



SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE MANAGEMENT IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA

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Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff University

Lui Tam

Cover: Volunteer managing the burning incense during the Longtaitou Festival in Dongyi Longwang Temple, Changzhi, Shanxi Province, China (Tam 2018aj)

Summary

This PhD research aims to establish an interdisciplinary interrogation of heritage and sustainability. It investigates how these two concepts may be understood under a coherent theoretical framework, how they are debated in academic and public discourse, and how they are practised in complex contexts, focusing on heritage management in China. One of the research objectives is to bridge the gap between theoretical reflections and practice in the heritage field. This initiative emerges in response to the disconnections between the recent critical turn of Heritage Studies and heritage practices. One of these disconnections lies in the challenges of translating these academic critiques and critical approaches into operable methods to inform heritage practices, policies, strategies, and decision-making.

Therefore, this PhD research concerns a re-conceptualisation of heritage and sustainability through theoretical exploration and empirical studies and developing research and practical methods to tackle these disconnections. The research outcomes demonstrate original contributions to knowledge on three levels. First, a theoretical framework is established to conceptualise heritage and sustainability's relational, multi-deterministic, and dynamic nature. Second, a more holistic understanding of the case studies, a group of heritage sites with pre-14th century timber buildings in Shanxi Province, China, is obtained by implementing such a framework and the relevant methodology and methods. Third, the theoretical framework is developed into a versatile methodology and set of methods that can be applied in practice to understand, assess, and facilitate sustainable heritage management.

The theoretical framework and approach developed in this PhD research, namely the Relational Morphostasis /Morphogenesis (M/M) approach and its relevant set of methods, are conceptually versatile to be adopted in various scales and contexts. They can be refined and adapted for application in other heritage types, from policy and strategy making to specific project evaluation through further empirical testing and investigation.

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|--------|---|
| ACHS | Association of Critical Heritage Studies |
| AHD | Authorised Heritage Discourse |
| ANT | Actor-Network-Theory |
| CDA | Critical Discourse Analysis |
| CHCC | Tsinghua Cultural Heritage Conservation Centre |
| CHPL | Cultural Heritage Protection Law |
| CHS | Critical Heritage Studies |
| CPPCC | Chinese 'eople's Political Consultative Conference |
| CR | Critical Realism |
| CSD | Culturally Sustainable Development |
| CSR | Corporate Social Responsibility |
| EPL | Environmental Protection Law |
| FSSD | Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development |
| HUL | Historic Urban Landscape |
| ICCROM | International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property |
| ICH | Intangible Cultural Heritage |
| ICHPL | Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Law |
| ICOMOS | International Council on Monuments and Sites |
| IUCN | International Union for Conservation of Nature |
| OUV | Outstanding Universal Value |
| MEE | Ministry of Ecology and Environment |
| M/M | Morphogenesis/ Morphostasis |
| Mg | Morphogenetic cycle |
| MOHURD | Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development |
| Ms | Morphostatic association |
| MCT | Ministry of Culture and Tourism |
| NM | New Materialism |
| NPC | National People's Congress |
| NUA | New Urban Agenda |
| PCHS | Protected Cultural Heritage Sites |
| PH | Post-humanism |
| PRC | People's Republic of China |
| ROC | Republic of China |

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| RPHCCTV | Regulation on the Protection of Historic and Cultural Cities, Towns, and Villages |
| SACH/ NCHA | State Administration of Cultural Heritage / National Cultural Heritage Administration |
| SARA | State Administration of Religious Affairs |
| SD | Sustainable Development |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| TMSA | Transformative Model of Social Activity |
| UCLG | United Cities and Local Governments |
| UFWD | United Front Work Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China |
| UNGA | United Nations General Assembly |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| WCCD | World Commission on Culture and Development |
| WCED | World Commission on Environment and Development |
| WH | World Heritage |
| WHC | World Heritage Committee |
| WHSD | Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention |
| WSSD | World Summit on Sustainable Development |

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The last two years of this PhD has been a strange time for the world, as we went through the Covid-19 Global Pandemic. This time of crisis will forever have an imprint on this research, not only on an intellectual level but also on a personal level. Writing up my thesis while being isolated at home with parental duties was, at times, very challenging. However, my partner Rhys and our child Oscar have made this challenging time much more rewarding. Their coming into my life during my PhD has made it intensely exciting. Seeing Oscar grow and learn with immense curiosity each day has given me a new perspective in the pursuit of knowledge. Rhys' passion for archaeology has inspired me during our many extensive conversations and excursions, from the ancient Mycenaean ruins to the industrial heritage sites in South Wales. Seeing him complete his PhD during the pandemic also gave me the confidence that I found lacking in myself at times. I would like to give tremendous thanks to my mom, who has always been supportive of my professional and academic pursuits and a cornerstone throughout my life (even as my assistant in the field). In addition, this thesis would not have been completed without the incredible generosity and support from my in-laws.

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Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my late father, a scholarly and complex person who opened the door to arts and history for me with his unyielding passion.

Preface

During this PhD research, some of the progress results have been included in a published journal paper in a special issue of the MDPI journal of *Religion* (Tam 2019). Some of the article's content and data have been adapted to conform to the coherent narrative of this thesis, specifically in parts of Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 9, and Appendixes 4 and 7.

Part 1 Aims: Setting the Scene

Chapter 1 Introduction

In 2020 and 2021 the world has been forced to confront multiple global and existential crises. The extreme weather events worldwide have made it undeniable that climate change is not a pending crisis but one already upon us (Center for Climate and Energy Solutions 2021). The Black Lives Matter protests that sparked globally upon the murder of George Floyd and the relevant debates over what to do with the type of heritage that glorifies colonialism and racism have rung the alarm that these social and cultural issues are also existential (Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation 2021). Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic not only exacerbates the social problems already existing in human society but also reveals that all elements around us are connected, and the consequences can be dire when these connections start to break down (Andres et al. 2021; Frisina Doetter et al. 2021; Ohlbrecht and Jellen 2021). These crises, when considered together, are reminders that leaders cannot afford to be merely reactionary to the short-term problems while taking their eye off other crucial issues or the long-term impact. Therefore, critical debates over the proposed solutions to these crises are equally essential as the solutions, if not more so. Along with these crises is a shift of geopolitical power in the world, where non-Western nations, such as China, attract due attention as much as contention (Campbell and Doshi 2020; Spinney 2020). In any case, it is undeniable that China, as a complex country, is highly relevant in the discussion of the world's sustainable future (Roach 2019; Maizland 2021).

Upon this global context of crises, this thesis emerges to discuss sustainability and heritage. The crises mentioned above are not new but have been the focal points of debates and research in sustainability and heritage studies for at least two decades. On the one hand, sustainability has become a ubiquitous term appearing in all contexts, from international strategic documents and regional development policies to advertisements of any number of products claimed to be 'sustainable'. On the other hand, its meaning and definition are sometimes taken for granted upon these crises, or it has become so vague that one does not bother to reflect on what it means (Jacobs 1999). Similarly, the heritage phenomenon has become increasingly all-encompassing upon its expanded definition and institutionalised effort to promote heritage globally. Consequently, critical scrutiny has been called upon in the subject field's recent development to reflect on what heritage is and what it does (Winter 2013).

Harrison (2013) argues that the emergence and spread of both concepts are inherently connected with a sense of crisis or threat. The 'rescue' missions have propelled many actions and solutions on various scales. Such a sense of crisis is also prominent in the heritage discourse and practices in China. Heritage activities, especially its conservation and

management, are often part of the 'rescue' missions prompted by either existing or anticipated threats. While these rescuing missions can effectively mitigate specific pressing threats, they tend to be short-term in nature and do not provide or encourage the time and space needed for critical debates before and during their implementation. They also follow a problem-solving orientation, where these threats are targeted and compartmentalised without considering specific actions' broader impact. These characteristics are relevant to the discussion of sustainability in heritage, where consideration of long-term planning and vision and critical reflections of the broader impact of these activities beyond the heritage entities are among the central issues. As will be demonstrated in the empirical studies of this thesis, despite considerable effort and resources have been deployed in these rescuing missions, the sustainable future of heritage remains very much in question.

The ubiquity of these two concepts and their connection with a sense of crisis prompted one of the initiatives of this PhD research. The urgency for heritage conservation and sustainable development has led to the assumptions that heritage must contribute to sustainable development and that heritage conservation inherently makes the world more sustainable. However, as will be elaborated in Ch.2, the assumed correlation between the two concepts has not been sufficiently challenged or dissected. Therefore, this PhD research intends to interrogate and articulate whether these assumptions can be validated and in what conditions they can be true. However, before doing so, this PhD research must start from a premise where these assumptions are not readily accepted; that is, heritage activities are not necessarily sustainable, and heritage activities do not necessarily contribute to the world's sustainability.

This research aims to establish an interdisciplinary study of heritage and sustainability upon this premise. It investigates how these two concepts can be understood under a coherent theoretical framework, how they are debated in academic and public discourse, and how they are practised in complex contexts, such as China. It reflects critically upon the discourse and actions in the name of heritage and sustainability, and more importantly, in the nexus of the two subject areas. These critical reflections unfold on various levels throughout the thesis. First, it questions these two concepts' ontological and epistemological natures and explores a philosophical position that can effectively capture their characteristics. This inquiry is achieved by reviewing the state of the art in the two subject fields - heritage and sustainability (Ch.2) and incorporating critically several philosophical traditions adopted in the arts, humanities, and social sciences (Ch.3). Second, it establishes a theoretical framework and set of methods based on the initial inquiry (Chs.3 & 4). Third, the methods and conceptual lens are used to acquire a new understanding of the empirical cases in China and scrutinise the heritage management practices and heritage-making activities on the ground closely (Chs.5-9). On this

level, the research aims to generate a causal explanation for the (un)sustainable outcome of such practices in the cases' specific context and beyond. Finally, the thesis reflects on the empirical studies' contribution to informing the conceptual and practical connections between heritage and sustainability and the versatility of the theoretical framework and methods used in this thesis for broader research (Chs.10-11).



Figure 1 Crowd sitting on the base of the main hall of CZ Temple 8 to watch the funeral performance in the central square next to it (Tam 2018d).

This PhD research's focus on China's heritage management partly stems from my passion, expertise, and previous professional experience in building archaeology and heritage conservation and management in China. More importantly, it is a deliberate choice to achieve another objective of this PhD research, to establish a critical account of the complexity of China's heritage practices. This criticality manifests in two directions throughout this thesis. On the one hand, it challenges the conventional heritage approach that still governs heritage decision-making in China today. Notably, this approach has guided the conservation and management activities in the case study region, which hosts a high concentration of designated heritage sites with pre-13th century timber architecture. These sites are among the most conventionally defined designated heritage entities in the country, the understanding of which has, in turn, formed the development of such an approach. On the other hand, the thesis examines critically perceptions of Chinese heritage practices in academic commentaries, some of which simplify, romanticise, or essentialise the complex situations on the ground. The

empirical studies are selected to present these complexities with grounded data to challenge a perceived notion of the 'Eastern' approach.

Besides guiding the empirical studies on sustainable heritage management in this PhD research, the theoretical framework and set of methods are developed to address some of the drawbacks in existing approaches and methods in heritage research and practice in the Chinese context and more generally. One of such drawbacks, as mentioned above, refers to the short-term nature of interventions and decision-making in the context of crises in heritage management. Another drawback lies in the conventional value-based approach to heritage. As will be further elaborated in Chs.2 and 5, this value-based approach, still guiding many heritage systems globally, has been challenged by the critical turns of heritage research and the conflicts and contention emerging in practices.

The value-based approach usually involves identifying attributes based on a particular set of assessment criteria. It presents values as an objectively defined standard to assess what heritage deserves to be saved. However, subjectivity is indeed inherent in the process of identifying values (Mason 1998; Thomas 1998; Throsby 2001d; Mason and Avrami 2002; Smith and Campbell 2017). This approach tends to set up a moralised premise whose legitimacy or applicability to the situations on the ground is seemingly beyond question. When adopted rigidly, it prescribes a pre-determined set of 'slots' where one can readily slide in the value attributes. Moreover, categorising these attributes based on the value criteria exacerbates the compartmentalisation issue with the problem-solving orientation. The pre-determined value assessment criteria imply that heritage should remain in a particular static condition where these values are best upheld, making it disadvantageous to capture the dynamic nature of heritage processes and discuss sustainability. Therefore, this PhD research aims to explore an approach that prioritises the investigation of the grounded conditions without a moralised premise, provides a model to examine the connections between heritage and broader society, and captures the dynamic change in heritage assemblages.

The organisation of the thesis is as follows. The thesis is divided into four parts. Part 1, including Chs.1 and 2, sets up the scenes of the research. Ch.1 introduces the premise and initiatives of the PhD research, and Ch.2 identifies the research opportunities and questions after a literature review on the relevant topics in heritage and sustainability studies. The literature review includes a critical examination of the state of the art of heritage research and practices, including the recent critical turns in Heritage Studies and Critical Heritage Studies (CHS). Specifically, it highlights two related dichotomies emerging in these recent discussions, the tangible and the intangible, and the 'Western' and 'non-Western' approaches. It identifies the reasons behind their emergence and points out the drawbacks of such dichotomous

characterisation. Another main section of Ch.2 looks at the subject field of sustainability studies and the relevant debates on sustainable development (SD). It identifies several existing and emerging conceptual models to understand sustainability and highlights the discussions on the social and cultural aspects of sustainability and SD related to heritage. Finally, Ch.2 concludes by articulating this thesis's research opportunities, research questions, and scope.

Part 2, including Chs.3 and 4, is dedicated to constructing a 'stage' for complexities, providing a framework and path to answer the research questions. Ch.3 explores three philosophical traditions adopted in arts, humanities, and social sciences research and elaborates on the critical incorporation of these traditions to reconceptualise heritage and sustainability. This chapter establishes this thesis's theoretical framework and introduces a conceptual model for sustainability, built upon relational thinking and a duo of concepts, morphogenesis and morphostasis. Following the theoretical framework, Ch.4 explains the rationale behind choosing the case study methodology for the research design, the case selection criteria, and the specific processes and methods for data collection and analysis. It lays out a research roadmap starting from the theoretical position and framework, through empirical studies, to generating knowledge through abstraction.

Part 3, including Chs.5-9, presents the data and initial analysis of the empirical studies. Ch.5 is a contextualised overview of heritage and sustainability in China. It follows the structure and overall themes in Ch.2 and presents a literature review on these two subject fields focusing on China. Besides the literature review, this chapter introduces and examines the legislative and administrative systems, relevant heritage conservation and management policies, and the current practices and strategies on sustainable development and heritage. Ch.5 also reviews two types of participation in the contemporary heritage discourse and practices, public and social participation, and the role of heritage professionals in the Chinese context. Ch.6 introduces the case study region, the south and southeast parts of Shanxi Province, and lays out the premise of the case studies. The chapter outlines the Southern Project, a state-led restoration scheme, as an example of the 'rescuing missions' mentioned above and the post-restoration situation of these sites after the Southern Project had been completed. This specific space and time mark the reference point where the empirical case studies are situated. Chs.7-9 are the case study chapters, taking a closer look into three cases in the case study region. Besides presenting the empirical data, the chapters also include the initial analysis of the cases using the analytical methods explained in Ch.4.

Part 4, including Chs.10 and 11, is where the answers to the research questions are synthesised, and the original contribution to knowledge is articulated. Ch.10 presents further

discussions on this PhD research's theoretical and empirical findings by addressing the five research questions identified in Ch.2. Finally, Ch.11 concludes the thesis by elucidating the three levels where this PhD research has produced new knowledge, reflecting on the limitations of the thesis, and identifying future research opportunities.

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Chapter 2 Tracing the Philosophy – Literature Review and Research Questions

2.1 Overview

This chapter reviews the core literature from subject fields most relevant to this thesis' research topic. It outlines the interdisciplinary subject field, the Studies of Heritage's state of the art, highlighting the recent philosophical developments in Heritage Studies and Critical Heritage Studies (CHS). These developments have brought critical reflections on what heritage is and what it does into both heritage research and practice. Two intertwined dichotomies that have become prevalent in the subject field's recent debates are discussed. It reviews how the 'discourse of differences' (Winter 2014) regarding Western /Eastern approaches has led to a mischaracterisation of heritage activities in non-Western contexts, focusing on modern China through a brief historical review of the formation of the subject field in 20th century China. It also examines how the modernist dualistic characterisation of the tangible and intangible aspects hinders a holistic understanding of heritage research and practice. The chapter traces the theoretical and strategic development of the sustainability and sustainable development (SD) concepts, further focusing on the social and cultural dimensions and the connection between heritage and sustainability studies. Finally, it recaps the research opportunities that have emerged through the literature review and introduces this 'thesis's research questions and scope.

