to travel was any romanticized notion of solitary travel as intrinsically superior. Indeed, the idea of traveling alone in circumstances designed to force the traveler to confront radical differences and alienation from the familiar as a means of gaining new insights has never been part

¹ Lu Dalin has been hailed by state authorities as China’s first anthropologist. In 2010, his tomb, along with those of several relatives, was excavated in Lantian County, near Xian in Shaanxi province (Yang 2010).

of mainstream Chinese norms. This was true for monasteries as well. Pilgrimage destinations such as Mount Wutai (*Wutai Shan*) in Shanxi, Mount Emei (*Emeishan*) in Sichuan, and Yellow Mountain (*Huangshan*) in Anhui provinces were economic, social, and tourist centers and thus part of everyday life (Kieschnick 2003: 186–187). Travel in China today remains overwhelmingly a social activity, undertaken with friends and family, as we discuss in Chap. 6. It also remains focused on *jingshan*. However, what counts as a scenic spot continues to expand: no longer limited to classical sites, the list of national “must-see” destinations now includes classical, early modern, Republican era, civil war, Maoist, and even modern sites such as theme parks and shopping malls.

The emergent interest, particularly during the Song and Ming eras, in studying the past through material cultural and travel remained subservient, however, to a much broader and deeper historiography. The underlying purpose of studying the past throughout Chinese history has been to document proper and improper behavior, identify the just and the unjust, and thereby influence action in the present. The practice of history was not a faithful recounting of facts; it was a moral project. And until the twentieth century, the primary form this took was biographical (Chang 1981: 157). For example, during the Tang era, an official history office was established to document and interpret previous reigns. The intent was not necessarily to establish what really happened or what was “true” but for “bureaucrats to justify the present dynasty’s power and authority” (Fowler 1987: 238).

How does this relate to a sense of national identity? A common view is that identification as “Chinese” is a very new phenomenon and only began to emerge in the years immediately before and following the 1911 Revolution. However, others argue that a key result of the Jin and Mongol conquests between the twelve and fourteenth centuries was an increased consciousness among elites of a civilized self standing in contrast to a suspect not-civilized other. Following the Manchurian invasion and defeat of the Ming rulers in 1644 and the establishment of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), this emergent sense of “Chineseness” was directed against Manchu authorities (Duara 1993: 5). Some scholars go further, arguing that the material record demonstrates a relatively wide geographical space of similitude. K.C. Chang cites the Shang Dynasty (1,766–1,027 BCE) as an example. If the extent of this state is defined by evidence of writing, then the Shang territories were relatively small. If, however, the Shang sphere is defined by archeological discoveries of bronze and pottery, then this state stretched from Liaoning in the north as far south as Hunan (Chang 1977: 640).

Nevertheless, in hindsight, it is clear that one of the key problems faced by Sun Yat-sen and his colleagues in their ethno-nationalist campaign against authorities in the final years of the Qing Dynasty was a noticeable absent of National identity among people. Indeed, most subjects of the Qing Empire did not identify as either “Chinese” or as “Han” but by kin, place, or language ties. This lack of a cohesive ethno-nationalist identity reflected foundational Confucian attributes that classified people not by race, ethnicity, or place of birth but by their degree of cultural achievement. From a Confucian perspective, people were not Chinese or other; they were civilized or other. Anyone could become Chinese by acquiring the language skills

needed to access Confucian texts that in turn instruct in how to be a person capable of cultivating *ren*, the foundational human condition of virtue, benevolence, and proper social behavior. To cultivate *ren* is to cultivate one's human essence and thus to be human(e). Until the late nineteenth century, this Sino-centric world view simply assumed that outsiders, if given an opportunity, would want to be transformed into civilized (e.g., fully human, hence "Chinese") people, since to not be Chinese was by definition, to be inferior (Zhang 1997: 76). Being Chinese was thus a cultural category, not biological or even historical, and was achieved not by dint of birth but through education and self-reflection.

Confronted with this dilemma, a society of people who lacked a national consciousness, Sun Yat-sen's Tong Meng Hui (Chinese United League), the forerunner of the Nationalist Party (KMT), promoted the concept of Han nationality or ethnicity (*minzu*). The first of Sun Yat-sen's "Three Principles of the People" (*Sanmin Zhuyi*) *minzu* was a transliteration of the Japanese neologism *minzokushugi*, which became prevalent in Japan after the Meiji Restoration and connoted racial uniqueness (Tuttle 2005; Zhang 1997). Sun Yat-sen argued that the subjects of the Qing had to be convinced they were not just historically linked to an ethno-national past as "people of the Han" (*Han ren*) but also biologically linked to each other as a "Han race" (*Han minzu*). According to Sun, only after recognizing this would Qing subjects recognize the Qing state as a foreign occupation (Gladney 2004: 13–14). In other words, for a Nationalist revolution to succeed, the foundational Confucian emphasis on the five relationships (*wulun*) had to be broken. Rather than defining themselves according to ties with their spouses, children, parents, friends, and ruler, Qing subjects had to be convinced to identify with other subjects with whom they presumably shared a *zu*, a hazy concept that translates as clan, community, or ethnic group but for Sun's purposes defined one's race (Dikötter 1992: 123). Only when this was achieved would the subjects of the empire see themselves as citizens of a republic (Harrison 2000: 175) (Fig. 2.1).²

Yet in the aftermath of the establishment of the Republic of China (1911–), Dr. Sun called on Han Chinese to transcend their (new) ethno-nationalist consciousness and become the leaders of a multiethnic society of Chinese (*zhongguo ren*). This dual emphasis on the Han people as the vanguard of the revolution and a collective advance of all Chinese toward modernization has continued under the Chinese Communist Party, as we discuss in Chap. 4.

While the collecting and archiving of material artifacts have been a part of the historical record in China for more than two millennia, both the scientific search for and public display of objects are a relatively recent practice. The Geological Survey of China was established in 1916. This organization was dominated by Europeans

² Prasenjit Duara (1992) argues that the category of racial difference in fact appeared in China during the reign of the Qing Emperor Qianlong (1735–1796), who led an active campaign to codify Manchurian superiority by dint of birth. Duara also argues that the great Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864) was a Nationalist rebellion against Manchu control and led to a Manchu ethnic revival. Other scholars argue that the Taiping Rebellion was a religiously inspired charismatic movement, given that its leader, Hong Xiuquan, claimed to be the brother of Jesus Christ.