2.2 The Studies of Her-tage - A paradigm shift or a call for convergence?

This research area's interdisciplinary nature means that heritage research has been nested under various subject fields. A wide range of literature concerns conservation and other relevant practices regarding heritage, the conceptualisation and theories behind our understanding and practices, and the implications of heritage that extend into almost every corner of our life (Lowenthal 2005). Heritage literature can be seen in nearly all major disciplines. While the heritage subject field is often nested in archaeology or architecture departments, many other academic disciplines in arts and humanities, social sciences, physical sciences, and engineering have influenced heritage research and practices. (Appendix 1 shows a non-exhaustive list of academic journals on heritage that are either interdisciplinary or focusing on a specific discipline or subject field) Heritage Studies has become an academic home to some such literature while excluding much else.

Carman (2002, pp. 1-4) initially defines Heritage Studies as covering literature in the categories of "commentary, guidance, and research". However, Sørensen and Carman (2009a) later suggest that the academic subject field in a narrower sense only started when the commentary literature emerged in the 1980s. If understood in this narrower term, Heritage

Heritage Studies distinguishes itself with the research and guidance types of literature, even though the overlapping and relevance are apparent. The questions asked within Heritage Studies literature often come from practice-based research. The research outcomes of Heritage Studies, if communicated fully, can have a fundamental influence on the decision-making of practice and the premise of practice-based studies. Therefore, it is deemed necessary that such an ambiguous disciplinary boundary does not become a barrier to reviewing heritage-related literature in its broader sense in this thesis. The Studies of Heritage will be used as an alternative term to encompass the breadth of heritage literature to avoid confusion. It covers the broader scope that Carman initially suggested for Heritage Studies including commentaries, guidance, and research, as well as relevant international documents such as charters, declarations, and standards.

By the turn of the 20th century, heritage, or more precisely, monuments and practices revolving around them, started to be linked with not only the materials, crafts, and the practitioners' architectural or artistic preferences, but also the concept of a mental construct – values.¹ This connection was elucidated by Alois Riegl, who, in his 1903 book *Die moderne Denkmalkultus, sein Wesen, seine Entstehung* (The modern cult of monuments: its character and origin), defined heritage (monument) values in a systemic way into the categories of values embodied by cultural heritage as 'memorial values' (value of antiquity; historical value; and commemorative value) and 'actual values' (use value; artistic and spiritual value) (Riegl 1903; reviewed in Ahmer 2020). Subsequently, the focus of heritage values and their 'universality' and 'inevitability' has been increasingly heightened thanks to the Athens Charter (The First International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments 1931), the Venice Charter (ICOMOS 1964), and the establishment of the World Heritage system upon the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO 1972).

At present, many countries worldwide with a modern heritage system have also adopted a value-based approach for assessment in one form or another (for examples, see ICOMOS Indonesia 2003; Pan-Canadian governments 2010; Australia ICOMOS 2013; British Standards Institution 2013; ICOMOS China 2015). The ten criteria of Outstanding Universal

¹ In Europe, historical preservation has been a subject of discussions among architects, archaeologists, and art historians since the European Enlightenment, emerging from a sense of 'cultural continuity'. These debates were theorised and became the preamble of modern heritage philosophy during the 19th century. During this period, prominent contemporary figures in historical preservation in Europe such as William Morris, John Ruskin, and Eugène Viollet-le-Duc advocated distinctive approaches based on their scholarships and practices (Cleere 2012). The value assessment of cultural heritage in the modern age stayed primarily within the realm of arts and humanities (Throsby 1997a).

Value (OUV) of World Heritage (WH) sites play a dominant role in the value assessment process of cultural heritage today, especially those inscribed on the WH list. The ten criteria are articulated to cover a wide range of meanings and associations that convey the standard of outstanding and universal impact from historical, artistic (aesthetics), scientific, ethnological, and anthropological perspectives (UNESCO 1972; UNESCO WHC 2015).

Another influential international document regarding value is the Nara Document on Authenticity (Nara Conference on Authenticity 1994). The Nara Document iterates that value assessment should be carried out under the specific cultural context of the heritage. It nevertheless identifies four dimensions within which values and the attribute sources might be examined - artistic, historic, social, and scientific. The Nara Document also signifies the fundamental shift in the understanding of authenticity, which, according to the document, should be judged based on the credibility and truthfulness of the information sources and varies in specific cultural contexts. In the discourses surrounding the Nara Document and the World Heritage Convention, authenticity is the “essential qualifying factor concerning values” (ibid., p. 3). It is considered a perimeter to evaluate how authentic the heritage in question is and how credible the information is attributed to its values (UNESCO 1972; UNESCO WHC 2015).

2.2.1 The initial disciplinary domain of Heritage Studies

Although there has been abundant and comprehensive literature emerging from both practical experiences and philosophical debates regarding heritage conservation (for examples, see Forsyth 2007; Worthing and Bond 2008; Jokilehto 2018 (1999)) and the value-based approaches adopted are slightly different from one another based on the local contexts, the premise of these debates and approaches was rarely challenged until the recent decades. In these works, it is asserted that heritage, as recognised by the various registries ranging from the World Heritage List to a local protection list, should be protected in the best way possible. It also implies that heritage, as a uniquely modern experience, constantly faces destructive forces, such as war and conflicts, rapid development, globalisation, political actions, and even time (Harrison 2013, p. 27). However, the notion of destructive forces can sometimes be self-conflicted.² Such conflicts become even more apparent when the entities that we call heritage become intertwined or equivalent to the values that human society recognises in these entities. These values can defer dramatically in different communities, even regarding the same entities.

² For example, while natural decay can be identified as a threat to conservation, evidence of its physical presence can also become an aesthetic and evidential attribute to its values (Muñoz Viñas 2002).

The academic subject field of heritage studies emerged around the mid-1980s, mainly owing its foundation to publications of historians from Britain and North America (Sørensen and Carman 2009b). Before directly addressing the topic of heritage, the disciplines of archaeology and history had already developed critiques on issues such as colonialism, nationalism, identity, and memory through the knowledge production of archaeology practices and the use of the past (for examples, see Trigger 1984; Kohl and Fawcett 1995; Hobsbawm and Ranger 2012 (1983)). The early literature of heritage studies features an array of academic commentaries taking a critical stance against the heritage valorisation emerging from the much longer and technically focused tradition of heritage practices. These practices relied very much on the knowledge fields such as architecture, archaeology, and museology (Harrison 2013, p. 98). Some of these discussions are concerned with the conceptualisation of heritage and its relationship with the past (notable examples include Lowenthal 1985, 1998). Others are presenting criticism on the post-war popularisation of heritage and the blooming of '*heritage industry*', a term coined by Robert Hewison, and its socio-cultural, political and economic consequences in the Western world (for examples, see Wright 1985; Hewison 1987; Rosenzweig and Thelen 1998).

By the 1990s to early 2000s, academics from a much broader range of disciplines have joined the conversations, including those from anthropology, geography, economics, cultural studies, and tourism studies (for examples, see Harvey 1990; Urry 1990; Herzfeld 1991; Urry 1995; Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996; Graham et al. 2000; Harvey 2001; Herzfeld 2005 (1997)). The multidisciplinary nature of the academic engagement with heritage reflects the broad influence and ubiquity of heritage. However, it also presents a concern as much as an opportunity for it to develop from a multidisciplinary subject field to an interdisciplinary one.³

These early academic critiques were developed almost independently of the dominant concerns in heritage practices, which still focused on the 'knowhow' based on the premise that heritage is inherently benign. Nevertheless, practitioners also started to realise that these practices have real-world consequences that could aggravate the inequity of society on a local and global scale. Despite Sørensen and Carman (2009a, p. 18) arguing that some of these early commentaries were based "less in substantive research than in the perception – if not the biases and preconceptions – of the authors", they started to have impacts on heritage practitioners and policymakers in the 1990s. The academic discourse of heritage value has been central to multidisciplinary participation in the Studies of Heritage. Furthermore, it has led to the expanded understanding of cultural heritage values in heritage practices (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2003).

³ For the difference between these two definitions, see (Danermark 2002).

2.2.2 The rise of Critical Heritage Studies

The core literature of the sub-subject field CHS has emerged since the mid-2000s, following the disciplinary expansion of Heritage Studies. The first scholars in this area, many of whom are practitioners who entered the academic field after working in the public sector or consultancy, followed the intellectual debates that started in Heritage Studies and attempted to problematise and theorise the experience of practices presented mostly as case studies at the time (Sørensen and Carman 2009a). They have brought more focus on practices and their real-world implications into the academic field and, vice versa, more theoretical debates into practices by questioning their premise. CHS scholars, whose voices have become very diverse, can be characterised by some common threads, advocating for challenges to the conventional ways of understanding heritage, and raises critical discussions towards the established legitimacy of activities and interventions revolving around heritage (Waterton and Watson 2013; Winter 2013; Winter and Waterton 2013). Much of the literature that adheres to the paradigm of CHS questions the 'intrinsic significance', or the 'canonical model' of heritage identified through the production of knowledge in sciences and humanities disciplines, and at the same time, challenges the 'representative approaches' that emerged in the power structure which produces heritage in the late modern period (Harrison 2013, pp. 13-20).

One of the most notable contributions to its development is the work of Laurajane Smith. Her 2006 book, *Uses of Heritage*, was initially conceived from her experience as a UK-trained archaeologist working with indigenous peoples in Australia (Smith 2006). While some critics of her book may claim otherwise, her significant work in the conceptualisation of heritage processes and their consequences have opened up an opportunity for the academic subject field of Heritage Studies and the world of heritage practices to converse [cf. (Feintuch 2007)]. Smith's works have become increasingly influential within the initial circle of CHS scholars and other heritage-related research. By establishing the concept of the 'Authorised Heritage Discourse' (AHD) and emphasising the material impacts of heritage discourse on social and political issues, her works have certainly inspired a discursive and anthropocentric paradigm shift in heritage research. It is worth noting that Smith, in the very beginning of her 2006 book, emphasises that heritage is not *just* 'things', but also "a process of engagement, an act of communication and an act of making meaning in and for the present" (Smith 2006, p. 1). However, the 'word' 'just' gets lost in the latter part of her book and her later works. The position becomes much more focused on heritage's processual and intangible characteristics (for examples, see Smith and Akagawa 2009b; Smith and Campbell 2017). This position also becomes increasingly prevalent in works that adopt or discuss her theory, where "there is no such thing as heritage" is often quoted (for examples, see Harvey 2008, p. 19; Walter 2016, p. 53). Omitting the word 'just' as emphasised above makes a significant difference in

interpreting the ontological and epistemological position towards heritage. Despite the absence of an outright rejection of the tangible nature of heritage and the diverse or even contrasting positions of CHS scholars, the main body of works from the paradigm concern little of heritage's tangible nature, which can be equally problematic (Wells and Stiefel 2019b).

The Association of Critical Heritage Studies (ACHS), founded in 2012, set one of its missions as bringing together academics and practitioners from various disciplines (ACHS 2012).⁴ However, criticisms towards the paradigm's distancing and dismissing heritage professionals' contributions have surfaced. Winter (2013) points out the extensive range of disciplines involved in conservation activities and heritage studies but notes that the literature in the field's two leading journals (the *International Journal of Heritage Studies* and the *Journal of Cultural Heritage*) presents almost no disciplinary overlap. He suggests that this lack of overlap demonstrates a lack of conversation between academics and practitioners and warns that a paradigm created mainly within academia might not serve its purpose of being critical if such conversations are not facilitated (Winter 2013). A similar concern is shared by Witcomb and Buckley (2013, p. 562), who advocate for promoting active engagement with practitioners through pedagogy and open conversation rather than "critique for its own sake". The lack of conversation also hinders a genuinely interdisciplinary approach to studying this subject field. The rationale behind this necessity will be further elaborated on in Ch.3. This gap risks alienating heritage professionals and essentialising the complex nature of heritage practices on the ground. It also delays critical reflections from academia from having a substantial real-world impact.

⁴ The broad influence of CHS in both academia and practice can be testified by the sheer number and diverse disciplinary backgrounds of the hundreds of presenters who participated in the biannual conferences of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies (ACHS) in recent years. The 2018 ACHS conference held in Hangzhou, China attracted around 500 participants from 43 countries with 560 presentations (ACHS 2018) and the 2020 ACHS conference, initially planned to take place in London, attracted 1130 participants and 822 presentations (ACHS 2020 Committee 2020) despite the switch to an online format due to the Covid-19 pandemic (although it might have indeed made it more accessible for participants from less developed regions who might not have been able to afford the trip to London). The sessions in both conferences cover a broad disciplinary background, although some participants in both conferences have noted the lack of participation from prominent heritage practitioners. Some archaeologists claimed that they 'rushed' between the 2020 ACHS conference and the annual conference of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA), which took place at the same time. They suggest the fact that the two organisations did not even notice the clash shows how little overlap there is in the participants, despite the two subject areas being closely related.

2.2.3 Critiques on CHS and the 'post-discursive turn'

While the academic debates of CHS contribute significantly to highlighting the competing discourses that were neglected previously, there is some genuine concern from practitioners that heritage professionals' work and perspectives are being dismissed and criticised. Wells (2016) criticises that no workable remedy has been offered due to the lack of engagement with practitioners and the regulatory environment from CHS scholars (with very few exceptions such as Wells and Stiefel 2019a). Skrede and Hølleland apply Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a methodology that Smith herself uses, to analyse the narratives of Smith's works on AHD. They point out the normalisation in discourses that use the concept of AHD uncritically and criticise that the lack of specificity from heritage professionals' perspective runs the risk of painting over individual professionals as 'one grey mass' (Skrede and Hølleland 2018). Such a pitfall in theoretical conceptualisation can also affect the decision-making process in practice. Hølleland and Skrede (2019) suggest that while democratising heritage is essential, heritage 'experts' are an inherent and crucial part of the movement.⁵ Therefore, the role of heritage professionals and expertise is critical to the focus of this thesis. The role of 'experts' in China is further examined in Ch.5.

As mentioned above, CHS is also an umbrella of very diverse and even sometimes opposite voices. The paradigm's theoretical foundation is constantly challenged and refined from within the association and without (for examples, see Waterton and Watson 2013; Winter and Waterton 2013; Wells 2015, 2016; Wells and Stiefel 2019b). Skrede and Hølleland (2018) question Smith's claim of using Critical Realism (CR) as the epistemology to develop her theory centring around the concept of AHD. They point out that upon the theoretical basis of CR, a 'laminated system' allows the existence of 'a strata of realities' instead of a reductionist narrative (Bhaskar and Danermark 2006; cited in Skrede and Hølleland 2018). Essentially, they consider that when viewed through this lens, heritage should be allowed to be both a 'thing' and a 'discourse', an objective being as well as a cultural process, and perhaps even more (ibid. p.83-84). Without fully adopting a Critical Realist's stance on an inclusive ontology, Smith's application of CDA focuses on the 'material' effect of discourses but fails to fully capture the multi-deterministic nature of a phenomenon such as heritage (more discussion on this in Ch.3). Wells (2016) is critical of CHS scholars' silence in addressing cultural relativism when advocating for civil experts. He warns against such postmodern thinking in creating an

⁵ Even before the full emergence of CHS, Viñas raised the concern from a conservation professional's point of view that the attempts of contemporary conservation theory to "eradicate the excesses committed by too powerful 'experts'" may bring on new problems because "democratic decision-making" can also "produce equally regrettable abuses" (Muñoz Viñas 2002, p. 31).

'alternative reality' where anyone can claim anything is of historical value, and not one value is more important than another. He also notes that some CHS scholars' emphasis on intangibility, which tends to disregard the physicality of place altogether, should be challenged by the latest research in environmental psychology.

The anthropocentric trend in defining and managing heritage is also reflected in the people-centred approaches developed in 'contemporary conservation theory' (Loulanski 2006; Kwanda 2009). These approaches have been promoted through international programmes such as the People and Heritage programme by ICCROM and IUCN (Court and Wijesuriya 2015; ICCROM and IUCN 2016). Although not questioning the premise of heritage conservation, these approaches have absorbed the anthropocentric focus and dialogical relation of culture and nature seen in Heritage Studies and CHS. This shift of focus parallels the evolution of theoretical basis in broader scientific disciplines, where positivism is criticised and rejected while postmodern thinking such as hermeneutics and constructivism is rising (Wells 2016). A theoretical framework to navigate these philosophical traditions and support this 'thesis's fundamental positioning and conceptual backbone will be established in Ch.3.

Critical reflections on the theoretical basis of this discursive and anthropocentric shift of Heritage Studies have gradually gained momentum and emerged to become what could be called a 'post-discursive turn' of Heritage Studies in the last decade. The new development can be characterised by the refocusing of materials and their agency, a re-conceptualisation of heritage as the outcome of interactions between human and non-human actors. It is inspired by philosophical traditions with anti-anthropocentric tendencies and relational ontology in archaeology, anthropology, and social sciences, including symmetric archaeology, post-humanisms, new materialism, assemblage theory, and Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) (Ingold 2007; Harrison 2013; Watts 2014; Fowler and Harris 2015; Harrison 2015). Scholars who are pushing this turn advocate a return to material in the conversation within heritage research and a dialogical relation between human societies and nature in the heritage assemblage. This movement provides a distinctive theoretical basis for CHS and has provided room for research projects that would not have been considered within the subject field before. The latest development gives rise to a research focus that examines the impact of extant heritage assemblage and practices and critically explores how such assemblages and activities might shape our future. Heritage activities, including its preservation and management, are characterised as not only handing the past to the future generations but as proactive future-making exercises, pointing towards heritage's role in sustainable development (Harrison 2016; Sandford 2019; Harrison et al. 2020).

Some scholars who insist on the previous anthropocentric approach have voiced criticism over this post-humanist turn. They are concerned that the shift away from human actors will once more shift away from the needed attention to the socio-political issues, such as racial, gender, and class inequalities, that might have been neglected or even exacerbated by heritage (Campbell and Smith 2016). However, upon a closer look at the two approaches, one can see that these two aspects are not necessarily contradicted. The post-discursive turn is in no way a return to the conventional positivist approach that prioritises material remains. Instead, this approach recognises the social impacts of heritage fully but proposes a model of dialogical relation between humans and non-humans in heritage production. Affording agency to non-human actors does not necessarily dismiss human agency. On the other hand, as mentioned above, Smith has explicitly recognised the material aspect of heritage (*ibid.*), even though this recognition seems to have grown weaker and been neglected by many other researchers within CHS.

At this juncture, perhaps it is crucial to ask where the future of this subject field lies. In the 2018 ACHS conference held in Hangzhou, China, the 'critical' in CHS was translated to Chinese as 'reflect and debate' rather than the more literal translation related to criticism and the philosophical tradition of Critical Theory. It was a diplomatic choice to introduce a more constructive sense of the paradigm to the Chinese audience rather than a negative one. However, perhaps coincidentally, it is an interpretation of 'critical' that is worth pondering. One might need to ask, who are we inviting to reflect and debate? Is the new direction of the Studies of Heritage a shift away from some or an inclusive call for conversation and convergence?

2.3 Two intertwined dichotomies – Western /Eastern approaches and the tangible and the Intangible

2.3.1 The Nara Conference and the (mis)understanding of Ise Shrine

In the last three decades, conversations around heritage have seen the emergence of two tightly intertwined dichotomies. They both originated from philosophical positions taken towards heritage and have far-reaching impacts on practices. To trace the origins and the implications of these two dichotomies, one international document born in the context of UNESCO and the perception revolving around one particular site is worth addressing. In 1994, the ICOMOS Conference was organised in Nara, Japan, where most of the oldest timber structures of Japan and the world are located. The Nara Conference created a platform for extensive discussions of how and to what extent the philosophy and approach from 'the East' are derived. This philosophy and approach are perceived to contrast with the existing international standards for heritage conservation, which were predominantly developed in the

Western context at the time (Falser 2010). The philosophical development of heritage conservation approaches advocated by the Nara Document, symbolising the outcome of the Nara Conference, not only formalised the acceptance of approaches from 'the East' but most importantly, also called for the respect and inclusion of cultural diversities in consideration of heritage (Nara Conference on Authenticity 1994). However, as Akagawa criticised, what is rarely discussed is the specific role that Japanese delegates played during the conference, and consequently, their influence on formulating the Western perception of heritage conservation approaches from 'the East', exemplified by Japanese approaches context (Akagawa 2016). According to Akagawa, Japanese experts tried to align Japan's approach towards heritage with the international (Western) standard and actively influence and modify it. During this process, Ise Shrine was used as an example of the distinctive approach held by the 'East' (Japan) (ibid.).

Since the Nara Conference, the Ise Shrine has become one of the most cited examples in literature that addresses the debate of tangibility and intangibility and its closely related twin – the dichotomy between the 'Western' and 'Eastern' philosophies.⁶ The building of the Ise Shrine, which goes through a reconstruction and relocation ritual every 20 years, is frequently used to represent a 'non-Western' society's lack of care for tangibility and its emphasis on the intangible process that constitutes heritage. However, as Akagawa (2016) points out, the Ise Shrine is a unique example of Japanese Shintoism. Its exemplification of Japanese heritage conservation methods is the source of a widespread misunderstanding in the west. Furthermore, the reconstruction process derives distinctly from Shinto ritual practices. It implies a political connotation as Japan's royal family considers it a venue representing their legitimacy given by the divine power. These aspects are conveniently lost by the Japanese secular government's act of placing it in a modernist heritage context during the Nara Conference. The example of Ise Shrine was either intentionally or unintentionally presented with a neutral and secular image of the shrine's aesthetics and its symbolisation of the synchronisation between Japanese architecture and nature (ibid.).

Despite the unique approach towards the valorisation of Ise Shrine's reconstruction rituals, Japanese conservation philosophy towards other timber historic buildings, exemplified by the careful repair, replacement, and documentation of the timber materials of most of their ancient timber buildings, is highly in accordance with Article 11 of the Venice Charter ((Larsen 1994,

⁶ As will be discussed further in this section, this binary notion that categorise philosophies towards tangibility and intangibility based on geographical zoning is more than problematic. Therefore, when it is used as the context to discuss the notions of tangibility and intangibility, one must keep in mind the probability of bias that comes with it.

pp. 125-126; Ito 2002), cited in (Akagawa 2016, p. 21)). Falser (2010) points out that despite Larsen's careful emphasis at the Nara Conference on the distinctions between the Japanese conservation approach of ancient timber buildings, and the unique ritual in the Shinto Ise Shrine, European representatives were disproportionally influenced by the latter. It planted the seed for further stereotyping of the Japanese (and 'Eastern') uniqueness internationally and domestically in Japan and other Asian countries. An increasing number of authors have noted this misunderstanding in recent years (for examples, see Sand 2015; Stubbs and Thomson 2017; Gao and Jones 2020). It can be argued that the hasty willingness to accept the Ise Shrine as an example of an 'Eastern' conservation and valorisation approach distinctive from the Western one has, in turn, strengthened a misconception of the 'East'. It contributed to the 'otherness' which distracted the attention to understand the complexity of the diverse, dynamic, and negotiated nature of a particular culture or society's (Western or non-Western) approaches towards heritage.

The subsequent charters, declarations, and protocols formulated primarily on conferences and meetings in Asia, such as the *2005 Hoi'An Protocols* and the *2005 Xi'an Declaration*, have, on the one hand, improved the representation of non-Western societies in the global scene of heritage and brought more attention to the intangible aspects of heritage. However, they also reinforced the stereotype that non-Western societies, and they only, value the intangible aspects of heritage over the tangible ones (Gao and Jones 2020). Western authors highlight these differences to criticise Eurocentrism and propose alternative approaches. At the same time, non-Western researchers and practitioners go along with the stereotyping to promote representation and acceptance for local practices in the global heritage arena (Winter 2014).

The following two sub-sections will further review the two dichotomies in heritage literature. Finally, the last sub-section will demonstrate why a more nuanced approach to address issues in a complex context such as China is needed through a brief historical review of China's modern heritage conservation approach towards its built heritage.

2.3.2 Is there really an 'Eastern' approach?

One of the most debated concerns emerging from the scholarship of Heritage Studies, especially of CHS, is related to the globalisation of heritage, and more specifically, the value and practice of standards that are promoted from the Euro-American West to the rest of the world (Sørensen and Carman 2009a; Harrison 2013). There are two aspects to these discussions. On the one hand, these critics address the global and local power imbalance and the seemingly inevitable incompatibility between universality and contextual specificity (Evans 2002). Furthermore, they point out the process of 'imposition' of such values and practise standards through an international organisation such as UNESCO and the World Heritage

programme (Cleere 2001). On the other hand, since the emergence of the World Heritage programme, which was still dominantly developed under a Euro-American (and to some extent, Australian) context, at least at the time of these critiques, the literature on this topic has contributed significantly to the increased interests in the dichotomy of Western and non-Western approaches. The subject of this thesis concerns heritage management in a domestic context manifested as the confluence of various cultures, values, and heritage philosophies, rather than practices that involve direct international negotiation such as the World Heritage sites. Therefore, this section will review the relevant literature with more focus on the second aspect despite these two aspects being tightly intertwined.

As conceptualised by Smith's notion of AHD, the Western approach refers to an emphasis on monumentality and tangibility of heritage promoted by the states and international organisations such as UNESCO (Smith 2006). Critiques of this approach towards heritage have a strong tie with those of the Western hegemony in archaeological research. These critiques most notably started in the early 1980s, when the journal *World Archaeology* published two issues problematising the exportation of a single Western archaeological theory and methodology to the rest of the world through colonialism. They provided a starting space for developing regional archaeological approaches (Trigger and Glover 1981). Approaches in archaeological research concern both the 'research' part and archaeological heritage management. Byrne (1991) notes that while the former part is usually more laden with theories, the latter initially paid much less attention to the theoretical premises – the epistemological and ontological positions. He suggests that this focus on practices was due to the 'urgency' that archaeologists and heritage managers felt "in a world where ancient places are disappearing almost as fast as they can be recorded" (ibid. p. 270). As mentioned in Sec.2.2, the lack of theoretical consideration and critical discussion of the premise of heritage management and conservation was, and still is, prominent in practices and research. According to Byrne, it contributed to the uncritical application of a homogeneous approach towards heritage management across a broad range of contexts. As will continue to be argued in the thesis, the lack of attention to epistemology and ontology and their differentiation in the Studies of Heritage can be overshadowed by emphasising political and cultural imbalance contributing to the supposed imposition of 'Western' hegemony in a non-Western context.

Viñas and Winter suggest that the inter-cultural issues from the post-Western perspective in heritage studies and conservation can indeed be intra-cultural (Muñoz Viñas 2002, p. 168). Therefore, Winter suggests that such issues should not only be considered to foreground the voice of indigenous peoples or non-Western societies but also to be critical and reflexive by "moving beyond the limited repertoire of epistemologies currently privileged" (Winter 2013, p. 542). Instead of the 'discourse of differences', termed by Winter (2014) to describe and criticise

the perceived distinctions between the 'materialistic Western approach' and the 'non-materialistic Eastern approach', Matsuda and Mengoni (2016) suggest that the processes of negotiation between these various approaches can be better described as both differentiation and assimilation. Comparative research on contemporary conservation practices in Western and non-Western countries has attempted to illustrate these two processes of conflicting philosophies in a wide range of contexts. Gutschow (2017) uses cases from Germany, Nepal, India, China, and Japan to highlight some similarities in the contemporary strategies and practices when dealing with concepts such as identity and integrity in these countries. Gao and Jones (2020) question the amplified difference between the 'West' and the 'East' by comparing specific conservation approaches in China and Scotland, highlighting the similarities in dealing with the dilemma of authenticity in practices in both nations. These case studies demonstrate what Viñas describes as 'intracultural' issues mentioned above.

Since the development of CHS and the emergence of the widely used concept of AHD, the conflict between competing discourses in non-Western contexts have often been characterised as a result of the distinctiveness between 'Western' and 'non-Western' traditions, cultures, religions and even ideologies. Such an argument is amplified by the power imbalance between the structure and individuals or between the global powers and the local actors (for examples, see Smith 2004; Waterton and Smith 2010; Zhu 2015; Gentry and Smith 2019). However, a limited but growing number of researchers have pointed out a tendency to 'exoticise and simplify' the situations in these non-Western societies, as illustrated by the discussion around Ise Shrine in sub-sec.2.3.1 (Matsuda and Mengoni 2016). Indeed, the non-Western alternatives characterised in the literature that addresses this dichotomy have a much less universal definition and are, in some cases, much less explored. The word 'non-Western' are sometimes used interchangeably with adjectives such as 'Eastern', 'Asian', or 'indigenous' despite the apparent distinction of their definitions. Specific features of these alternatives, such as those from Asia, are often exemplified for generalising the 'Orient' rather than further discussing the complexities within, a problem that scholars who have been tackling orientalism raised over two decades ago (Dirlik 1996; Sen 1999). The question of whether these features could paint a comprehensive portrait of these cultures or societies' situations is often neglected. Defining the situations in non-Western contexts as alternatives overlooks the complexities existing and rapidly evolving in each specific context. The conflicts, negotiation, differences, and assimilation processes in each unique country or region deserve more nuanced and in-depth scrutiny (Matsuda and Mengoni 2016).

Furthermore, as seen in the Ise Shrine case, misunderstandings of the origins of these alternative approaches can be taken out of context and misleading (Sand 2015; Akagawa 2016). Comparisons between the 'Western' and 'Eastern' approaches are sometimes

extrapolated beyond their contexts. Particular philosophies of Japanese traditional culture that do not necessarily apply to building conservation in the country, let alone the entire 'East', are used to exemplify 'Eastern' approaches (cf. Forster et al. 2018). Casual comments suggesting non-Western societies have little interest in their material heritage are commonly seen even in widely referenced literature (for examples, see Lowenthal 1985; Ryckmans 1986), amplifying the mischaracterised dichotomy. Moreover, the lack of discussion on the conflicts between a material-focused approach and the value of intangible associations in Western countries has yet to be fully appreciated (Gao and Jones 2020). Such representationism runs the risk of becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy when researchers look for evidence that fits the representational model to prove its validity. Furthermore, such generalisations can also be 'essentialising', treating these 'approaches' as if they were frozen ideas that never evolved without sufficiently verifying whether certain traditions are indeed the causal powers behind a specific phenomenon (Dirlik 1996; Matsuda and Mengoni 2016).

In advocating for treating these non-Western cases as having complexities of their own, researchers have recognised that the relationship between the 'Western' hegemony propagated by UNESCO, the 'nationalised' discourse adopted by the states, and the transformed versions of these narratives by local actors needs much more nuanced characterisation (Svensson and Maags 2018; Yan 2018b; Maags 2020). Ogino (2016) examines the undercurrents of Japanese conservation approaches both specific to the country and part of a global phenomenon. By providing a critical account of the use of AHD in China's World Heritage management, Yan (2018b) points out that the 'Western' hegemony is initially introduced through the globalisation of heritage but is also very much negotiated and adapted in domestic research and practices. He points out that one of the drivers for the Chinese government to embrace these international standards and the World Heritage system is the need for the nation to gain recognition in the international arena, especially after the Cultural Revolution, during which the country was isolated from the world. Such interactions not only influence the activities revolving around World Heritage sites but also have permeating effects on the domestic practices on non-World Heritage sites (Qian 2007; Blumenfield and Silverman 2013). The craving for recognition also permeates among its citizens who, as exemplified by Maags' research on Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) transmitters, can sometimes utilise the authorised discourse to enhance their personal achievement as well as their ICH (Maags 2018). Bi *et al.* (2016) discuss the implications of China's heritage visions and practices 20developdevelopment of heritage tourism and urban development in China by examining the negotiation process between international standards and social debates with an evolutionary approach over issues such as reconstruction and commodification of heritage.

As shown in this sub-section, the Western / Eastern (non-Western) dichotomy was borne and amplified by a critical approach towards the conventional heritage value system and conservation practices. It is an exoticised and simplified misconception of the value system and approaches adopted, negotiated, and contested in the non-Western contexts. The increasing acknowledgement of the complexity of heritage approaches in both Western and non-Western contexts begs more contribution to painting a fuller and richer picture, which is part of what this thesis intends to do.

2.3.3 The conversation between the tangible and the intangible

Another dichotomy, between the tangible and the intangible, has emerged through the debate above and requires further reconfiguration. Even though there are studies rendering the impracticality of separating the two, these two notions are still widely used to categorise heritage entities. As discussed in Sec.2.2, the emergence of Heritage Studies as a subject field in the mid-1980s took an approach towards heritage that is critical to and distinct from the technically focused approach of heritage emerging through practices. Heritage Studies has brought increasing attention to the intangible aspects of heritage.⁷ Claiming that heritage has moved from stressing 'tangible monuments and materials' to emphasising 'intangible folkways', Lowenthal (1998, p. 19) suggests that the material-focused approach is an outdated 'Western mania'. However, as illustrated above, the accuracy of Lowenthal's representation of non-Western societies' lack of interest in tangibility and their preference for intangible 'folkways' in the contemporary era is very much debatable. Generalising an entire society's (or several entire societies') preference based on examples from these societies that fit the representational profile while ignoring others is a fundamental fallacy. Nevertheless, these early critiques have substantially influenced the development of the canon of academic literature that champions the intangible aspects of heritage over the perceived intrinsic values of its tangible existence.

The conversation between the tangible and intangible aspects If heritage is not always explicit in Heritage 'tudies' early literature. On the contrary, one may say there is a deliberate lack of separation between tangible and intangible heritage in this body of scholarship because whether heritage is made of tangible or intangible 'stuff' is not the primary concern. Instead, historians started to detach heritage from the substance of the past, referring it to a connection with the past created in the present rather than the 'stuff' that is from or reminds us of the past

⁷ The phrase 'intangible aspects of heritage' is indeed complex and inclusive. It can mean heritage 'things' that take an intangible form, such as practices, traditions, customs and performances. It can also mean the intangible associations connected to the 'things' that are considered heritage. This complexity will be addressed further in this section.