Fig. 2.1 Sun Yat-sen, leader of the nationalist movement that established the Republic of China in 1911 (National Museum of China, Beijing)

such as Johan Gunnar Andersson, who led the first archeological excavation of Paleolithic Yangshao sites in Henan province in 1921. However, these early field researchers were trained not in archeology but in geology and paleoanthropology. They consequently emphasized index fossils and comparative analysis across a wide geographical range rather than individual sites (Chang 1981: 164). The founder of scientific archeology in China is generally regarded as Li Chi (1895–1979). Li studied both ethnology and physical anthropology at Harvard before returning to China in 1921. He was the first Chinese scientist to work on a field excavation, joining the Yangshao dig in 1923. He later helped establish the first Archeology Department in China, at Beijing University in 1925, served as the first director of the Central History Museum in 1945, and served as the founding director of the Department of Archeology at National Taiwan University in 1949 (Chang 1981: 165).

The emergence of archeology as a field of study reflected a growing interest among Chinese scholars in empirically based sciences. In 1930, the KMT (Nationalist) government passed a *Law on the Preservation of Ancient Objects*, the country's first regulations of cultural artifacts (Murphy 2004; Zhuang 1989). This was followed in 1931 by the "Statute for the Preservation of Scenic Spots, Points of Historical Importance, and Articles of Historical, Cultural, and Artistic Value" (Gruber 2007: 272).

The country's first museum had been established in Shanghai by French priest Pierre Heude in 1868, followed in 1872 by the founding of the British Royal Asiatic Society, also in Shanghai. The first government museum was opened in 1912 by the

Ministry of Education in Beijing on the grounds of the former Imperial University, and in 1914, the Ministry of the Interior opened the Beijing Ancient Relics Exhibition Hall to display the more than 70,000-piece art collection of the Qing Dynasty royal family. By 1921, the fledgling Republic of China had 13 museums located in Beijing, Hubei, Shandong, Shanxi, Hebei, Jiangsu, Guangdong, and Yunnan (Pao 1966: 22–23). And, following the expulsion of the deposed Emperor Puyi in 1924, the Forbidden City was opened to the public as a museum on October 10, 1925 (Watson 1995: 8). Despite political instability, military conflict among various warlords, a weak central government, and economic problems, the museum industry flourished in Republican China. Indeed, by 1936, shortly before the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945), the Republic of China had 77 museums, 56 art galleries, and almost 100 conservatories (Pao 1966: 31). This period also saw the emergence of a nascent tourism industry; in 1922, the *Encyclopedia of Chinese Scenic Spots and Ancient Relics (Zhonghua Guangguo Mingsheng Guji Daguan)* was published (Nyiri 2006: 14).

The first formal attempt to categorize the country's material heritage occurred in 1948, shortly before the collapse of the Nationalist government, when professors at Qinghua University issued a list of 450 sites under the title of *A Brief List of Important Architectural Heritages in China*. However, a government project to build a national museum in Nanjing failed, primarily because of the war. Construction began in 1933. Between 1932 and 1936, approximately 20,000 crates of material were shipped from Beijing's Forbidden City to Nanjing for the museum. But before the museum could open, the staff and curators packed the most important objects, divided these into three separate shipments, and followed government ministries to Chongqing in Sichuan province in 1938. They briefly returned to Nanjing in 1946 after the Japanese surrender before following the Guomindang (KMT) into exile on Taiwan in 1948, where this collection became the basis of the National Palace Museum in Taipei, which opened in 1965.

The Palace Museum in turn became a key component of the post-civil war struggle for international status between Chiang Kaishek's Nationalist government on Taiwan and the new People's Republic of China led by Mao Zedong. The KMT government in Taiwan claimed to be the guardians of China's historical record against a radical regime bent on the wholesale destruction of the past, while the CCP government in Beijing depicted the removal of the Nanjing collection to Taiwan as an act of theft (Watson 1995: 11). Heritage, then, even before it was labeled as such, was an important factor in modern Chinese politics much like it had been for centuries before this at times of regime change.

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Chapter 3

The Politics of Heritage

Heritage is often differentiated from history by its selectivity (Logan 2007: 34). While history seeks to explain the past, heritage is a filtered depiction of these events. However, as seen in Chap. 2, historiography in China was traditionally a moral project, centered on describing the lives of both the upright and the immoral in order to instruct people in how to live. This historical approach continued after the victory of the Chinese Communist Party against the Nationalists. Since the establishment of the People's Republic on October 1, 1949, the presentation, depiction, and interpretation of China's past have been a political and pedagogical project. Immediately following the defeat of the Nationalist government, all museums were nationalized and reorganized to reflect a strict linear view of Chinese history based on a historical materialist interpretation. Drawing on the work of Henry Lewis Morgan (1818–1881) and Fredrick Engels (1820–1895), this social evolutionary model took as self-evident a universally applicable linear view of history, in which all societies advanced through similar material stages of development. Practicing archeologists were expected to interpret their findings through this politically inspired prism. Moreover, because the Communist Party emphasized a particular ideological interpretation of the past, open inquiry or a nonpolitical analysis of

Heritage plays an important role in the Chinese Communist Party's promotion of cultural nationalism to fill a void left by the Party's abandonment of world revolutionary socialism and Maoist nationalism. We begin with a broad discussion of the links between political goals, nationalism, and archeology before turning to a specific focus on China. After an introduction to heritage policies in China following liberation in 1949, we turn to the impact of the Cultural Revolution on culture, both tangible and intangible, that marked the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) and the reasons why the CCP has since embraced the promotion of cultural preservation. Of importance also is the use of heritage as a moral/educational tool. The Cultural Revolution not only resulted in immense damage to tangible culture and sites, this also significantly impacted society's collective memory of the past. The net result is that heritage sites, museums, and artifacts also serve a pedagogical purpose, to simultaneously educate visitors about the past and shape them as modern subjects in the present.



Fig. 3.1 Museum of Natural History, Beijing, built in 1951

findings was impossible (Keightley 1977: 124). As a discipline, archeology was defined as a subfield of history, which in turn was classified as a social science that provided objective facts.

The past was divided into five periods defined by the organization of society and the means of production. This historical materialist approach dated the beginning of history in China to approximately 5,000 BCE and the establishment of the Yangshao (5,000–3,000 BCE), a (arguably) matriarchal Neolithic culture in Hunan province that had been discovered in 1921 by the Swedish archeologist Johan Andersson (1874–1960). This was followed by the Lungshan (3,000–1,900 BCE), located along the Yellow River valley in Northwest China; the Shang (approximately 1,766–1,122 BCE) and Zhou (1,046–256 BCE), classified as the first centralized feudal states; the Imperial era (220 BCE–1,911 AD); and finally the era of “Popular Resistance” (1911–1949) to both the Nationalist government and Japanese invaders (Keightley 1977: 126) (Fig. 3.1).