(Lowenthal 1985; Harvey 2001). In this sense, heritage is a layer of meaning that *can* (but not necessarily) be added to both the material remains and intangible traditions or expressions.

Despite the lack of differentiation, the connection with the past manifests on material remains and intangible expressions in various ways. A semiotic label is placed on the material remains when they are 'heritagised', and this connection is in a constant process of becoming. For intangible expressions, such as traditions, customs, and performances, even though there are almost always materials involved, the process of 'happening' of these expressions is essential to maintaining this connection. In this sense, intangible heritage is both entities and processes. When it comes to intangible heritage, the 'past' with which we have a connection is a continuous production process and its products have currency in the present. This necessary connection with present communities participating in this production inevitably leads to a more political and complex characterisation of heritage (Blake 2009).

The definition of heritage as 'connection' and the processes that create, maintain or alter this connection, in many ways through heritage discourse, is what prompted many subsequent authors to claim that 'all heritage is intangible' (Smith 2006, p. 3). This shift from considering heritage as an intrinsic 'tangible existence'⁸ in reality to heritage as a connection with the past created by the 'moderns' (Lowenthal 1985) is fundamental to the development of Heritage Studies and its cousin CHS. However, it is also confusing since many heritage professionals are still referring 'heritage' to the entities rather than the process or connection. It is worth pointing out that, even though something can only be called 'heritage' through discourse, it does not take away the material properties and effects of its tangible being. On the contrary, it should be argued that this tangibility keeps the door open for the intangible associations to be formed because of or despite any authorised discourse (cf. Byrne 2009).⁹

⁸ Not to confuse the use of the two terms even more, in the context of this sentence, both tangible remains and the intangible expressions have a 'tangible existence' when they are referred to as the substance rather than the process that 'makes them heritage' (processual properties) or the 'symbol of heritage' (semiotic properties).

⁹ Some terminology needs to be clarified at this point. To avoid the confusion mentioned above as much as possible, whenever heritage is mentioned on its own in this thesis, it is referring to the 'stuff' that is considered heritage unless specified otherwise.⁹ The processual and discursive properties of heritage will be specified by using terms such as 'heritagisation', 'heritage processes' and 'heritage discourse'. This clarification is also to 'demystify' catchphrases such as 'all heritage is intangible' (Smith 2006, p. 3), or 'heritage is not a thing' (Smith 2006, p. 44; Harrison 2013, p. 14), which can read exclusive if taken out of context. Accepting the validity of these statements does not mean those who acknowledge

While differentiating the concept of heritage from the 'things', literature from Heritage Studies continues to dichotomise the tangible and the intangible entities considered heritage. Lowenthal points out three 'enlargement of heritage', one of which is from the material to the intangible. Much subsequent literature from Heritage Studies and CHS devote specifically to this shift (for examples, see Ruggles and Silverman 2009; Smith and Akagawa 2009a). This shift towards the discourse surrounding intangible heritage is seen as a discursive turn moving away from the positivist attitude dominating the conventional material-focused heritage approach (Harrison 2013). The increasing attention towards the intangible aspects of heritage offers an opportunity for interactions between researchers and practitioners from various disciplines in the Studies of Heritage. They may not have had the chance to engage with each other when tangible heritage was the dominant concern.

Attention towards the intangible aspects of heritage did, of course, exist before Heritage Studies became an academic subject field. The neglect of intangibility in heritage started to be noticed and raised on an international platform as early as the 1970s. The Permanent Delegation of 'olivia's proposal to include protecting folklore in the Universal Copyright Convention in 1973, although unsuccessful, is considered the first attempt to "include intangible aspects within the area of cultural heritage" (Bouchenaki 2003, p. 1). This effort was then followed by adopting the Recommendation on the Protection of Traditional Culture and Folklore by UNESCO in 1989 (UNESCO 1989). However, this recommendation was soon considered obsolete as few member states have taken action accordingly (Aikawa-Faure 2009). An international conference held in Washington DC in 1999, titled "A Global Assessment of the 1989 Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore: Local Empowerment and International Cooperation", considered the 1989 Recommendation was inadequate in terms of its limited definition of ICH and its lack of inclusion of non-expert participants in the safeguarding of ICH (Seitel 2001). The result of the conference brought forth the involvement of tradition bearers rather than scholars in the understanding and safeguarding of intangible heritage and shed light on the processual aspects of intangible heritage – its creation, reception by, and interactions with people (Bouchenaki 2003). The Washington Con'ERENCE's recommendation subsequently led to the

the tangibility of heritage or consider heritage as 'things' (at least sometimes) are wrong. It only means that the word 'heritage' is being used to refer to different concepts, and we will see as this thesis unfolds, it is possible for these concepts to coexist.

adoption of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (referred to as the 'ICH Convention' hereafter).¹⁰

Munjeri (2004) considers that the discrepancy between the protection and attention to the tangible aspects and the intangible aspects of heritage is attributed to the central issue of values and valorisation. He problematises the 'intrinsic values' categorised by those who contributed to today's heritage profession's early development, including modernist philosopher Alois Riegl and the more recent policymakers of the Burra Charter. He points out that this reductionist approach towards understanding cultural heritage's complexity is further restricted by focusing on the physical evidential basis for defining 'authenticity' (ibid. p.13). Countering this reductionist approach, an expert meeting concerning the 'Global Strategy' at the UNESCO World Heritage Centre held in June 1994 accepted that multiple disciplines relevant to cultural heritage now acknowledge heritage's complex and multidimensional nature. They defined heritage as cultural groupings that include physical (tangible) and non-physical (intangible) entities. The strategy considers heritage as a system where these entities are closely connected by reciprocal relationships [(UNESCO WHC 1994), cited in (Munjeri 2004)].

Although the processual properties had been noticed, the effort coming from heritage practices and policymaking was still mainly aimed to broaden the scope of heritage 'things', including material and immaterial entities. The 2003 ICH Convention's adoption is considered a reaction from UNESCO to expand the definition of heritage that previously was constrained as a material-focused and Eurocentric definition by the 1972 World Heritage Convention (Smith and Akagawa 2009b). The intention is for the two conventions to complement each other to uphold the universal definition of heritage. However, Harrison (2013, p. 137) argues that by placing the 'intangible' in opposition to the 'tangible', the ICH Convention contrarily strengthened the categorisation that separates the two aspects of heritage.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2004) acknowledges that by creating the ICH Convention, the WH Convention's inclusiveness is reduced for the intangible aspects of tangible heritage. They argue that the ICH Convention implies that the previous Convention would not have to address the intangibility of heritage anymore. Upon the adoption of the 2003 ICH Convention, conversations in the context of UNESCO between the specialists from the two sectors of tangible and intangible heritage were far from straightforward. As Rudolff (2006, pp. 31-32)

¹⁰ For more detailed documentation of the process that led to the adoption of the ICH Convention, see Aikawa (aka Aikawa-Faure) (2004, 2007; 2009).

points out, at least two attempts¹¹ were made in 2004 to create the platform for these specialists to come together but failed to achieve their goals. The way towards integration, cooperation and coordination proved to be full of obstacles due to miscommunications and misconceptions of terminology. According to Rudolff, antagonising emotional responses were observed between specialists from the two sectors (Rudolff 2006, pp. 31-32).

Instead of constantly drawing and redrawing the line that separates the tangibility and intangibility of heritage, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2004) suggests that similar to the ambiguous line that separates 'natural' and 'cultural' heritage, tangible and intangible heritage cannot exist without each other. Tangible heritage would be mere "objects that are not yet things" without the intangible meaning-making process [(Latour 1993b), quoted in (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004)], while people, places, or objects necessarily embody the intangible aspects of heritage. Also highlighting the impracticality of separating these two categories, Rudolff (2006) proposes taking a pre-categorical approach towards heritage in a 2006 PhD thesis. Instead of categorising heritage based on whether they are made of tangible materials or not, they propose three categories based on disciplinary differences as a starting point¹² (ibid. p.33). These categories reveal the more fundamental theoretical basis upon which our understanding of heritage is based. This thesis' position on this very topic will be further elaborated in Chapter 3.

Bouchenaki (2003) highlights the synchronicity between cultural heritage and 'ociety's "norms and values". By acknowledging the role of these intangible aspects behind the creation and recognition of tangible heritage, they suggest that the intangible heritage may be considered a larger framework for tangible heritage to emerge and take on significance and propose a threefold approach that integrates both aspects. This approach includes "putting tangible heritage in its wider context", "translating intangible heritage into 'materiality'", and "supporting practitioners and the transmission of skills and knowledge" (ibid. p.2-3). By highlighting the role of community, this approach also implies that the conversation between the tangible and the intangible is not only about heritage but also the relationship between heritage and people (See Appendix 2 for a further literature review on 'community' in heritage and sustainability literature).

¹¹ The expert conference 'Safeguarding of tangible and intangible heritage: towards an integrated approach' and a World Heritage Committee discussion entitled 'Cooperation and coordination between the UNESCO Conventions on heritage'.

¹² "A positivist heritage category focusing on traces from the past, a constructivist approach to heritage looking at dynamic processes of social interaction, and a semiological perspective considering heritage as symbol, sign and reference of understanding."

Bouchenaki's article was part of a collection of works presented at the 14th ICOMOS General Assembly and International Symposium titled 'Place, memory, meaning: preserving intangible values in monuments and sites' (Petzet 2003). The Symposium was held in October 2003, almost immediately after the adoption of the UNESCO ICH Convention. As one of the three advisory bodies to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, the work of ICOMOS has always been, as indicated by its name, focusing on monuments and sites. Therefore, it is understandable that the goal of this collection of works was set to explore the integration of 'intangible values' and the material existence of tangible heritage, rather than 'moving away' from the materiality of heritage.¹³

However, the connection between heritage and the 'norms and values' of communities can be problematic and complex.¹⁴ The "spiritual, political and social values" (Bouchenaki 2003) of these sites also vary when a more diverse and dynamic notion of community is taken into consideration. Moreover, as discussed in Sec.2.2, heritage research in recent decades has revealed that the relationship between heritage and people can pose significant challenges to the ethical principles of the present society, such as promoting the continuation of sexism and racism.¹⁵ The continuation of these relations can also present obstacles to achieving sustainable development goals. This thesis will elaborate on an approach to facilitating sustainable heritage management, highlighting the interconnectedness of tangible and intangible aspects of heritage that can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of what heritage is and what it does.

2.3.4 Erstwhile in China

Some of the competing ideas that have significantly shaped the conservation approach and understanding of heritage in today's China had their roots in China's internal relationship with modernity. Despite its significant role in amplifying it, there is more complexity than a one-off importation of the Western AHD through the World Heritage programme. These ideas and their manifestation in policies, administrative systems, conservation approaches and public

¹³ It should be noted that the 'intangible values', used as the title of the ICOMOS General Assembly in 2003, is a confusing tautology since all values are intangible as mental constructs (Smith and Campbell 2017). Rudolff suggests that what tangible heritage professionals may be referring to with this term is the values that cannot be identified through heritage's material characteristics (Rudolff 2006, p. 31).

¹⁴ For example, giving more weight to heritagised (former) religious spaces by involving their current communities, who may or may not be religious, is far more complex.

¹⁵ One needs not look further than the debates over the Black Lives Matter movement and the statues of the confederate figures and symbols of slavery.

opinions, especially in the post-Cultural-Revolution era, will be further explored in Part 3.¹⁶ The following is a brief overview of these ideas' origins by reviewing the formation of this subject field in China's academia and among heritage professionals.

Modern academic disciplines such as architecture, archaeology, and art history were introduced into China from Europe and America, sometimes via the route of Japan in the early 20th century, when the imperial history of the nation was coming to an end. Simultaneously, a new republic found itself not only having to deal with a society already made wretched by the previous anti-colonial wars but facing another imminent war with Japan and domestic unrest due to corruption and rebellion (Zhu and Maags 2020, pp. 31-32). Even though antiquarians' activities were recorded from as early as the 10th century, the attitudes towards the past, heritage, and especially architectural heritage experienced significant transformations at this junction of history (Bao 2000). The first modern legislation on conservation was published in 1930 by the Republic of China government, which was heavily influenced by other countries' legislation, especially Japan.¹⁷ Its implementation was suspended in 1937 at the Sino-Japan's War's outburst, as the responsible administration was dissolved (Lai 2016).

Hoping to explore modern conservation philosophies of architectural heritage that apply to China, voices emerged among the first architectural historians. They formed the *Yingzao Xueshe* (Society for the Study of Chinese Architecture) in 1930, the first academic society in its modern sense dedicated to studying traditional Chinese architecture (Zhu 2012a). Among these voices, the most advocative one came from Liang Sicheng. Liang was the son of Liang Qichao, one of the most significant reformists during the 'modernisation' of China, an

¹⁶ Despite the promising emergence of more nuanced characterisations of the complex and diverse non-Western approaches, including more representation of researchers from these societies on an international academic platform, in the case of China, it has yet to drive these critical conversations into the heart of its heritage apparatus including research, policymaking, and practices. As discussed previously, this disconnection between critical academic research, practices, and the regulatory environment is shared in many countries, and China is no exception. Discussions in Chinese literature related to heritage have a disproportionate focus on tangible heritage, despite covering many categories. They adopt the premise that these heritage entities face some immediate threats and concentrate on the 'how' questions, including the approaches to value assessment, planning, restoration, adaptive reuse, community engagement, and management (for examples, see Chai 1999b,d; Luan et al. 2008; Li et al. 2009; Liu 2012a; Zhu 2012b; Chai 2013). Such literature tends to take an 'authoritative' stance considering the premise of conservation approaches following the international guidelines, national standards, legislation, and state policies as given.

¹⁷ The heritage legislative development during the early 20th century in China will be further addressed in Chapter 5.

architecture graduate from the University of Pennsylvania and, subsequently, one of the first scholars to study Chinese architectural history (ibid.). It was perhaps inevitable for Liang to consider the conservation of China's architectural heritage as the physical evidence of its evolution to be a given task, not just for academics, but a task for the entire generation (Lv 2001). With Liang being among the most respected intellectuals and well-acquainted social elites at the time (Fairbank 2009), his studies on traditional Chinese architecture with the influence of Euro-American methodology acquired during his study abroad put him squarely in the 'contact zone', as termed by Dirlik (1996). This 'contact zone' was where domination from Euro-American culture, the exchange between Euro-American and Chinese scholarship, and the self-production of 'Orientalism' from Chinese intellectuals coexisted. In Liang's writing, from as early as the 1930s, he explicitly expressed that he considered ancient Chinese architecture as the physical testimony of cultural, social and political aspects of Chinese society throughout history and is no doubt of high historical value (Liang 1935).

Liang also proposed a few 'principles' for architectural conservation in his writings. These principles were primarily written in the context of specific restoration projects he was working on. Among the most influential ones were 'retaining the original form' (*Baoliu Yuanzhuang*) and 'restoring the old as the old' (*Zhengjiu Rujiu*) (Liang 1964). As mentioned above, being in the 'contact zone' means that his generation of intellectuals was experiencing the break with tradition that modernity has brought to China. In Liang's writing, he often stated that 'we as conservators of this generation' had a task to preserve, which was diametrically different from those of traditional craftsmen, whose mandate from the users and commissioners was to maintain the buildings' grandeur, often through the means of heavy renovation and even complete reconstruction (Liang 1935).

On the other hand, he was aware of the dilemmas of historical restoration and cited Italy as an example regarding the reconstruction of archaeological sites and proposed measured and case-specific solutions for Chinese heritage (Liang 1932). Early members of the *Yinzao Xueshe* translated some of the articles on conservation from Japanese scholars such as Tadashi Sekino, which Liang considered valuable references for establishing conservation approaches applicable for modern China (Liang 1932; Lv 2001). Liang's principles have had a long-lasting influence that permeates the conservation philosophies even in the post-Cultural-Revolution era (Lv 2001), despite some of his proposed 'principles' contradicting each other and concepts such as 'the original' and 'the old' being ill-defined in his literature. These principles are often compared to the Venice Charter to show how 'advanced' his ideas were because they share similarities with the international principles put forward by an international organisation such as ICOMOS (Lou 2004).

Liang's propositions are limited in various ways. They are constrained by his educational and professional background. They are also particular products of the collision between his ideals and the turbulent political, social, and cultural contexts that he encountered throughout his life. His recognition of Chinese ancient architecture's significance for nation-building in the early Republic of China (ROC) era was shared by many intellectuals who saw the need for restoring and sustaining the Chinese population's faith in these turbulent times (Liang 1932). The radical movements in the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the 1960s-70s condemned the connection with the imperial past.¹⁸ These ideological movements led many Chinese scholars, including Liang, to adopt a (historical) materialist position and choose a narrative that highlights the significance of the tangible materials for scientific and historical research (Zhang 2010a). The implications of these conflicts extend far beyond Liang's lifetime. Ch.5 will elaborate on these implications and negotiations in the post-Cultural-Revolution era.

2.4 Understanding sustainability

2.4.1 Concepts and approaches

Emerging as a concept in the 1970s, 'sustainability' has become almost ubiquitous. However, its definition has become so broad and all-encompassing that one often finds it difficult to grasp. In this sense, it shares some similarities with the concept of heritage. As discussed in the previous sections, the expansion of heritage's definition and the lack of clarification on the ontological and epistemological levels can sometimes create confusion and ambiguity in research and practices. Similarly, the multi-faceted meaning of sustainability, along with its broad implications, has made it necessary to define the term specifically in every case, or it runs the risk of it becoming a vague and meaningless placeholder (Jacobs 1999; McKenzie 2004). Therefore, this section aims to elucidate the existing discourses on sustainability by tracing the development of the definitions and examining a few theoretical approaches to understanding the concept. It further discusses two aspects of sustainability more closely related to heritage, social and cultural sustainability.

¹⁸ Attitudes towards Chinese traditional cultures became radically ideological during the Cultural Revolution. Scholars either followed suit for self-preservation or were fiercely condemned for their advocacy to study Chinese imperial history and protect heritage that was representative of that period. Liang, being one of the most notable advocates for the protection of Chinese ancient architecture, became a target for criticism in the early stage of the movement. His writings during this period were apologetic and regretful, a common feature of forced apologies at the time. His advocacy for the study of architectural history and the conservation of architectural heritage never stopped but were phrased in a more 'politically correct' manner (Zhang 2010a).

Since environmental economics emerged in the 1970s, 'sustainability' has gained political significance as environmental issues became increasingly pressing in the 1960s in the industrialised world (Jacobs 1999; McKenzie 2004; Du Pisani 2006; Purvis et al. 2019). The concept was used to call for a new relationship between environmental protection and economic growth. However, as Purvis et al. (2019) synthesises, previous research has shown that its root can be traced back to the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe [(Du Pisani 2006; Grober 2012; Caradonna 2014), cited in (Purvis et al. 2019)]. The term's first use in a modern sense was attributed to either the 1972 *Limits to Growth* report or the 1972 *Blueprint for Survival* issue (Jacobs 1999; Grober 2012). However, the influence of these two documents has turned out to be very limited.

The first time it was brought into the global discussion in the context of sustainable development (SD) and environmental sustainability was by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in their 1987 report *Our Common Future*, also known as *the Brundtland Report*. In this document, 'sustainable development' was defined as "to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own" (WCED 1987, p. 16). The report was dedicated to exploring the possibility of a path towards a sustainable world where the biosphere and environmental resources can withstand the human activities needed to provide sustained and equitable growth, which essentially refers to economic growth. This definition is widely used and appears in almost every piece of literature, policy, strategy, and guideline regarding SD. It indicates that despite its initial emergence as a specific reference to the environmental aspect of sustainability, it is still widely applicable when discussing other aspects of sustainability. Nevertheless, it remains a vague and ill-specified definition. James (2015) points out that it implies the assumed significance of all types of needs due to the lack of specification, while these needs can indeed be contradictory. The strategy paper *Caring for the Earth - A Strategy for Sustainable Living* also criticises the ambiguity of WCED's definition and its lack of clarification on some contradictory terms such as sustainable growth (IUCN et al. 1991). The definition of SD in the IUCN paper points specifically to the environmental aspects and addresses other aspects of sustainable living, which concern the balance between improving the quality of life and sustaining the vitality and diversity of the world.

In English, the generic dictionary definition of 'sustainability' is relatively straightforward: "the ability to continue or be continued for a long time" (Oxford English Dictionary 2021). Jacobs (1999) pointed out that the first level of meaning – the broad and unspecified definition of SD – is hardly controversial. However, he elaborates that the general characterisation of this concept on the first level does not mean that it is meaningless, nor does it mean that it is not contested. The questions that sustainability research and policymakers have been asking are

what to continue and *how*, which are questions that bring contested ideas, interests, and needs into the debate. Since the two defining documents from WCED and IUCN, sustainability has taken on much broader connections that extend into almost all disciplines. Nevertheless, the conceptual basis behind its use in policy documents, either in a global or local context, follows a few relatively consistent threads.

The first one is an idea that centres Around the balance between human consumption and the reservoir of finite and non-renewable resources (or resources that take a long time to renew), upon which human survival and development depend. This characterisation was the initial approach towards sustainability taken by environmental economics. It can be seen in various documents on SD, including the Brundtland Report, the Rio Declaration, the Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Declaration, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out by the 2030 Agenda, that these resources are deemed to require ‘protection’, ‘restoration’, and ‘sustainable management’ (WCED 1987; UN 1992b,a; WSSD 2002; UN 2015). It also invokes a general reduction of human consumption, following the idea that the more humans consume, the less these resources are left and the shorter they will survive for future generations (Seegebarth et al. 2015). While this model was initially targeted towards natural resources, it has been partly transplanted onto issues of cultural resources subsequently when the dimension of culture entered the conversation of sustainable development. In this context, some cultural heritage, at least in a very narrow sense, is also considered a ‘finite resource’ whose destruction is irreversible (Throsby 2001a). The following two sub-sections will elaborate how this view of heritage in sustainability research and policies, especially in social and cultural sustainability discussions, has collided with the expanding and contested definitions of heritage, as discussed in Sec.2.2.

The first basis concerning the sustainability of the environment is relatively straightforward and uncontroversial on its own. However, the second part of SD, the development part, came with another model of thinking, which can provoke conflicts with the first basis and bring other dimensions of sustainability into the discussion of SD. The contradiction that the term SD¹⁹ brings has been pointed out frequently (Drummond and Marsden 1999; Jacobs 1999; Banerjee 2003; James 2015). The second basis concerns the issue of equity, both on intergenerational terms and intragenerational terms. While intergenerational equity is connected to the first basis, the intragenerational aspect refers to the equal opportunity for communities worldwide to access these finite resources to meet an essential quality of life and

¹⁹ As well as a few other terms that are often used interchangeably with SD, such as sustainable growth.

requirement for well-being²⁰. It also relates to distributing the 'reduction of consumption' fairly (UN 1992a). What the 'quality of life' encompasses was identified in the *Caring for the Earth* strategy paper, which gathered more and more significance over the development of the concept of SD, including Agenda 21 and the latest 2030 Agenda (IUCN et al. 1991; UN 1992a, 2015). The intergenerational aspect directly connects with heritage when viewed as a 'finite resource' and something from that past that we and future generations inherit. The intragenerational aspect is also related to heritage when it is viewed as a relevant factor in forming the power structure of the present world.

This second basis broadens the concept of sustainability into the social dimension, which eventually leads to the identification of the 'three pillars', the 'triple bottom lines' (Elkington 1997), or 'three dimensions' – environmental, economic, and social sustainability – for supporting a sustainable world. The social dimension and its interconnectedness with the economic and environmental dimensions were already mentioned in the Brundtland Report (WCED 1987). However, the conceptualisation and operational measures regarding social sustainability still fall behind compared to the economic and environmental ones, partly because social sustainability indicators are much less 'measurable', and even the definition of society itself varies within social sciences (Eizenberg and Jabareen 2017). The specific issues regarding the social and cultural aspects of sustainability and SD, which bear more relevance to this PhD research, will be further discussed in the following two sub-sections.

The emphasis on development and the contradiction between improving the quality of life for all through growth and protecting the environment have been heavily criticised (for early examples, see Lélé 1991; Jacobs 1999).²¹ Banerjee (2003) criticises that SD is, in essence, more about economic concerns rather than ecological ones. From the perspective of less

²⁰ The connection between well-being and sustainability has become a significant topic recently and an increasing amount of research has been devoted to it (for examples, see Zautra et al. 2010; Kjell 2011; Helne and Hirvilammi 2015; Seegebarth et al. 2015). While these research outcomes address well-being and sustainability in a broad sense which includes the psychological, social, and cultural aspects, the goal and targets regarding well-being in the SDGs proposed in the 2030 Agenda only narrowly refers to access to certain natural resources (such as clean air and clean water) and healthcare facilities. Its emphasis on the social aspects (such as community support and social welfare system) and cultural factors that could influence mental health is limited (UN 2015).

²¹ Adams (1993) cautions that SD could be used as a token to pacify the forces for environmental protection and a convenient wagon to carry economic growth forward regardless of the environmental crisis we face. Despite the emphasis on equity in SD, there is also criticism that some of the competing goals of economic and environmental sustainability to guarantee intergenerational equity will nevertheless hinder the goal of reaching intragenerational equity.

developed countries, they warn of the danger of reinforcing colonial ideas on less developed countries while implementing SD strategies on a global scale.²² Their criticism echoes Redclift's concerns over the possibility of such a global initiative to disenfranchise marginalised communities rather than reducing the inequity of the world (Redclift 2002 (1987)). This uneasiness over the potential power imbalance in the global initiative's impact on the local levels draws a parallel with the concerns over the World Heritage programme emerged in Heritage Studies and CHS.

The brief review above shows that as the definitions and scope of sustainability and SD expand, the knowledge and discussions around them also become more fragmented and compartmentalised. Despite Jacobs (1999) suggesting that the contested nature of the SD concept makes it an inevitably futile task to search for a unitary and precise meaning, it is deemed possible and necessary in this thesis to examine a few conceptual models to understand sustainability in a cross-disciplinary way. These understandings are indeed the go-between of the first and second levels of sustainability's (and SD's) definitions as suggested by Jacobs. They have the potential to transcend the disciplinary divide and provide a more nuanced, dynamic, and critical comprehension of the subject matter. The previous sections in this chapter have indeed undergone such a review on heritage. It is, therefore, reasonable to do a similar enquiry into sustainability to pave the way for the discussion going forward.

One of these models conceptualises two modes of sustainability –the inverse correlation between human consumption and our world's finite resources or carrying capacity and the more diverse and dynamic 'creative' actions relevant to SD. Paul James (2015, pp. 21-25) describes this model as 'negative sustainability' and 'positive sustainability'. While James agrees that sustainability is not inherently good (ibid. p.21), the 'negative' here does not mean 'bad', but the 're'uctive' nature of most measures suggested to sustain and prolong a system, such as reducing the adverse impact of change. Contrarily, 'positive sustainability' refers to a more future-oriented approach where entities evolve, adapt, and develop vibrantly and dynamically. A parallel between these two modes of sustainability and the evolving attitude towards change in heritage research and practices is ready at hand. Indeed, James uses the analogy of heritage conservation to explain the idea of 'positive sustainability'. He compares

²² For example, imposing a way to 'manage resources effectively' could impair the quality and fundamental way of life of the communities in these countries.

the approaches of 'heritage preservation' versus 'heritage conservation'²³, stating that the former approach, adhering to 'negative sustainability', focuses on 'freezing' heritage by avoiding change. In contrast, following the idea of 'positive sustainability', the latter aims to let heritage evolve and adapt in a living manner through 'active engagement'. He defines 'positive sustainability' as "*practices and meanings of human engagement that make for lifeworlds that project the ongoing probability of natural and social flourishing, vibrancy, resilience, and adaptation.*" (ibid. p.22) The term 'lifeworlds' here is used to transcend the natural and social boundaries, which is coherent with the 'post-discursive' turn in heritage research and allows this conceptual model to apply to both natural and cultural heritage. Despite the relatively simplistic characterisation of heritage preservation and conservation practices, as will be elaborated on in Ch.3, both the attitude towards changes in sustainability and the tendency to avoid the 'natural/cultural' or 'natural/social' divide are essential in informing the fundamental positions of this thesis.

Another model of conceptualisation comes from a Critical Realist perspective of causality. In this model, sustainability is viewed as an outcome of 'conditioning'. Adopting the deep ontological understanding of causality, Drummond and Marsden (1999) suggested that the condition (generative mechanisms) that gives rise to (un)sustainable outcome inform a more fundamental understanding for policy-making. More importantly, they identified that approaches to sustainability and SD were reduced to narrower ideas by prioritising one aspect over the other (such as economic sustainability or environmental sustainability) instead of adopting a 'fundamentally integrative' concept of SD. According to them, the inability to address SD holistically is also attributed to the positivist attitude that prevailed much sustainability research at the time. It is also related to the emphasis on reaching specific outcomes rather than identifying the underlying condition that explains the (un)sustainable outcomes. Therefore, they advocate for a revised ontological and epistemological position for sustainability from a Critical Realist perspective. Although this research is from more than 20 years ago, it still appears relevant when one considers the latest SDGs and much of current literature that addresses one aspect of sustainability or another without considering the relationality among these aspects. However, by only adopting the basic form of CR, the research fell short of fully considering the dynamic and changing conditions in sustainability, which have been hinted at through the concept of 'positive sustainability' mentioned above. Nevertheless, as will be elaborated further in this thesis, CR, along with other philosophical

²³ The differences between these two terms in James' argument align with those defined by the then English Heritage in the 2008 *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance – For the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (English Heritage 2008, p. 15).

traditions, can be very useful in capturing this 'moving target' too. Moreover, identifying the condition of sustainability still does not answer what is to be sustained. As will be discussed soon below, this question leads to a more systemic and relational understanding of the term.

The need for a more interconnected way to understand sustainability and SD has gained increasing attention. The issues of fragmentation of knowledge have been identified in the studies of heritage and sustainability or SD. Loulanski and Loulanski (2016) pointed out that the previous disciplinary-driven approach of heritage and sustainability research that highlights the significance of the discipline that studies the subjects is one of the main reasons for such fragmentation. Through deploying the methodology of 'meta-synthesis', they carve out shared space for synthesised and integrated interdisciplinary research within and between the subjects of heritage and sustainability. Purvis et al. (2019) provide a detailed and critical retrospective account of the formation of the three pillars of sustainability, pointing out that the connections between the pillars or dimensions lack clarification and sometimes fall back into the divide between disciplines. The interconnectedness and complex nature of the subject field of sustainability prompt the use of systems thinking as a useful conceptual tool. The reference to systems thinking in sustainability research is indeed not new (for example, see Barbier 1987) but has yet to be systemically applied until recently. Broman and Robèrt (2017) have developed a Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD) over the past two and a half decades based upon systems thinking, defining sustainability as a condition where the ecological and social systems do not systemically disintegrate. Adopting the theoretical basis of systems thinking and the methodology of systems dynamics, initiated in business and management studies (Sterman 2000), Fouseki and Nicolau (2018) explore the complexity and change in 'heritage-led regeneration' in an urban context. They establish an urban heritage dynamics theory and propose a multi-dimensional sustainable lifestyles approach to examine the impact of heritage on SD, which can, in return, guide participatory heritage projects and policies. Systems Thinking has also been used to develop the concept of cultural sustainability and Culturally Sustainable Development (CSD) (Throsby 1995), which will be elaborated further in this section. Systems thinking has provided a valuable theoretical basis for a holistic conceptualisation and application of sustainability and SD.

With a similar focus on SD's interconnectedness and dynamic process, relational thinking has also surfaced as another theoretical approach towards sustainability. Datta (2015) notes the incompatibility between some Western modernist scientific paradigms and dualistic thinking that have guided the approach to SD. They also point out the diametrically distinctive views of the relationship between the human and non-human worlds among some research with indigenous communities and propose a theoretical framework based on relational ontology to understand sustainability. This theoretical framework adopts the concept of relationality

incorporating works from Ingold (2011), Deleuze and Guattari (2004), and Actor-network-theory (ANT) as developed by Latour and Law (Law 1992; Latour 2005). Furthermore, in addressing the issues in a post-colonial and non-Western context, Datta's theoretical framework also adopts the concepts of *hybridity* as developed by Bhabha (2012) and Whatmore (2002) and *otherness* as developed by Said (2012). Although possibly due to the 'article's brevity, the exploration into this approach's application in sustainability research and the hybrid processes in a non-Western context is limited, this approach's theoretical basis is potentially inspiring for capturing the complexities and dynamic nature of heritage and sustainability.

Similarly, Walsh et al. (2020) propose a relational paradigm for sustainability research that encompasses its ontological, epistemological and ethical concerns. This theorisation, along with the systemic approaches above, can be very useful in research that incorporates other interdisciplinary subjects with sustainability, such as heritage, urban studies, and well-being (Helne and Hirvilammi 2015; James 2015). The emphasis on 'relation' can inspire a revolutionary understanding of the ontology of sustainability.²⁴ As will be further discussed in this thesis, understanding sustainability in relational terms can also help capture the dynamic processes within SD.

2.4.2 Social sustainability

The interconnectedness of SD, as revealed above, suggests that sustainability cannot be viewed in one isolated aspect. The environmental, economic, and social dimensions have been commonly accepted as the three pillars of SD (Giddings et al. 2002), and this characterisation remains the same in the 2030 Agenda (UN 2015). It is commonly believed that the social (and cultural) aspects of sustainability have been much less explored compared to the economic and environmental ones (Eizenberg and Jabareen 2017; Throsby 2017). This sub-section will examine the social dimension of SD and the closely related concept of social sustainability in both academic research and strategy-making, such as the SDGs set out by the 2030 Agenda.