Museums and historical sites were relevant only as teaching mediums for instructing citizens about the past as interpreted by the Party. They were thus not designed to support open inquiry or the pursuit of truth, but political objectives. In this sense, the Communist Party continued the historiographical tradition of the past, which emphasized not truth but morality, but with one caveat, all of history before 1949 was characterized as evil, and whatever cultural achievements had been achieved had occurred

in spite of exploitative rulers, not because of them (Fowler 1987: 238). However, an inherent tension underlined this historical approach. The Maoist revolutionary project sought to transcend both a feudal past that had weakened society and led to foreign attacks and national humiliation from 1842 to 1949 and the so-called historical laws of Marxism, which dictate that a feudal society necessarily must advance through fixed stages of development (including capitalism) before it could achieve socialism. Thus, while socialist ideology prevented rapid modernization, China's deep culture of particularism, rooted in kin and clan ties, undermined socialism (Sofield and Li 1998). Mao's response to this dilemma was his dictum to "use the past to serve the present." For example, in a letter, he wrote in 1964 to students at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, Mao urged them to "make the past serve the present, and make foreign things serve China" (*guwei jinyong*). In this phrase, Mao combined two key elements of how the past had historically been interpreted in pre-1949 China. "To make the past serve the present" was a continuation of the traditional historical approach to past events, in which history was seen primarily as a moral, not a truth project, focused on highlighting the just and the unjust, the good and the bad, and those on the right side of history and those who were not. "To make foreign things serve China" (in the students' case, European-derived classical music) was a restatement of the *ti-yong* arguments that predated the 1911 Revolution: to utilize (*yong*) foreign practices, knowledge, and objects while maintaining the essence (*ti*) of "Chineseness."

When applied to the material artifacts of Chinese history, this Maoist dictum led to the selective erasure of some cultural sites and their replacement with new symbols of state power (Wu 2005). For example, historic areas to the south of the Forbidden City were demolished in 1958–1959 during the construction of the Great Hall of the People and expansion of Tiananmen Square, while Beijing's Ming-era walls were destroyed during construction of the city's first subway line between 1965 and 1969. However, state authorities also preserved some historic sites as examples of prerevolutionary feudalism. Thus, in Lhasa, capital of Tibet, the Dalai Lama's former summer palace (Norbulingka) was opened to the public as a museum dedicated to his supposedly extravagant lifestyle shortly after he went into exile in 1959, while the house on Gulangyu Island near Xiamen, Fujian province where Nationalist leader Chiang Kaishek stayed the night before he fled China in 1949, was maintained as a symbol of the defeat of the old regime.

Shortly after liberation, the State Council issued a decree in May 1950 that ordered the protection of historical sites, artifacts, books, and endangered animals (Zhuang 1989: 102). A decade later, in November 1961, the State Council issued the *Provisional Regulations on the Protection and Administration of Cultural Relics*, the country's first formal decree aimed at cultural preservation. This decree also established a national Cultural Relics Bureau (*wenwu zhengji zu*) within the Ministry of Culture to categorize and collect important cultural objects. In 1962, this Bureau published China's first list of national cultural sites. Numbering 180, these were classified as either "patriotic education bases" [*aiguo zhuyi jiaoyu jidi*] or "national protected work unit sites" [*guojia wenwu baohu danwei*] (Svensson 2006: 7). The former were mainly historical sites connected to the Communist

Party, while the latter included sites such as tombs, grottoes, buildings, and stone carvings that predated the collapse of Qing authority (Liu 1983: 97).¹

This early focus on ethnicity and cultural protection was, however, vastly different than contemporary neoliberal projects aimed at highlighting multiculturalism and cultural diversity. The Chinese Communist Party took as self-evident the belief that ethnic and therefore cultural differences would disappear as a society progressed toward socialism and communism. Therefore, between 1949 and 1957, the Party supported the classification of ethnic groups, the establishment of minority research institutes, and the creation of scripts for various minority languages as a means toward furthering socialism and documenting cultural differences that Marxist theory assumed would soon disappear (Zhang Haiyang 1997: 76).

This attempt to create a national cultural heritage system was disrupted first by Mao's "Great Leap Forward" (1958–1961) and then by the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). The former campaign was aimed at transcending Marxist historical stages and moving China from an agrarian-based feudal society to an industrialized socialist society in a generation. Putting into practice Mao's belief that Marxist stages of history could be skipped and communism achieved through sheer will power, millions of people were put to work to raise industrial output and food production. This utopian campaign ended in abysmal failure with as many as 30 million deaths primarily caused by mass famine (Dikötter 2010).

This also led to a Party shift away from Mao's radicalism in favor of a more pragmatic approach to governance. As a way of regaining his standing within the Party hierarchy, Mao unleashed the Cultural Revolution and turned his followers against both the Party and state.

The Cultural Revolution is generally portrayed as an Orwellian campaign of violence and destruction spurred by Mao Zedong's encouragement of youthful Red Guards to attack the "four olds" (customs, culture, habits, and ideas). Between the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 and Mao's death a decade later, thousands of historic sites including temples, churches, mosques, and other buildings were looted, destroyed, or turned into warehouses and other public buildings; private homes were ransacked; and "tradition" was effectively banned.

Without downplaying the enormous harm done to people and property, two points need to be considered in analyzing the impact the Cultural Revolution had on cultural heritage. First, this was not the first instance of ruling authorities directing the destruction of material culture, in either "new" or "old" China. A similar process of CCP-inspired attacks on the material record of the past had occurred during the land reform campaign conducted immediately after the establishment of the PRC in 1949. During this earlier campaign, a great many antiques, books, and other objects were looted and destroyed (Tong 1995: 193). Before this, the most often cited example of a state-directed attack on material culture occurred in 845 AD, when the

¹ This list included 33 Communist Party revolutionary sites, 14 grottoes, 11 stone carvings, 19 tombs of famous people, 77 historical buildings, and 26 archeological sites (Liu 1987: 97).

Wuzong Emperor directed the destruction of an estimated 4,600 Buddhist temples and 40,000 shrines. During this campaign, imperial authorities ordered the seizure and melting down of all Buddhist statues and directed imperial funding to Daoist temples and monasteries. This was thus not an attack on icons but on what the Emperor believed was a foreign religion (Kieschnick 2003: 71).

Second is the extent of destruction during the Cultural Revolution, which in turn is connected to how the story of this movement has been presented, both within China and abroad. The Communist Party has portrayed this period as *shi nian haojie*, “the ten years of catastrophe,” which has sometimes been equated with a cultural holocaust in foreign language publications (Gao 2008: 15). In addition, the majority of memoirs, biographies, and autobiographies that describe this period have been written by former Party members and elites who suffered or former Red Guards who regret their actions. Books such as Jung Chang’s *Wild Swans* (2003), Nien Cheng’s *Life and Death in Shanghai* (1987), and Gao Yuan’s *Born Red* (1987) emphasize an atmosphere of mass paranoia and chaos and a breakdown of social order. Because the dominant narrative of the Cultural Revolution has been shaped by its targets, the received wisdom is that the entire movement was an unmitigated disaster that set China back decades in its development efforts and created a lost generation. Yet, as Gao Mobo argues, if this campaign is analyzed from a socioeconomic class perspective, its effects and outcomes are more complicated. Gao, himself a former Red Guard, argues that after political stability was restored in 1969, the Cultural Revolution had many positive effects, such as new infrastructure, improved education and health care in rural areas, and markedly increased production in rural enterprises (Gao 2008: 5).

The actual impact on cultural heritage is equally complicated. Mao’s “four olds” campaign (against ideas, customs, culture, and habits) was launched in August 1966, peaked the following month, and was largely abandoned by late 1967. During this campaign, students and youth were encouraged to attack and eradicate all evidence of “old thinking” and “old culture.” Most of the destruction and killing that followed was aimed at individuals and their private collections. Indeed, the fact that the State Administration for Cultural Heritage has estimated that China currently has more than 400,000 current heritage sites demonstrates the extent to which the “four olds” campaign failed to eradicate the country’s public heritage. Desecration, not outright destruction, became the order of the day.

In fact, state cultural holdings appear to have *increased* during the Cultural Revolution, especially after March 1967, when the State Council, Central Military Commission, and Party Central Committee issued a joint decree ordering Red Guards to protect all state property, including cultural relics. Objects and books seized from private homes were directed away from paper mills and smelting plants to state warehouses, museums, and libraries, where they could be categorized and stored (Ho 2006: 69–71).

While premier Zhou Enlai has been widely credited in China for protecting the country’s most important heritage sites against destruction during this era, he clearly

did not act alone. Indeed, just as the “Gang of Four”² has been blamed for all of the negative consequences of the entire Cultural Revolution, Zhou has been solely credited for all of the positive outcomes, such as cultural protection. He did not, however, act alone. At the national level, the protection of material culture and heritage sites was defended by some Party leaders as necessary in order to teach the masses about China’s feudal past, while for others, this was an excuse for personal enrichment. At the local level, a combination of civic pride, suspicion of outsiders, and an authentic desire to preserve the past motivated both state and non-state actors (Ho 2006). Finally, this campaign against the past paradoxically required not the forgetting of this but its remembrance. As Rubie Watson has noted, “that which was to be forgotten had to be attacked; to be attacked it had to be remembered – it follows, therefore, that in forgetting “the legacy” was revived, if only as a negative example” (1995:14).

In summary, widespread material destruction was the norm for approximately one year, between mid-1966 and late 1967. This was spurred by the iconoclasm of the Cultural Revolution and demonstrated its (albeit extreme) links with the century-long modernization movement in China that began with Sun Yat-sen’s attack on Qing rulers as foreign occupiers before the 1911 Revolution, continued with the New Culture Movement’s critique of Chinese traditions beginning in 1919 and the KMT’s early attacks on Confucianism in the 1920s, and reached its logical conclusion with Mao’s call to youth to “smash the old” in August 1966. For example, the historian Gu Jiegang (1895–1980), writing in 1926, called for the careful investigation of “spurious works” and “unauthenticated history” (quoted in De Bary and Lufrano 2000: 364), while Hu Shi (1891–1962), who studied under the American philosopher John Dewey at Columbia University, advocated a philosophy of life based on science (*ibid.*, 375–377). Similarly, a Nationalist Party decree issued in February 1927 described Confucianism as “superstitious and out of place in the modern world” and called for the destruction of Confucian temples (Li 1987: 17).

These examples show how traditional practices and, by implication heritage, being fundamentally conservative, have been attacked by modernizers of all political persuasions in China, not just Marxists. What makes the current politics of China different is the fact that cultural practices and materials have been redefined as resources under the guise of first development and more recently sustainability (Winter and Daly 2011: 19). This process has opened up the realm of culture to capital accumulation, accentuating class differences. Nothing more graphically demonstrates this class factor than the ticket prices for China’s most

² ‘The Gang of Four’ is the named used by the Communist Party to describe four key leaders who, after Mao’s death in 1976, were blamed for the chaos of the Cultural Revolution. These were Jiang Qing, Mao’s wife; Zhang Chunqiao, second deputy premier; Yao Wenyuan, a member of the Party’s Politburo; and Wang Hongwen, who was Vice-Chairman of the Politburo at the time of his arrest. Jiang Qing and Zhang were each sentenced to death (commuted to life imprisonment in 1983), Yao to 20 years, and Wang to life imprisonment. Jiang subsequently committed suicide while on medical release in 1991. Zhang was paroled in 1998 and died of cancer in 2005. Yao was released from prison in 1996 and died of diabetes, also in 2005. Wang Hongwen was never released, and died of liver cancer in 1992.

famous heritage sites. Indeed, the use of prohibitive admission fees as a way of controlling visitor arrivals and thereby helping preserve key heritage sites might well in the near future mean the transformation of cultural tourism in China into a class activity, much like golf (see Chap. 5).

The most lasting damage of the Cultural Revolution was to education and what in Chinese is called public morality (*gongde*). All schooling was halted for several years, and when universities reopened, history, literature, and other subjects deemed to be “bourgeois” were banned. In 1969, teams of workers were placed in charge of higher education institutions, effectively ending formal education for a generation. Besides an enormous waste of human potential, these policies did significant damage to society’s collective memory of the past. This fact, combined with the wrenching political shifts that saw the Communist Party under Mao turn on itself only to repudiate Maoism and embrace market reforms under Deng Xiaoping, has left a significant moral quandary. The Communist Party today has largely abandoned communism; it justifies its rule on its delivery of consistent economic growth, the maintenance of public order, and citizens’ right to increase their personal wealth. The question is how sustainable this model is in a society in which faith (be this in communism or religion) has been shattered. The net result is that heritage sites, museums, and artifacts now serve political *and* pedagogical purposes. If some sites foreground cultural nationalist propaganda, others aim to educate visitors about their own collective past. Tourism has a key role in this pedagogical effort; from the state perspective, cultural tourism is a means of reconstituting “a shared cultural grammar” (Nyiri 2006: 12).