The social dimension was mentioned in early documents and research regarding sustainability and SD, such as the Brundtland Report and the *Caring for the Earth* strategy paper despite their focus on environmental protection against unsustainable economic development (WCED 1987; IUCN et al. 1991). As mentioned in the last sub-section, introducing 'equity' into the

²⁴ According to Walsh et al. (2020), a relational paradigm also suggests that individual agencies do not pre-exist before their relation occurs through 'intra-action', although the idea that the causal powers of entities do not exist until they are 'activated' is an ontological position that many social scientists, especially those who adhere to a realism paradigm, find hard to accept.

definition of SD has brought the issue of sustainability and SD into the social realm. The issue of equity concerns both the disproportionately strong impact of environmental disasters that less advantaged communities receive and the burden they will have in mitigating ecological degradation compared to the developed world. In the Agenda 21 and 2030 Agenda, alleviating poverty has become critical to achieving SD (UN 1992a,2015). In theory, social sustainability has been recognised as an equally important component as the economic and environmental dimensions by establishing the ‘three pillars’/ ‘triple bottom lines’ concept. However, the social concerns rarely bear equal weight in decision-making compared to the economic and environmental ones (McKenzie 2004; Eizenberg and Jabareen 2017). Nevertheless, notable efforts to clarify social sustainability and provide some applicable tools for operationalisation are worth mentioning.

In academic research, the social aspect of sustainability was recognised early on when studies showed that economic inequality caused by social structures could lead to further environmental degradation as poor people have no other choice but to exploit the natural resources they can access (Chambers 1986). Lélé (1991) points out the distinction between social conditions in ecological sustainability and ‘social sustainability’ as “the ability to maintain desired social values, traditions, institutions, cultures, or other social characteristics”.²⁵ Although the definition of social sustainability has remained contested since then, these two aspects imply the shared significance of social sustainability as environmental and economic dimensions in a sustainable world and the interconnectedness of these aspects in SD. As alluded to in the last sub-section, the contestation regarding SD is partly attributed to the conflicts between the goals within social sustainability in SD and the goals between the three dimensions. It has, therefore, been recognised that not all the goals can be achieved simultaneously, and ‘trade-offs’ are necessary (Barbier 1987; Godschalk 2004). Vallance et al. (2011) further categorise these conflicted goals into three types of social sustainability – development, bridge, and maintenance social sustainability. They highlight the confusions that the competing goals under these categories can cause. The first type refers to what people need and addresses the issues of poverty and inequality. The second type refers to efforts to change behaviours to achieve ecological sustainability, similar to the social conditions required for environmental sustainability. The third one refers to the potential conflicts between the desire to preserve social-cultural traditions and the changes needed to address issues in the first two types. The maintenance of social sustainability presents a strong connection with cultural sustainability and heritage, which will be addressed below.

²⁵ Although attributed to Barbier (1987) by Lélé, this quote and definition cannot, however, be found in Barbier’s original article as cited by Lélé.

The concept of community is closely intertwined with heritage and sustainability (see Appendix 2 for a literature review on the theme of 'community'). Literature in sustainability research frequently engages with the concept of communities, especially when addressing participation and equity (or justice) (for examples, see Jacobs 1999; Agyeman 2005; James 2015; Eizenberg and Jabareen 2017). Such is also the case for all the significant strategic documents of SD, including the Brundtland Report, the Rio Declaration, the Agenda 21, and the 2030 Agenda (WCED 1987; UN 1992b,a,2015). Communities are, in most cases, the subjects and necessary components of social sustainability. For example, Magis (2010) defines community resilience as an indicator for social sustainability, referring to the ability of a community to withstand disasters and transformation. McKenzie (2004) defines social sustainability as a positive condition and a process towards that condition within communities and provides a list of indicators for achieving it. While the list of indicators might be more specific to the communities where the research is based, the idea that social sustainability can be defined as a condition (and a process towards achieving it) accompanied by a list of case-specific indicators is valuable. This idea echoes Drummond and Marsden (1999)'s theoretical framework as discussed above. Situating social sustainability within communities of a certain scope also makes it easier to identify applicable indicators. However, as McKenzie questions, this definition and framework might become limited when the discussion of SD goes beyond the scope of the specific communities.

Another issue regarding the sustainability of communities versus a universal standard of sustainability or SD relates to the tension and contradictions inherent in unilateral aspirations for governance. As mentioned above, a universal agenda for sustainable development can exacerbate the negative impact of colonialism or racism towards less advantaged groups (Banerjee 2003). This issue is closely related to the criticism towards the World Heritage programme in heritage studies, as discussed in Sec.2.2.

The indicators for the SDGs adopted by the UN in the 2030 Agenda are mostly measurable and tangible, which is helpful from an operational perspective (UN 2020). These indicators, reviewed and refined annually, address wide-ranging issues regarding the three dimensions of SD and are valuable tools for policymakers in countries of various contexts to set up short term and long-term political agendas to achieve these goals. Regarding the social dimension, the SDGs and indicators provide assessment benchmarks for tasks such as alleviating poverty, securing basic needs for all and providing educational opportunities. However, as mentioned above, sustainability research has argued that many intangible aspects of social sustainability are unmeasurable and insufficiently addressed in these indicators. Also missing is the

interconnectedness between these aspects that is essential in achieving SD holistically.²⁶ Furthermore, since these indicators and goals are primarily created for policymakers, they are not specifically applicable for evaluating whether a certain project can bring about a socially sustainable outcome or facilitate a process towards a socially sustainable condition for the communities.

Eizenberg and Jabareen (2017) suggest that instead of coming up with longer and longer lists of indicators to 'measure the unmeasurable', a conceptual framework can be helpful to push forward the understanding of social sustainability. Their framework centres around the concept of 'risk'. It identifies the goal of social sustainability to be achieving a safer society and planet for all. In this way, social sustainability is not only a dimension of SD but "an integration of social, economic, and environmental aspects" (ibid. p.11). This conceptual basis recalls the concept of community resilience above. Additionally, the framework points towards facilitating safety through equitable policies and public involvement in space production, mitigation policies to achieve responsible consumption and production models, and desired physical (urban) spatial forms to promote a sense of community and place attachment (ibid. p.12).

In this sense, the social dimension of SD includes the intangible aspects such as community identity and mental well-being and tangible space that could contribute to these aspects. Furthermore, the connection with the physical spatial forms potentially points towards a link between social sustainability and heritage space, which is relevant to the subject of this thesis and will be further explored in the following sub-section. Investigating further on the social dimension of the FSSD, Missimer et al. (2017) characterise the social system as a complex dynamic system and establish five social sustainability principles within the framework. Along with the rest of the framework that concerns other dimensions of sustainability, these principles aim to help organisations adhere their strategies and decision-making to the global sustainability agenda, such as the SDGs and their indicators. Furthermore, their characterisation of the social system, which includes concepts such as social capital and diversity, bears a high resemblance to the cultural system developed under a similar theoretical basis, which will be elaborated in the following sub-section.

2.4.3 Heritage and cultural sustainability

Although the latest global agenda for SD still adopts the three-dimensional model, there has been increasingly strong advocacy to include culture in the discussion of sustainability. The

²⁶ For example, the indicators do not address the sense of community identity and cohesion, which is relevant to heritage's impact on communities. Consequently, heritage's potential connection to support well-being and mental health is also missing (cf. UN 2020).

reasoning behind it either points towards its close association with the three dimensions or suggest considering it as a fourth pillar (for examples, see Hawkes 2001; Nurse 2006; UNESCO 2013; Astara 2014; Sabatini 2019). While scholars who discuss cultural sustainability have adopted various understandings of what 'culture' stands for, in most strategic documents and academic literature, the term is often understood as closely related to cultural heritage and artistic and cultural creative production.

There are conflicting claims about when the term 'cultural sustainability' first emerged. In any case, the term can be seen in academic literature from as early as the 1980s (Norgaard 1988) and a World Commission on Culture and Development (WCCD) report in 1995 (WCCD 1995). Norgaard (1988) mentions the term as an evaluation of the interaction between different regions' contribution to knowledge and highlights the significance of considering cultural system and cultural diversity in SD and how culture can be crucial in tackling other dimensions of sustainability, especially in non-Western societies. The WCCD report acknowledges that culture has both an instrumental role and a constituent role in society and recognises that future generations should have the same opportunity to enjoy the common cultural heritage of humanity, as much as natural and genetic resources (WCCD 1995).

However, the mentions of cultural sustainability in the early literature and documents remained brief. The concept of cultural sustainability was subsequently further developed in cultural economics in the 1990s, where the subject field of heritage economics was nested. In 1997, the first conference concerning cultural heritage in economic science was held (Hutter 1997). The outcome of this conference is a collective but diverse group of voices that explicitly states the connection between economics and cultural heritage, following the previous discussions by economists such as Alan Peacock and David Throsby (Peacock 1978; Peacock et al. 1994; Throsby 1995). Since this conference, the theory of heritage economics has been developed, through which the works of Throsby became a cornerstone. Throsby discusses the system of values and its assessment from the aspects of economics and culture (Throsby 1995, 2001a, 2003, 2012). Through his analysis, he firmly states that economic value assessment cannot fully encompass cultural heritage's assets' values. He calls for separate value assessment from both economic and cultural perspectives to capture values holistically. It is upon the discussion of the relationship between economics and culture where cultural sustainability, and subsequently, the concept of Culturally Sustainable Development (CSD), is developed.

The beginning of this section has suggested that cultural heritage is also considered a 'finite resource' that needs protection and to be managed sustainably in the current discourse of sustainability and SD. This notion can be partly attributed to considering culture (and cultural

heritage) as ‘goods’ or capital (Throsby 1997a). Cultural capital is initially an extension based on the concepts of various types of capitals already discussed in economic studies, including the natural, human, and social capitals. While developing the theories of capitals, Bourdieu has used the notion of cultural capital to explain the cultural and educational connotations when discussing social and human capitals (Bourdieu 1986). Berkes and Folke (1992) use cultural capital to refer to “factors that provide human societies with the means and adaptations to deal with the natural environment and to actively modify it” (Berkes and Folke 1992, p. 2). Throsby defines cultural capital more precisely and links this concept directly with heritage (Throsby 1999). He defines cultural capital “as an asset which embodies, stores or provides cultural value in addition to whatever economic value it may possess” (Throsby 2001a, p. 46). He argues that many cultural phenomena, such as heritage buildings, have cultural asset characteristics and should be identified as cultural capital (Throsby 1999).

Throsby connects sustainability and cultural capital and emphasises the essential role of maintaining cultural capital “as an investment process committing current resources in anticipation of a future time-stream of benefits” (Throsby 1997b, p. 17). He suggests that the word ‘sustainable’ should not be only referred to as associated with the natural environment but should be considered “in its substantive intrinsic sense connoting long-term self-supporting viability of any type of system” (Throsby 1997b, p. 11). He articulates the connection between the economic system and culture system and proposes a comprehensive systemic approach, the concept of CSD, to include both systems, where he makes an explicit link with heritage (Throsby 1995, 2001b, 2017). Instead of a definition, CSD was initially characterised by four criteria which were later expanded into six principles.²⁷

²⁷ These six principles include: 1) “*material and non-material wellbeing*” (referring to the tangible benefits produced by cultural capital and intangible public-good benefits to the collective); 2) “*intergenerational equity and dynamic efficiency*” (referring to “fairness in the distribution of welfare, utility or resources between generations”); 3) “*intragenerational equity*” (referring to “the rights of the present generation to fairness in access to cultural resources and to the benefits flowing from cultural capital” across various groups and communities); 4) “*maintenance of diversity*” (similar to how biodiversity is viewed in natural systems, the diversity of cultural capital is considered able to “yield new capital formation”); 5) “*precautionary principle*” (referring to the precautions needed to avoid “irreversible change”, assuming that some cultural capital such as cultural heritage is unrenewable resources and should be treated from a “strongly risk-adverse position”);

Combined with the value assessment methods developed within the same framework, these principles can be quite useful for evaluating whether certain projects or actions contribute to the cultural sustainability of a particular community. However, as the previous discussions show, an uncritical view of culture and heritage can be problematic. As defined by Throsby, the culture in CSD encompasses both the 'cultural sector' of the economy (including the tangible things that are considered heritage and the cultural industry in general) and the expressions of a society's values and customs (Throsby 1995). He briefly considered culture as a process, which renders its values changeable and debatable and discussed the issue of 'dark culture', which challenges the moral basis of culture's role in SD. Nevertheless, the role of heritage and culture as cultural capital (and components of cultural systems) in CSD is generally viewed as inherently positive and should be maintained (Throsby 2001c). It aligns with how cultural sustainability and the role of culture and heritage in SD are characterised in declarations and advisory documents advocated by international organisations such as UNESCO, ICOMOS, and the WCCD. Although the early documents on SD, such as the Brundtland Report, the Rio Declaration, the Johannesburg Declaration, and the Agenda 21, did not include culture in the discussion of SD (WCED 1987; UN 1992b,a; WSSD 2002), the cultural sector of the intergovernmental and international organisations has been advocating culture's significance in SD.

The 2001 'Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity' and the 2005 'Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions' state that maintaining and promoting cultural diversity is essential to sustainable development (UNESCO 2001; 2005, p. 4). The United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) adopted the Agenda 21 for Culture in 2004 and the Culture 21 Actions in 2015 (UCLG Committee on Culture 2004,2015). Furthermore, the 2002 'Budapest Declaration on World Heritage' recognises applying the World Heritage Convention as an instrument for the SD (UNESCO WHC 2002). In 2011, both UNESCO's adoption of the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach and the 'ICOMOS Paris Declaration on Heritage as a Driver of Development' placed heritage and culture as a driving force of SD. It signalled a change of positioning that aimed to turn the contested relationship between heritage conservation and economic development into a reciprocal one, echoing the academic advocacy from cultural and heritage economics (ICOMOS 2011; UNESCO 2011). Wiktor-Mach (2019) points out that UNESCO's effort to connect heritage and development

6) "*maintenance of cultural systems and recognition of interdependence*" (referring to the interdependence between different systems in SD and how the loss of cultural systems would mean the loss of values produced by cultural capital).

(Throsby 2001a, pp. 52-58).

also responds to the imbalance of geopolitical powers where developing countries are disadvantaged.

This positioning has grown more robust in the UN's cultural and development strategies in recent years. UNESCO adopted the 'Hangzhou Declaration of Placing Culture at the Heart of Sustainable Development Policies' in 2013 (UNESCO 2013), and the World Heritage Convention's state parties general assembly adopted the 'Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention' (WHSD). The 2013 Hangzhou Declaration promotes culture as the fourth pillar of SD, whereas the 2015 WHSD policy recognises heritage's²⁸ relevance to the other aspects of SD, including 'environmental sustainability', 'inclusive social development', 'inclusive economic development', and 'fostering peace and security' (WHC General Assembly 2015). Beyond UNESCO, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) has adopted five resolutions on Cultural and Sustainable Development in 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017, and 2019 (UNGA 2010,2011,2013,2014,2015,2017,2019).²⁹ All these documents adopt a premise that protecting and transmitting the 'irreplaceable' heritage properties, promoting their OUV and the WHC, are inherently beneficial to SD and people's wellbeing (WHC General Assembly 2015).

Beyond the cultural sector, the UN Habitat-III adopted the New Urban Agenda (NUA), recognising culture as the provider of significant contributions to SD. It also mentions heritage and uses a particularly notable word, 'leveraging', rather than the usual 'protecting' or 'promoting' seen in documents from the cultural sector (point 38) (UN 2016). It is one of the very few strategic documents from the UN that imply a more nuanced consideration of how heritage could have a role in SD. The NUA was following the UNGA's adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the first of such documents to include heritage in one of its SDGs. Under Goal 11, 'Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable', strengthening efforts "to protect and safeguard the world's natural and cultural heritage" is considered one of the targets (UN 2015, p. 22). The indicators for the SDGs, adopted in 2017 and updated annually, specify that this target is assessed by the "total per capita expenditure on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by source of funding (public, private), type of heritage (cultural, natural) and level of government (national, regional, and local/municipal)" (UN 2020, p. 11). It has been criticised that this inclusion of

²⁸ The heritage here includes cultural, natural, and mixed heritage categories, and heritage beyond the World Heritage.

²⁹ These resolutions were adopted following two resolutions on Cultural and Development adopted in 2010 and 2011)

heritage in the 2030 Agenda is marginal and weak – it is only mentioned in one of 169 targets, and cultural and natural heritage are mentioned together (Nocca 2017).