Consequently, the beginning of the reform period in 1979 saw a significant shift in how the Party and state viewed the past. In 1982, the country’s first *Law on the Protection of Cultural Heritage of the People’s Republic of China* was issued by the State Council. They also issued an expanded list of national protected sites. Numbering 242, these included 43 revolutionary sites, 19 grottoes, 13 stone carvings, 26 tombs, 105 buildings, and 36 ancient sites (Liu 1983: 97). The Chinese government also ratified the World Heritage Convention in 1985 and, a few years later, made cultural heritage preservation a part of its national 5-year plans. The 1982 law, which remains the basis of heritage policies in China, established guidelines for the categorization of heritage, excavation procedures, and site protection. In doing so, it explicitly linked cultural preservation with the political objectives of nationalism, socialism, and modernization (Sofield and Li 1998: 370–371). In other words, preserving the past was not defined as an end in itself; this should instead serve to encourage a national consciousness, reflect socialist values, and aid with material development in the present.

China’s first world heritage sites, inscribed in 1987, included the Great Wall, Beijing’s Forbidden City and the nearby Peking Man archeological site at Zhoukoudian, the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huangdi outside of Xian, and Mount Tai (*Taishan*), an imperial pilgrimage site for more than 2,000 years. These are all sites that a generation before had been either physically attacked or harshly critiqued as feudal remnants. Historical sites such as these, and by extension tourism, soon came to be viewed as economic resources which could contribute to the modernization of

China, build patriotism, and provide people with a sense of the Party's historical interpretation. A striking example of this was the extensive renovation of the Potala Palace in Lhasa carried out beginning in 1989 and its subsequent inscription on UNESCO's world heritage list in 1994. This transformation of the Dalai Lama's former center of power into a national and world heritage site was funded by the same government that had led a three-decade-long campaign against Tibetan culture, religion, and sovereignty claims. Upon completion of this project, the Potala opened to the public as a heritage museum (Sofield and Li 1998: 375).

The 1982 law also introduced the concept of "heritage" (*yichan*). It established the National Cultural Administrative Bureau (renamed the State Administration of Cultural Heritage in 1988) as well as state conservation organizations at provincial, municipal, and local levels.³ In addition, it also established an expanded system for classifying cultural sites. However, funding and implementing heritage projects was largely left to local authorities, a critical issue we will return to in Chap. 5.

In the last two decades, heritage has become a key component of China's booming tourism industry but is still defined as a political project by national authorities. The Communist Party-led campaign to embrace modernization through the rhetoric of market capitalism has led to an ideological crisis. If communism and socialism are shunted aside, what will serve as the basis of continued Party rule? More specifically, in presenting its own past, how can the CCP reconcile a revolutionary message of self-sacrifice with its contemporary advocacy of self-interest in a "decidedly unrevolutionary present" (Denton 2005: 581)?

As the Party has shifted away from a Maoist emphasis on class struggle, it has promoted a carefully controlled nationalism as one answer to this dilemma (Lee 2008). Thus, the CCP's revolutionary narrative is now linked to a patriotic narrative in the display and presentation of heritage (Svensson 2006: 7). This can be seen, for example, in the official depiction of the Sino-Japanese War, which lasted from 1937 to Japan's defeat at the end of the Second World War. In an analysis of war museums in Beijing, Shenyang, and Nanjing,⁴ Rana Mitter (2005) shows how in each of these memorial spaces the Republican government has been reconfigured from anticommunist villains to flawed patriots in the fight against Japan. No longer is the official narrative a story of liberation from an oppressive military regime and an overthrow of the bourgeois class; instead, it is a story of a collective national struggle against a foreign invader. According to this new narrative, the KMT and its supporters were not inherently bad; they were simply on the wrong side of history, even if they tried to fight the good fight.

Since 1949, museums have served as a primary medium for communicating and promoting state and Party perspectives. Between 1949 and 1979, all museums, whatever their focus, faithfully followed a historical materialist framework that depicted

³These were called provincial [*shengji*], municipal [*shiji*], and county [*xianji*] "cultural relic protection work units" [*wenwu baohu danwei*].

⁴The Memorial Museum of the People's War of Resistance against Japan in Beijing, the September 18th Memorial Museum in Shenyang, and the Museum of the Nanjing Massacre in Nanjing

the present as liberation from an exploitative past and ended their narratives with popular resistance and collective struggle. In an era of Communist Party-directed market reforms and an official emphasis on individual effort and initiative, the former museum emphasis on collective sacrifice has not been abandoned, it has been enlarged upon. Patriotism, national unity, and a strong China standing up to take its place in the world have become crucial components of this new narrative. The newly renovated and recently reopened National Museum of China in Tiananmen Square in Beijing reflects this message. The museum has two permanent halls, “Ancient China,” covering the Paleolithic era to the Qing Dynasty, and “the Road to Rejuvenation,” covering the final decades of the Qing, the Republican era, and the People’s Republic. The “Ancient China” hall is organized chronologically and follows a historical materialist pattern, tracing the progressive development of new forms of technology and social organization. However, the previous emphasis on interpreting the past through the universal stages mapped out by Engels and Morgan has been eliminated. Instead, visitors are able to see the emergence of new forms of material culture (from pottery and bronzes to iron, steel, and glazed pottery) as well as the development of more complex and intricate designs and patterns. One of the only politically explicit messages in this hall is a consistent emphasis on national unity. For example, in introducing the Spring and Autumn period (722–403 BCE), curators briefly discuss the variety of ethnic groups that inhabited the central plains at the time, note that these groups began to interact during this period, and conclude that this “laid the foundation for a unified multiethnic country.” Similarly, after noting the fragmentation of political authority that followed the collapse of the Eastern Han Dynasty (25 BCE–220 AD), a placard declares, “There was unprecedented national interaction during this period, laying the foundation for a unified multiethnic country in the subsequent Sui and Tang Dynasties.” The actual independence of frontier peoples during the Sui (581–618 AD) and Tang is then noted but is credited to the “open ethnic policy” of the state. Moreover, what has become a familiar claim – that non-Han peoples learned from the Han – is here introduced (Fig. 3.2):

Frontier peoples learned from the economic and cultural achievements of the Han people and at the same time became an important cultural influence contributing to Han lifestyle and culture. Despite occasional conflicts, ethnic integration continued to strengthen the unified China as a multi-ethnic country.