Moreover, the single mention of heritage protection without connecting heritage and other SDGs is another proof that there is a general lack of consideration of the interconnectedness of sustainability in the SDGs and indicators, as discussed above. The target regarding heritage considers what heritage is and what it does in the narrowest sense, falling far behind the development of the academic subject field and even UNESCO's advocacy. Following the idea that heritage can be the driver of SD, UNESCO has identified that heritage can indeed play a role in many more targets, such as SDG 4.7 regarding the education of cultural diversity and culture's contribution to SD and SDG 5.5 regarding gender equality (UNESCO 2018).

Although it is a significant step to broaden the understanding of heritage's role in SD, much of the literature regarding heritage and sustainability has followed the premise that protecting and safeguarding heritage will contribute to sustainability and SD, as seen in the UNESCO and UN documents. There are two types of literature at the crossover between the subject fields of heritage and sustainability. The first one concerns how to protect and manage heritage sustainably. It usually includes topics such as mitigating the climate impact of heritage space and activities in terms of energy efficiency and biodiversity, mitigating the adverse impact of climate change on heritage, and how to manage tangible and intangible change in the heritage environment. Literature of this type falls significantly on the side of environmental and economic sustainability and is often technically oriented towards regeneration, retrofitting, and valorisation of heritage (for examples, see Rodwell 2003; US ICOMOS International Symposium 2003; Rodwell 2007; Godwin 2011; Prizeman 2015). While this type of literature is abundant and vital, this thesis considers it necessary to examine the philosophical basis first. Therefore, it will not focus on the technical aspects but acknowledges that it is still crucial to connect theoretical discussions with the empirical experience.

The second type, while closely related to the first one, addresses primarily the contribution of heritage to sustainability and SD, including specifically to cultural sustainability and more broadly to the other three dimensions of SD. However, the main objective of this type of literature appears to be proving how culture and heritage can readily contribute to sustainability and SD rather than questioning whether and how this can happen (for example, see Chan and Ma 2004; Tweed and Sutherland 2007; Throsby 2012; Nocca 2017).

One must question whether this premise is indeed guaranteed. As discussed previously in this section, some of the SDGs addressing different dimensions of SD can be contradictory to each other. Murzyn-Kupisz (2012) and Barthel-Bouchier (2013) have pointed out that the consequence of placing heritage in the development discourse, which can be manifested as

the development of heritage tourism, can bring adverse impact to environmental sustainability. Moreover, whether heritage tourism is indeed positive towards the social and cultural sustainability of the communities is still up for debate (for example, see Kapferer 1998; Timothy and Prideaux 2004; Hampton 2005; Robinson and Picard 2006; Timothy and Boyd 2006; Salazar 2010; Tam 2017). Moreover, as discussed in this chapter, expanding the definition and understanding of heritage has led to a more critical and nuanced view of what heritage and culture do to society. The processual and relational perspectives on heritage suggest that its connection with other actors in the human and non-human worlds is much more dynamic and complex than the presumption that heritage has intrinsic values for SD simply waiting to be untapped. It is then reasonable to question whether the protection and management of certain heritage and culture may not necessarily lead to a positive contribution to sustainability and SD, which will be one of the research questions for this thesis.

As will be discussed further in Part 3 and 4, there seems to require other conditions for heritage and heritage projects to be sustainable and benefit the SD of its communities. Rather than assuming their positive impact regardless of the context, it would be more appropriate to characterise culture and heritage's relevance in SD as their ubiquitous role in influencing how the SDGs may or may not be effectively achieved by either reducing or exacerbating the power imbalance between actors. This thesis also strives to address how managing heritage sustainably is closely tied to whether heritage can impact SD. The research questions and scope will be further clarified in Sec.2.5.

2.5 Research opportunities, questions, and scope

This chapter has reviewed the relevant academic literature and strategic and policy documents in the Studies of Heritage and sustainability (and SD). The overall review of how the Studies of Heritage has evolved in the recent decades reveals several turns of understanding of what heritage is and what it does, driven by both practices in contentious cases and theoretical conceptualisations that adopt various traditions from social sciences and archaeology. The academic commentaries from Heritage Studies and CHS have expanded the notion of heritage and brought forth some significant issues that connect heritage with broader political, social, and cultural contexts. These critiques have had some, though still limited, impact in practice by challenging the notion that heritage (and therefore, heritage conservation) is inherently benign, one that has been held and is still held by many heritage professionals and institutions.

On the other hand, they are also criticised for the lack of nuanced characterisation of heritage practitioners and insufficient attention to grounded experience and practices. The subject's field's discursive turn highlights the significance of placing people and discourse in the centre

of heritage. In contrast, the post-discursive turn proposes a dialogical relationship between humans and non-humans in the making and remaking of heritage. These reflections on the fundamental ontological position of heritage are helpful if they can be efficiently communicated to practitioners and invite them to join the conversations. Examining these theoretical reflections on real-world cases can also elevate the policy relevance of academic critiques to decision-makers, translating these critical discussions into the regulatory environment. Therefore, it is a research opportunity for this thesis to establish a theoretical framework that incorporates these theories and examine its applicability in case studies of a typology that may indeed be deemed 'typical'.

Examining the two dichotomies that play a front and centre role in the latest academic literature of the Studies of Heritage reveals the impediment they can present in understanding heritage in a complex context. The emphasis on the Western /Eastern dichotomy has led to overly simplified, essentialised, and even romanticised views of heritage activities in non-Western contexts. It also hinders a more nuanced understanding of the subject matter in Western contexts. Moreover, this dichotomy is closely intertwined with the conversation between the tangible and the intangible aspects of heritage, as they are both stereotypically assigned to one context or the other. The post-discursive turn has indeed started to address the second dichotomy, advocating for an approach to overcome the modernist mind /matter (nature/ culture) divide that has dominated our thinking and the institutional structure in heritage practices. On the other hand, the critical reflections on the first dichotomy have presented more complexity in contemporary non-Western contexts.

Bridging and dissolving these two dichotomies presents a research opportunity to fully capture the complexity and omnipresent interconnectedness of h'ritage's tangible and intangible aspects in a contemporary context. This thesis is in an advantageous position to achieve this objective by discussing issues with early timber architectural heritage in contemporary China. This type of heritage is considered the most 'typical' in the country (and in a broader sense, East Asia), primarily 'heritagised' for its tangibility and through 'expert' endorsement. However, these buildings are also situated in the complex negotiations of the various forces that have formed h'ritage's regulatory, institutional, and professional environments in today's China. As will be elaborated further in this thesis, both the tangible and intangible aspects are prominently displayed in the heritage assemblages of these sites. Their relationship with their local communities and the wider public is both close and remote at the same time.

Moreover, addressing domestic practices of a 'typical' heritage typology from a critical and nuanced perspective can hopefully bring these critical reflections into the heart of regulatory environment and conservation practices in China, which have mostly been in a vacuum from

the impact of academic critiques.³⁰ As shown in Sec.2.4, heritage has also entered the discussion of sustainability and SD in the recent decades, and connecting heritage with the issues of development has highlighted the policy relevance of heritage in the broader agenda of SD. On the other hand, the review of sustainability as a concept and how the subject fields of heritage and sustainability collide calls for a dynamic and relational theorisation of both terms. It also necessitates an enquiry into the conditions in which heritage can be sustainable and contribute to the SD of its communities.

Upon the research opportunities that have emerged from the literature review as summarised above, this thesis will strive to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What kind of theoretical framework can capture the complex, multi-deterministic, and interdisciplinary nature of heritage and the interconnectedness and dynamic nature of sustainability?
- 2) What is the connection between sustainable heritage management and heritage's relevance in facilitating the sustainable development of its communities and the broader society?
- 3) What fundamental mechanisms and conditions give rise to the (un)sustainable outcome in heritage management of early timber architecture in contemporary China?
- 4) What do the case studies demonstrate can help overcome the Western/ Eastern and tangible/ intangible dichotomies?
- 5) How can critical reflections on heritage approaches impact practices and decision-making on the ground in contemporary China?

Geographically, the research will mainly focus on the PRC. However, the issues discussed in the thesis may apply to other countries in East Asia where a similar type of timber architectural heritage exists and are, therefore, of regional significance. Temporally, the research reviews the conservation approach and heritage management mechanisms in contemporary China, focusing on the post-Cultural-Revolution era and their impacts and manifestation in present times. As explained above, the research will focus on the sustainable heritage management of early timber architectural heritage in China. The specific selection of case studies will be further explained in Ch.4. The research is not particularly concerned with the technical aspect of sustainability (such as energy retrofitting and sustainable building materials) or environmental sustainability issues in a narrow sense, which may or may not be relevant to the case studies. However, as reviewed in this chapter, the various dimensions of sustainability are interconnected. Therefore, the sustainability issues addressed in this research have an undertone regarding economic viability and concern the effectiveness in

³⁰ This issue will be as further discussed in Chapter 5

distributing financial and environmental resources, which has a ripple effect in a broader scope of the world's eco-system.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the relevant literature in the Studies of Heritage and sustainability and SD studies. The broad disciplinary background covered by this review demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature of these subject fields. Sec.2.2 highlighted the latest debates in heritage research practices brought forward by the discursive and post-discursive turns of the subject field. These philosophical turns are born out of critical reflections in academia on the conventional approaches to heritage. They have adopted an array of theoretical discussions in multiple disciplines such as archaeology and sociology. The discursive and anthropocentric arguments about heritage have challenged the positivist view of heritage and the assumption that heritage (and, therefore, heritage conservation) is inherently benign. It reveals that heritage can provoke contention and delay equity and justice, such as promoting racism and sexism. The post-discursive turn of the subject field, on the other hand, re-elevates the significance of tangible material and non-human actors while acknowledging the impact of heritage on human actors. More importantly, this turn has suggested a relational and dialogical ontology of heritage. As seen in Sec.2.4, this ontology has also been adopted in research on sustainability. However, reviewing the current situation of both subject fields shows that the relevance of these academic commentaries to practice and policymaking is still being questioned, and the gap between heritage academics and practitioners is still a concern.

This chapter examines the two dichotomies in heritage discourse characterised by the perceived differences between Western and non-Western approaches and the modernist dualistic separation of tangible and intangible aspects of heritage. The literature review has shown that the limitation posed by these dichotomies is increasingly acknowledged by researchers. It calls for further contributions to a more comprehensive and nuanced picture of the heritage phenomena and approaches in complex contexts, such as China.

Besides the Studies of Heritage, this chapter reviews several conceptual models in understanding sustainability and SD, highlighting the lack of consideration on the interconnected, interdisciplinary, and dynamic nature of these concepts in the current strategic documents such as the 2030 Agenda, which could be improved by adopting systems and relational thinking. Some literature also reveals that, just as heritage, a global agenda for SD is not exempt from the risk of promoting inequality across different regions. Reviewing the literature on sustainability and SD's social and cultural dimensions confirms the contested nature and reveals some internal contradictions of these concepts. As shown in Chs.6-9 (also see Appendix 2), these contested and complex characteristics are also present with the idea

of community, which is closely connected with heritage and sustainability. The literature review of this research's core subject areas has presented some common challenges and research opportunities for this thesis, situated at the crossroad. The research questions, as concluded in Sec.2.5, are calling for original contribution to revealing the complex web of connections between actors which give rise to (un)sustainable outcomes of heritage management, discussing the connection between sustainable heritage management and SD, and examining the validity of the critical reflections from academia against reality. To find the answers to these research questions, Part 2 will start by constructing a theoretical framework and assembling the methodology, which will be the backbone and pathway for this research to proceed.

Part 2 Methods: A Theatre of Complexity

Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Overview

The previous chapter has identified the current research opportunities emerging from reviewing the state of knowledge in the Studies of Heritage. It highlights the risks of adopting misleading research outcomes from the uncritical use of simplistic categorisations such as 'Western' and 'Eastern (non-Western)' approaches, and heritage defined only as either the 'tangible' or the 'intangible'. It specifies the drawbacks of these risks in discussing the relationship between heritage and sustainability in complex contexts. Part 2 (Chs.3 and 4) forms the framework-building and way-finding chapters of this thesis, where the fundamental positions, theoretical framework, research design, methodology and research methods are established.

Ch.3 introduces the philosophical foundation and conceptual models adopted by this thesis. It discusses the rationale behind adopting and adapting three theoretical traditions in this thesis—Critical Realism (CR), assemblage theory and Actor-Network-Theory (ANT), including their common grounds and distinctive but complementary components. The ontological and epistemological positions of this thesis are elucidated through such discussion. It introduces the realist ontology and the perspective of a stratified reality as advocated by CR, extends this perspective to include non-human actors and agency by incorporating assemblage theory and establishes a conceptual model to understand the multi-deterministic nature of reality. The first half of this chapter can be synthesised as the non-reductionist approach embraced by this research. The second half starts with a brief critical review of ANT. It highlights the advantage of incorporating this tradition methodologically to tackle the unpredictability and fluidity of cases in a complex context. Furthermore, it highlights the significance of tracing the associations and listening to the actors in empirical studies to establish a sound explanation of the causal powers at hand. Sec.3.7 addresses the concept of sustainability and proposes a conceptual model based on morphogenesis and morphostasis to explain sustainability in relational terms, which will be further developed into the primary analytical methods for the case studies. The last part of the chapter points to the destination of this theoretical framework, leading to the production of knowledge via abstraction and conceptualisation. It identifies two types of thought operations widely used in social science studies to travel from empirical studies to abstraction in the knowledge production process.

3.2 The inclusiveness and depth of a realist ontology

Chapter 2 has reviewed a few philosophical traditions that have influenced the development of the Studies of Heritage to date. These philosophical traditions have influenced heritage research's ontological, epistemological, and methodological aspects. Fundamentally, the ontological and epistemological positions influence the root of how heritage is understood as a multi-faceted concept covering matter, performance, connections, meaning, processes, and discourses. As demonstrated in Ch.2, incomprehensive or non-inclusive consideration of these properties can result in misleading assumptions of what heritage is and what it does. On the one hand, the conventional positivist position has neglected many social issues constructed or enhanced by heritage discourses and processes. On the other hand, viewing heritage as mere social constructs has not sufficiently acknowledged the impact of heritage independent of our perception and intervention.³¹ Therefore, this thesis advocates an inclusive and deep ontological position that recognises and allows the plurality of heritage identities and their partially independent existence from human conception.

The tradition of Critical Realism inspires such a position. Initially developed by Roy Bhaskar and termed as 'transcendental realism' (with the focus on natural science) and 'critical naturalism' (with an emphasis on social science), Critical Realism is a philosophical tradition established to allow for examination between "a body of theory and the world" (Bhaskar 2016, p. 5). Bhaskar's intention to return to ontology is coherent with part of the objectives of this thesis. Without understanding and re-establishing the ontology of heritage, the effort to reconstruct how we view it, what we do about it, and what it does runs the risk of futility.

In David Lynch's surrealist TV series *Twin Peaks*, Agent Cooper was given three clues after being shot, one of which was "the owls are not what they seem" (Frost and Lynch 1990). Despite the surrealism in Lynch's works, this sentence can be interpreted in how Critical Realists understand reality. Briefly speaking, Critical Realists believe that reality exists independently of our knowledge (*ontological realism*), but our knowledge of reality is contextualised and fallible (*epistemic relativism*) (Archer et al. 2013). While acknowledging the subjectivity of our knowledge to the social and linguistical context in which it situates, the third part of CR's 'holy trinity', *judgemental rationalism*, rejects the irrationalism of post-modernist constructivism, which considers it impossible to find rational grounds for one preferred theoretical explanation to another (Bhaskar 2015 (1979)). One aspect of CR's deep ontology conceptualises reality as 'stratified'. One form of this stratification illustrates reality in three domains: *the empirical*, *the actual*, and *the real*. *The empirical* refers to the experience and

³¹ These two general fallacies are indeed termed by Bhaskar as 'ontic-fallacy' and 'epistemic-fallacy', or as combined 'epistemic-ontic-fallacy', which will be discussed further below (Bhaskar 2016, p. 11).

observable phenomenon that can be empirically obtained. *The actual* refers to the events that produce such experiences. However, these events may not always be sensed or observed. Similarly, *the real* refers to the generative mechanisms that produce the events in the actual realm. However, the existence of such mechanisms does not necessarily lead to the happening of the events and, therefore, may not be sensed or observed. The *emergence* of these mechanisms only indicates *tendency*, but not *regularity* (Collier 1994; Bhaskar 2008 (1975)). Returning to the analogy of Lynch's owls, CR considers that the owls are *real*. However, their existence (ontology) is independent of how we see them (epistemology). The insistence on the separation of ontology and epistemology is one of the aspects of CR's non-reductionist approach, which will be further discussed in Sec.3.5.

This ontological depth emerges as an essential basis for conceptualising heritage and investigating heritage processes in this research. It insists that the ontology of heritage is independent of our knowledge and perception of it. It allows the heritage 'stuff' (either tangible or intangible) to be *real* while our understanding of it might vary and evolve. Bhaskar criticised the Western philosophical tradition to have "mistakenly and anthropocentrically reduced the question of *What is* to the question of *What we can know*" (Bhaskar 2016, p. 47, emphasis in original), which he called '*epistemic fallacy*'.