This claim situates not just “the Han people” in an era (the Tang Dynasty) when empirical evidence for any such identity label does not exist but also does the same for ethnic groups such as the Uighurs, despite widespread scientific agreement that no such collective identity marker existed in present-day Xinjiang until the nineteenth century (Sautman 2001). It thus takes a pressing contemporary political issue and seeks to locate this in a claimed shared historical past.

The “Ancient China” hall ends with a glossed-over description of technological and territorial advances during Qing rule (1644–1911). Left unmentioned are the Manchurian origins of the Qing Dynasty or their emphasis on distinguishing themselves from their subject peoples through dress, hair style, and spatial segregation. Instead, they are depicted as Chinese. Even more remarkably, the “Road to

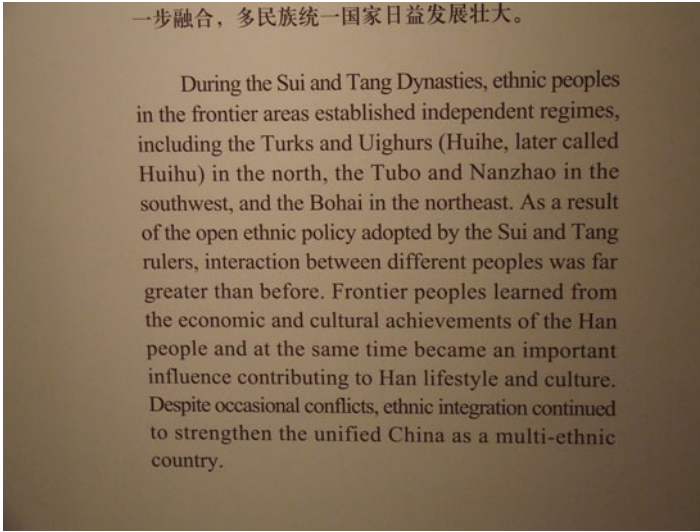


Fig. 3.2 Imagining a multiethnic historic China: interpretive panel, National Museum of China, Beijing

Rejuvenation” hall begins not with the rise of the Communist Party but a description of nineteenth-century foreign encroachments and attempts by members of the Qing regime to resist. The standard Nationalist Party narrative of the Qing as a foreign occupier and Communist Party narrative of them as a feudal regime has been largely erased, replaced with an emphasis on the patriotic motives of all Chinese (including members of the ruling class) who resisted attacks against China. This focus on patriotism and national unity dominates the entire exhibit. Neither the Qing nor the Nationalists are portrayed as enemies of the people, feudal oppressors, or lackeys of foreigners; instead, both regimes are depicted as containing elements of patriotic resistance. However, ultimate success (redefined as national unification, not as a class-based victory for socialism) is depicted as only having been achieved under the leadership of the Communist Party. Indeed, other than a single set of portraits of Marx and Engels, the place of Marxism in China’s twentieth-century history is largely downplayed (Fig. 3.3).

This emphasis on national unity under the leadership of the Communist Party is also the dominant theme in newly opened or renovated provincial museums. For example, in an exhibit on the war against Japan in the recently renovated Inner Mongolian Museum in Hohhot, class struggle and feudal oppression are completely absent, replaced by a shared struggle of Mongolians and Han Chinese against invasion:

After the Opium War ended in 1840, imperialist countries like Japan and Russia etc. sped up their steps to dismember Inner Mongolia. The half-century successively by Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), Northern Warlord government (1911–1927) and Kuomintang Government (1927–1949) made the people of different ethnic groups in Inner Mongolia live a miserable



Fig. 3.3 Diorama of nationalist revolutionaries attacking Qing forces in 1911 (National Museum of China, Beijing)

life in a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. This was worsened after Japan's gradual invasion starting from September 18, 1931. In order to fight against the imperialist invasion and the feudal rule, people in Inner Mongolia had had a long-term continuous struggle ... historical experiences show that only the Chinese Communist Party, which had experienced the long-term revolution and practice, can issue a policy to meet the needs of Mongols and the situations in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. The Chinese Communist Party can lead Mongols in the right way to liberation and freedom. The founding of the Inner Mongolia Government was a successful example of the regional autonomy policy of the Chinese Communist Party (Introduction, "Beacon Fire on the Grassland" exhibit, Inner Mongolian Provincial Museum, 2008).

Notably absent in both the Inner Mongolian and National Museums' twentieth-century exhibits are large numbers of material objects. Instead, curators rely on still and video images, dioramas, and multimedia technology to tell their stories of patriotism. But the reliance on images in the "Road to Rejuvenation" exhibit as compared to an emphasis on tangible objects in the "Ancient China" exhibit is not indicative of a curatorial turn to postmodernist play or cool irony. That is to say, this is not a sign of a message that cannot be told or a history that cannot be displayed, but a tool to attract a (domestic) audience at a time in which mass consumption has become the overriding ideological message (Denton 2005: 577). This shift away from straightforward propaganda to a visitor-friendly message does not, therefore, mean a shift away from an explicit focus on a central political message. Far from being an embrace of endlessly possible interpretations, the intent in both exhibits is a clear story line (Fig. 3.4).



Fig. 3.4 “Fire on the Grasslands”: war against Japan exhibit, Inner Mongolia Museum, Hohhot, 2009

The “Road to Rejuvenation” exhibit closes with a placard entitled “Afterword,” a new call to arms:

We shall closely unite around the CPC central leadership with Hu Jintao as its General Secretary, hold high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, follow the guidance of Marxist-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory and the Important Thought of ‘Three Represents’, carry out the Scientific Outlook on Development thoroughly, join efforts to forge ahead and persistently strive for the great goals of implementing the 12th Five-Year Program and building a moderately prosperous society (National Museum of China, June 2012).

Taken seriously, this political evocation is riddled with contradictions, from the oxymoronic basis of “Marxist-Leninism” to the fundamental differences between Maoist aspirations for transcending Marxist historical stages of material and social development and Deng Xiaoping’s advocacy of market-driven production and individual wealth. Yet its conclusion with a call for “moderate prosperity” also signifies the Party’s rejection of, ironically, communism. A former ideological focus on revolution and class struggle has been replaced by a nationalist and sentimentalist look back, a form of nostalgia that rejects an empirically driven depiction of the recent past as effectively as did the previous revolutionary narrative.

This new narrative of what might be termed market-driven development with patriotic characteristics and an increasingly nonmaterial interpretation of the past is increasingly widespread in contemporary China. Besides museums, this message is also part of the construction of Ming-, Qing-, and Republican-era “old towns” in various Chinese cities, ranging in size from a single street (such as a Republican-era “snack street” off of Beijing’s Wangfujing pedestrian shopping area) to an entire quarter (such as Shanghai’s Xintiandi quarter, a bustling enclave of designer boutiques and trendy bars in a former working-class neighborhood). These typically combine newly built “authentic” buildings with service workers in period costumes. The recently completed reconstruction of Beijing’s Qianmen neighborhood, west of Tiananmen Square, is a good example. In the 1950s, this area became home to a new working class, its hundreds of courtyard homes divided into small apartments. These have in turn been demolished and replaced with a newly built “old” Qianmen district, complete with buildings designed to mimic the built space of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, along with a retro-tram line (that goes nowhere). One of the ironies of this project is the fact that the Beijing government demolished postliberation development (workers’ housing) to recreate built space as it had been in “feudal” China, albeit devoid of authentic signifiers such as beggars, opium smokers, gangsters, prostitutes, or warlord soldiers.

As part of this patriotic-nationalism campaign, state authorities emphasize China’s multiethnic but unified cultural landscape. For example, Article One of the State Administration for Cultural Heritage’s (SACH) “Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China” declares that China is a unified country “with an unbroken cultural tradition” and the purpose of heritage conservation is to “strengthen national unity and promote sustainable development of the national culture” (Agnew and Demas 2004: 59). This reflects the more than century-long campaign to cultivate a national consciousness among Chinese, with roots in the pre-1911 revolutionary movement led by Sun Yat-sen, regarded in both China and Taiwan as the Father (*guofu*) of modern China.

While there is widespread disagreement about the outcomes of various state policies during both the Republic era (1911–1949) and after 1949, it is difficult to argue with the success of this national identity campaign. Indeed, the biological basis of Han identity and the leadership role of Han people are now taken as natural by the vast majority of PRC citizens who self-identify as Han. In this sense, Sun Yat-sen’s racial nationalism has trumped both Marxism and Maoism and is reflected not just in popular culture but also in the scientific record, such as in paleoanthropology.

At a time at which the global scientific community has rejected race as a biological category, paleoanthropology in the People's Republic has claimed this as in fact factually valid.

For example, there is widespread agreement within the international scientific community with the "Out of Africa" hypothesis of human origins, which theorizes that *Homo sapiens* emerged approximately 143,000 years ago in Eastern Africa and subsequently spread around the world, eventually displacing *Homo erectus*. Yet both mainstream paleoanthropological opinion and state authorities in China reject this view, arguing that human remains found at Zhoukoudian outside Beijing and known as Peking Man are evidence of not just a "Chinese race" (*zhonghua minzu*) but of a "yellow race," the ancestors of all East Asians (Sautman 2001: 96). This is in spite of the fact that Peking Man was not a *Homo sapiens* but a *Homo erectus* and has been dated to 500,000 years ago. The official Chinese explanation of this discrepancy is that *Homo sapiens* emerged in different places and at different times. In other words, rather than common human ancestors spreading out from Africa, a unique "Chinese race" has its roots in its own unique ancestor(s). While this claim could be dismissed as a nationalist myth or as a state attempt to trump scientifically based ethnomorphosis with politically inspired ethnogenesis, it is important to note the racial nationalist basis of this argument, which is very different than the current civic nationalism that predominates in the world (Sautman 2001: 108). Not only does the Chinese government assert that contemporary China is heir to an unbroken civilization that dates back to 3,000 BCE but also that contemporary Han Chinese are biologically the same as their putative distant ancestors.

One response to this is to note that current policies in China are actually no different than previous nation-building policies in most of Europe and North America in the past. In this sense, China is not different; it has simply begun this process later (Kohl 1998: 226). This, however, ignores the overwhelming scientific evidence against both the scientific basis of "race" and the claim that a unified Chinese civilization has existed for 5,000 years.

Although a racial nationalist campaign has succeeded among the majority of (Han) Chinese citizens, in minority areas of the PRC, the situation is quite different. A striking example is the saga of the "Xinjiang mummies." Shortly after the end of the Cultural Revolution, Chinese archeologists led by Wang Binghua uncovered more than 100 well-preserved corpses in the Tarim Basin, a vast desert region in Xinjiang, some dating back to 2,000 BCE. At the main site of Qizilchoqa, east of the city of Ürümqi, 113 mummies were found, all of which date to 1,200 BCE. These findings are significant for two reasons: all of the mummies found to date are not of nobility but common people, providing invaluable insight into everyday life thousands of years ago, and all of these mummies have Caucasoid features (Hadingham 1994). DNA testing carried out in 2004 provided scientific evidence of non-East Asian origins, which raises questions not just about the dominant Chinese narrative of Chinese civilization but also about Chinese territorial claims. Indeed, Uyghur separatists have claimed these early settlers as their ancestors and asserted these mummies prove Xinjiang was never Chinese until quite recently. Yet DNA testing has also demonstrated that the biological ancestors of today's Uyghur

communities arrived in the Tarim region from Mongolia in the ninth century CE, more than 2,000 years *after* these mummies were buried (Thurbon 2011; Hare 2009). The political sensitivity of these Indo-European artifacts led to the abrupt curtailment of an exhibit at the University of Pennsylvania in 2011 when the State Administration of Cultural Heritage ordered that all but three mummies be returned to China in the middle of the exhibit (Rothstein 2011).

This conflict over the public display abroad of the human remains of people who clearly were neither Chinese nor Uyghur demonstrates the underlying political issues involved in heritage conservation. This also serves as a reminder that the promotion of heritage tourism in minority areas is allowed in China only so long as this does not, from the state view, threaten national unity. What is conserved and displayed must be presented as an example of a national (Chinese) consciousness (Shepherd 2006, 2008). This example also shows how there actually is no multicultural state policy in China. The official government position is that the word *minzu* was mistakenly translated as “nationality” by early revolutionaries, when it should only have meant “ethnicity” (Zhang Qian 2010). Yet the Party itself translated the *Guojia Minzu Shiwu Weiyuanhui* as the “State Commission for Nationality Affairs” until 1995, when this was retranslated as the “State Commission for Ethnic Affairs” and the catch phrase *minzu tuanjie* was changed in English from “the unity of nationalities” to “ethnic unity” (Zhang Haiyang 1997: 79; Gladney 2004). Evoking Confucius, authorities now argue that China for thousands of years has been a nation of many ethnic groups, all linked by a shared culture. In other words (and correctly, from a Confucian perspective), all the various peoples who came into contact with the Middle Kingdom could become “Chinese,” regardless of race or ethnicity, by embracing Confucian cultural pillars. However, according to this new official position, early revolutionaries mistakenly framed this culture issue in the language of nationhood, borrowed from the dominant rhetoric of late nineteenth-century European imperialism.

To be Chinese, then, from the official perspective of the Communist Party, is to accept the core principles of Chinese culture, no longer defined by the five relationships and three bonds of Confucianism⁵ but by the language of socialist modernization. At the heart of this narrative is a key assumption about culture, namely, that an authentic Chinese identity requires people to transcend and overcome what they may think of as their own *ethnos* or culture, in the sense of customs, habits, norms, and values. This means that a Tibetan, Mongolian, or other minority citizen becomes Chinese by learning to speak Chinese and presumably practicing the normative values of the (Han) Chinese majority. Hence, this is not a multicultural policy, which demands respect and toleration for cultural differences, because such an acceptance would undermine the logic of the state perspective. At best, it is a multiethnic policy that cultivates superficial differences. To be simultaneously different and Chinese,

⁵ The five Confucian relationships define how people should interact and are premised on the fundamental inequality of society. These relations are ruler and subject, father and son, elder brother and younger brother, husband and wife, and (the only human bond based on equal standing) friend to friend.

an official ethnic minority can only be different at a surface level, such as in appearance, language, music, and dance; she must be the same as a Han Chinese in mental outlook and her thinking about the world.

This means in practice an ongoing state attempt to capture the tangible symbols of cultural differences and refurbish these as elements in a national project of unity. Thus, the Potala Palace in Lhasa, the former home of the Dalai Lama and a World Heritage site, is described in application documents for UNESCO status as an example of Tibetan and Han Chinese cooperation, while the town of Lijiang in Yunnan Province, formerly the center of Naxi social and political life, was nominated for world heritage status based on its “harmonious fusion of different cultural traditions” (UNESCO 1997). This emphasis on cooperation among different ethnic groups is the dominant theme in applications for international status for heritage sites in minority regions. Even the former Qing imperial summer resort at Chengde, north of Beijing, has been reinterpreted to support this claim despite the fact that it was designed as a place where the Manchurian ruling elite could be free of (Han) Chinese influence to interact with other (non-Chinese) peoples such as Tibetans and Mongolians. Yet the state application for world heritage status for this site emphasizes its historical importance in promoting “national unity” (Hevia 2001: 224). This is similar to how the archeological site at Xanadu, the Mongolian capital established by Kublai Khan in 1256, is described in its inscription on the world heritage list, as important because it, “exhibits a unique attempt to assimilate the nomadic Mongolian and Han Chinese cultures” (UNESCO World Heritage List, 2012). Similarly, a common stop on China Travel Service (CTS) tours is the tomb of Zhaojun near Hohhot, the capital of Inner Mongolia. This memorial site commemorates Wang Zhaojun, a Chinese woman who married a *Chanyu* (leader) of the nomadic Xiongnu people during the Han Dynasty (220 BCE–220 CE). Although this is not the actual, burial place of Wang, the site has been significantly improved for tourism in recent years and touted as evidence of ethnic cooperation in China (Fig. 3.5).

Branding and selling minority culture and heritage is not limited to the Chinese state. It is important to acknowledge, for example, the increasing number of Tibetan entrepreneurs in places as far flung as Lhasa, Zhongdian (Yunnan), Xiahe (Gansu), Kangding (Sichuan), Mount Wutai (Shanxi), and even Beijing and Shanghai who have sought to capitalize on a growing Han Chinese infatuation with Tibet to open hotels, restaurants, jewelry stores, and art shops.

Moreover, the Tibetan government in exile has publicly supported tourism in Tibetan areas as a development tool. A 2007 report on development and the environment in Tibet argued that the total volume of tourism in Tibet is not a problem but the fact that the vast majority of visitors go only to the Lhasa valley (GOT 2007: 192–193). The authors of this report argued for an increased focus on ecotourism in rural communities. This would, they suggested, further development in isolated communities, reduce tourism pressures in Lhasa, and provide visitors with a more authentic Tibetan experience. However, the authors of this report take as a fact (that tourism is primarily “Western”) what in actuality is a fiction: the percentage of European and American tourists in the TAR is largely insignificant. Thus, a focus on improving the English language capacities of tour guides (189) and meeting the



Fig. 3.5 Tomb of Wang Zhaojun (first century BCE), one of China’s “Four Ancient Beauties,” near Hohhot, Inner Mongolia

expectations of Western visitors (194) is oddly out of place, given the realities of the tourism industry in the TAR.

Finally, as we discuss in Chap. 4, the promotion of domestic tourism as a by-product of heritage preservation has been linked by the national government to the development of “higher-quality” citizens with a “civilized” (*wenming*) consciousness (Chio 2010) (Fig. 3.6). Established by the State Council in 2006, the China Central Spiritual Civilization Steering Committee has been tasked by the State Council with molding “civilized” modern subjects. While often critiqued and even ridiculed by outside observers, this “quality” campaign reflects deep cultural assumptions about the public role of Confucian subjects as well as Chinese perspectives on a materialist approach to both history and economic development. To be specific, modernization is viewed by CCP authorities as both a material and spiritual/mental project. This is at once a Party response to assumptions about the close ties between modernization and “Westernization” held by globalization advocates, to its own legacy as a Marxist political movement, and to practical concerns about public behavior, environmental problems, and the Maoist abuse of nature.

In summary, heritage destinations such as museums, national memorials, archeological sites, and historic built space have an explicit public education purpose, which is still shaped by the Communist Party. But unlike the “patriotic education bases” of the pre-Cultural Revolution, contemporary heritage sites are not limited to



Fig. 3.6 The state protects history? Signs such as these are common at Chinese heritage sites

sanitized Maoist and Stalinist interpretations. Given the expanded mobility, incomes, and entertainment choices of many Chinese citizens, Party authorities and by extension local state actors must grapple with how the past is presented in a post-Maoist era and how to attract an audience.

Ultimately the Party seeks to maintain control of how history is interpreted, which simply cannot be reconciled with a rigorous critical analysis. But what cannot so easily be controlled in a consumer-driven market economy is oral history, the stuff of intangible heritage. Thus, although recent political events such as the Cultural Revolution and the Tiananmen Square movement have been eliminated from the state historical narrative, these are being remembered through ongoing, non-state oral history projects. These projects aim to document a peoples' memory (*mingjian*) in place of material archives that are restricted (Bonnin 2007: 59). This attempt to use the intangibles of collective memory as a counterpoint to a state project of amnesia demonstrates the underlying political basis of heritage.

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