A distinction should be made here regarding tangible and intangible heritage. It is relatively straightforward for material remains – their existence is not dependent on our knowledge of it. This ontological independence is also related to a second ontological position taken in this thesis regarding non-human actors and their agency, which will be discussed in Sec.3.3. It is more complicated with intangible expressions. Of course, their existence depends on the people who embody, practise, or remember it. However, it is not exhausted by people's conceptualisation of it. It can be influenced by our knowledge but cannot be reduced to it. Therefore, our conceptualisation of intangible heritage expressions (and tangible heritage) is corrigible and should be subject to critique.³²

As discussed in Ch.2, the interpretation of the term 'heritage' has become much more diverse, comprehensive, but also confusing since the academic subject field of Heritage Studies emerged and as the field of CHS has developed over the last three decades. The separation between ontology and epistemology when investigating heritage is helpful to reduce some of

³² For example, a heritage researcher's knowledge of an intangible heritage expression may inaccurately represent how it is practised or performed. While the researcher's opinion can influence how people practice this intangible heritage expression, it does not conflate how heritage is practised and how it is understood.

the confusion. It should be clarified here that the 'independence' of heritage ontology does not mean that it is static and is not subject to change. As will be discussed further in Sec.3.7, the ontology of heritage can be changed when it goes through a 'morphogenetic cycle', or as Bhaskar terms it, a TMSA (Transformative Model of Social Activity) (Bhaskar 2015 (1979)). Such changes, especially those occurring on an ontological level, requires certain 'actions', not just our understanding on an epistemological level. However, some actions are subject to our knowledge of heritage and, therefore, can influence the changes on the ontological level. What CR advocates for is a relative autonomy of ontological detachment from epistemology. Eventually, our philosophy of being must be coherent with the findings of scientific research (Bhaskar 2016, p. 27).

The ontological position of CR, which is critical towards both hyper-naturalist positivism and anti-naturalist hermeneutics, is also helpful in resolving the dichotomy between conceptuality and materiality. In the Studies of Heritage, this dichotomy is manifested partially as the debate between heritage discourse and heritage materiality. In CR, social life, and the phenomenon within it, is "dependent upon, but not exhausted by, conceptuality" (Bhaskar 2016, p. 15). As discussed further in this thesis, the discursive aspect explains some of the issues in the heritage phenomenon. Still, it does not explain away all that happens revolving around the concept of heritage. It can even sometimes be misleading and deceptive. A particular material dimension to heritage, including its material agency or emergence and the embodied experience of the material environment, is irreducible to heritage discourse.

3.3 'Things' matter too – assemblage and agency

As mentioned in Sec.2.2, recent developments in CHS have taken a post-discursive turn due to the influence of symmetric archaeology, assemblage theory, Actor-Network-Theory (ANT), New Materialism (NM) and Post-humanism (PH). In this thesis, assemblage theory and ANT are incorporated methodologically with CR. Such incorporation is not straightforward for some critical realists and actor-network theorists who have discussed the ontological incompatibility between CR and ANT (Mutch 2002; Vandenberghe 2002; Elder-Vass 2008,2015) or argue to prefer one over the other (Baxter and Chua 2019; Modell 2019). Meeting halfway is especially not encouraged by Latour, who criticises most other sociologists³³ (Latour 2005). However, A

³³ However, it is not entirely clear which sociologists Latour is referring to when he criticises the 'sociologists of the social'.

further reading of these schools of thought³⁴ reveals some common ground among them that is helpful for heritage research. ANT and assemblage theory bear significant overlaps, and so do CR and assemblage theory on an ontological level (Alverson and Sköldberg 2018). On the other hand, their differences can also be complementary when deployed for different tasks in this research. The value of their incorporation has been recognised by a few researchers in the context of social-ecological studies and information system studies (McLean and Aroles 2016; O'Mahoney et al. 2017).

As discussed in Sec.2.2, viewing heritage as assemblages has gained momentum in recent developments in Heritage Studies and, particularly, CHS. However, even this last sentence can be confusing as what 'heritage' is referred to is not explicit. The flexibility of assemblage theory, as developed by Deleuze and Guattari, suggests that a heritage assemblage can simply be a collection of heritage 'things', a concept about heritage such as 'the World Heritage', or an event such as a heritage project (Deleuze and Guattari 1988). Within these heritage assemblages, human and non-human actors, and even social structures such as organisations and administrative frameworks, can all be included through what Deleuze and Guattari describe as 'relations of exteriority'. In this sense, entities are included not simply because of their inherent properties but how they exercise their capacities in the 'milieu of exteriority' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, pp. 353-354). This model bears a resemblance to CR's model of a laminated system, which will be further elaborated on in the next section. When using the word heritage, it needs to be clarified whether it means heritage as an assemblage that includes the entities and their arrangement that form the assemblage, or heritage 'things' that are some of the entities, or the process and associations that connect and change these entities. The clarification is crucial not only to avoid confusion but also to allow examination and taking apart of the assemblage.

As mentioned in the last section, one of the aspects of CR's inclusiveness relates to resolving the dichotomy between conceptuality and materiality. Resonance can be found in assemblage theory in this regard, which views the 'being' as an assemblage of both concepts and materials. Assemblage theory, as developed by DeLanda upon Deleuze and Guattari's initial concept, takes a 'realist' stance but with a specific position of viewing social ontology as 'conception-independent' (DeLanda [2006]2019). He states that social entities, such as individuals, organisations, and nation-states, are 'mind-dependent', but their reality can be independent of

³⁴ It should also be noted that CR, assemblage theory, and ANT are much more diverse than simply two or three schools of thought. There are discrepancies in their development and interpretations under different authors, and even the same authors writing in different times (Elder-Vass 2015; Alverson and Sköldberg 2018).

our conceptualisation of them. This position is relevant to framing the ontological independence of tangible and intangible heritage as discussed in Sec.3.2. Furthermore, it provides a means to explain how intangible heritage expressions are human-dependent but not entirely dependent on the anthropocentric conceptualisation of them. Indeed, while the use of words is different, DeLanda's ontological position is coherent with how Bhaskar described social activities as *concept-dependent* (which is more equivalent to DeLanda's idea of mind-dependent) but not *concept-exhausted*. For Bhaskar, dissolving the conceptuality /materiality dichotomy involves viewing social entities as both materially embodied and conceptually mediated (Bhaskar 2016, pp. 48-50). This position is relevant to our experience of heritage, which is both influenced by our conceptualisation of heritage and the embodied experience of us being in the physical environment where tangible heritage is situated or where intangible heritage expressions are practised or performed.

However, by incorporating assemblage theory and ANT, it can be argued that there is still more to material or materiality than humans' embodied experience. The inclusion of both conceptuality and materiality in addressing the heritage phenomenon is relevant to another aspect inspired by symmetric archaeology, assemblage theory, and ANT. It is the consideration of a dialogical relationship between human and non-human actors and allows the consideration of non-human agency (Harrison 2013). Although the inclusion of non-human entities is not explicit in CR, Bhaskar's anti-anthropocentric approach and his insistence on ontological independence support this possibility. CR criticises the anthropocentric approach of classical philosophy and epistemic biases of hermeneutics, that is, to collapse ontology into epistemology and to view the multi-dimensional world of beings exclusively through the experience and conditions of humans (Bhaskar 2008 (1975),2016).

As suggested by the French term *agencement*, used by Deleuze and Guattari and later translated to 'assemblage' by Brian Massumi, the concept of assemblage also invokes the concept of agency (Alliez and Goffey 2011). Jane Bennett (2010) suggests that agency is not afforded by individual actors in an assemblage but, indeed, distributed across the assemblage through human and non-human actors and the connections and lines of actions among them³⁵. This concept of distributed agency is resonant with Bhaskar's interpretation of the concept of *holistic causality*, where "the form of the combination of elements causally co-determines the

³⁵ There are several meanings in what are the 'lines' that exist between actors in assemblage theory and ANT, including 'line of flight' or 'lines of becoming' as suggested by Deleuze and Guattari (1988, pp. 204, 293), and the 'associations' and 'flow of action' described in Latour's works (Latour 2005, pp. 5, 237). Perhaps what Tim Ingold describes in his concept of meshwork, 'lines of interaction', might be a more accurate term (Ingold 2013, pp. 98-100).

elements; and the elements causally co-determine each other and so causally co-determine the form of the whole” (Bhaskar 2016, p. 92)³⁶.

To further clarify the symmetry between human and non-human actors that this thesis adopts from the latest turn in CHS, the materiality discussed in this thesis is tightly knitted with materials, the concrete, tangible materials that form a significant part of the heritage phenomenon. Using David Nash’s artworks and a wet stone that sits on the table to dry as examples, Tim Ingold states that tangible materials are always changing and interacting with their environment regardless of the presence of human interactions with them and regardless of whether they have been altered by humans. As such, the pitfall described by Ingold where the discussion of materiality falls back into the matter/ mind dualistic approach by referring to the notion of materiality as something created by human minds but has no *real* connection with the materials must be adamantly avoided (Ingold 2007). Therefore, not only does our embodied experience in the material environment matter, the existence of the material environment, no matter whether someone is there to experience it at any moment in time, should also be afforded agency.

However, symmetry does not mean sameness and acknowledging the agency or emergent powers of non-humans in social phenomena does not equal to humans and non-humans having exactly the same way of acting. As Elder-Vass points out, the non-differentiating way to include human and non-human actors in the collectives/assemblage in Latour’s ANT can sometimes be the source of confusion. While admitting that such an understanding of ANT could be a literal understanding of a metaphorical representation and that there could be something lost in translation from the original French text to English, Elder-Vass stresses that the emergent powers or agency that human and non-human actors exercise are distinctive (Elder-Vass 2008). Such a position is coherent with the one taken by this thesis, which acknowledges that the emergent powers of materials are not exclusively dependent on humans. They are nevertheless distinctive from those of human actors and of the social structures that are mostly formed of human actors.

CR’s interdisciplinary conceptual model of reality considers that both human and non-human actors can potentially be involved in the generative mechanisms that collectively give rise to the events on *the actual* level and empirical experiences on *the empirical* level. ANT and

³⁶ In Archer’s works, agency is narrowly understood as intentional causation where human intentionality or reflexivity is a necessary component (Archer 1996; Burkitt 2016). However, in the interpretation of agency that can include non-human actors, the human intentionality is obviously no longer a necessary component. In this sense, agency has a much higher similarity to emergence and causation described in CR and DeLanda’s interpretation of the assemblage theory.

assemblage theory share a similar stance on the multi-deterministic nature of social phenomena with CR. However, further to the ambiguous differentiation between human and non-human agencies, Elder-Vass also points out that the assemblage as referenced by Latour seems to include both the referent (reality) and the reference (our knowledge of it) (Elder-Vass 2015). This 'lumping together' of ontology and epistemology can contribute to the confusion that was mentioned in Chapter 2, where heritage, which can be understood as assemblage, includes both the 'things' that we refer to as heritage and our knowledge and perception of those 'things', such as heritage discourse. There is indeed value in regarding heritage as assemblage, as it allows us to explore the complex relations between its components and the exterior relations of this assemblage with other entities or assemblages. However, the ontological independence as insisted in CR and conception-independence as, indeed, held in DeLanda's assemblage theory should be emphasised. Heritage as things, processes and discourse can all have agency and effects and should all be considered in heritage research. However, they have distinctive properties and emergent powers and, therefore, must be clearly differentiated.

3.4 The (necessarily) laminated system

As alluded to above, the interdisciplinary nature of heritage makes CR an appealing theoretical approach. CR's interpretation of interdisciplinarity relates to the second dimension of the stratification of reality – '*a (necessarily) laminated system*'. For critical realists, interdisciplinarity is determined by the ontological characteristics of reality and the epistemological requirements to study it (Bhaskar and Danermark 2006). A 'laminated system' is a concept borrowed from Andrew Collier (Collier 1989). One version of this theoretical model, as described in Bhaskar and Danermark's work from 2006, illustrates that a phenomenon in an open system has contributions from generative mechanisms at various levels³⁷. It should be clarified that in avoiding the nature/culture(social) divide, this thesis does not consider that there is any absolute distinction between a 'natural' phenomenon or a 'social' phenomenon, precisely due to their multi-deterministic nature. A phenomenon in an open system only means that it is a phenomenon that occurs outside of a strictly controlled environment (i.e. a laboratory), where a cause cannot possibly be singled out by eliminating the others. In the

³⁷ They have also developed four other types of laminated system – the four-planar social being, the seven-scalar social being, the co-existent emergent space-temporalities (rhythmics) or pentimented social being, and the irreducible and necessary components in a complex whole. While they are coherent in how CR is applied in research, they do not directly invoke interdisciplinarity as the first type, which will be adopted to a certain extent in this research.

case of Bhaskar and Danermark's 2006 study, which explores the phenomenon of disability, seven levels were identified as physical, biological, psychological, psycho-social, socioeconomic, sociocultural, and normative (Bhaskar and Danermark 2006). These levels are determined in a 'case-specific way', and therefore, their combination can vary. As mentioned in the last section, the multi-determination nature is ubiquitous in most phenomena that occur in open systems.

This multiplicity of ontology certainly applies to heritage. Take the example of an ancient building as a heritage site. Even without any specific context, it can be identified that for the building to be 'ancient', certain physical and chemical features of the materials need to be able to survive over time. It also requires economic resources on a micro level which might have gone into the maintenance of the building, or economic environment on a macro level which allows the building not to be replaced by something else. For the building to be considered 'heritage', the psychological acceptance of individuals and the cultural consensus that a community are contributing factors. Moreover, the administrative and legislative systems that enable its designation with legal protection status is also necessary. Such a list is far from exhaustive and specific context or new discoveries can also alter the assemblage of these generative mechanisms – both in terms of their components and their arrangement. Therefore, it must be emphasised from the onset that this thesis specifically sets out not to impose such levels before a deep dive into the matters at hand – the case studies. The slow, exploratory, and labour-intensive groundwork remains at the forefront of this research and is prioritised before entering any abstract domain. This necessity and how to approach it will be elaborated further in the next section.

As demonstrated above, the ontological multiplicity of phenomena in an open system is characterised by multiple mechanisms which exercise emergent powers. As such, it requires the application of diverse knowledge and the accumulation of perspectives to gain an epistemological understanding of these phenomena. The investigation into these levels requires contributions from various disciplines and inclusiveness towards the methodologies and methods used. It has several implications regarding disciplinary involvement. The most straightforward one would be pooling the knowledge from multiple disciplines to build up a multi-layer understanding of the subject matter. In the case of heritage, it is quite common that our understanding of the heritage entity requires research outcomes from several disciplines. The second dimension, as pointed out by Bhaskar and Danermark, relates to when a qualitatively new outcome is expected (Danermark 2002; Bhaskar 2016; Bhaskar et al. 2017), such as heritage policymaking. The mechanisms that produce the result of a certain policy may not be understood simply by adding the knowledge from various disciplines, but rather, it requires a 'genuine interdisciplinarity' to understand it as a synthetic integration. As will be

demonstrated further in this thesis, the cross-sector and cross-disciplinary relations are essential in heritage's relevance in sustainability.

3.5 The non-reductionist approach

One fundamental aspect of the approach adopted by this thesis is that it sets out to be non-reductionist. CR stands adamantly against a reductionist approach in any form (Skrede and Hølleland 2018), and a very similar stance can be seen in assemblage theory, as developed by DeLanda (more on this below). Three reasons for this approach have already been mentioned in this chapter. The first one is that ontology cannot be reduced to epistemology, which is related to the position taken against reducing the world of beings to pure human experiences and perspectives. It logically leads to including non-human actors into consideration of emergence and agencies. It is also related to what Bhaskar described as the *linguistic fallacy*, where reality is reduced to discourse and language (Bhaskar 2016, p. 17). The second dimension is that social explanation cannot be reduced to either mere conceptualisation or pure empiricism. This dimension is related to the three domains of reality developed by Bhaskar: the *real*, the *actual*, and the *empirical*. It is against reducing the definition of reality to only what can be observed or experienced or reducing generative mechanisms (in the *real* domain) to only actualised events. The other direction is related to the second part of CR's 'holy trinity' and what is emphasised in ANT – any explanation of the emergence and causal powers can be fallible and must be able to be taken apart and examined to establish whether it conforms to the understanding of the 'concrete'. The third aspect of the non-reductionist approach relates to the 'laminated system' whereby generative mechanisms exist in various strata, and a comprehensive explanation of a phenomenon cannot be reduced to only one stratum.

The fourth dimension of this non-reductionist approach is related to structure and agency. In this respect, critical realists such as Bhaskar, Margaret Archer and Dave Elder-Vass speak against three types of conflation regarding structure and agency (Archer 1982, 1996; Elder-Vass 2010; Bhaskar 2016; Archer 2020). There is an almost identical critical reflection on this issue in assemblage theory as developed by DeLanda (he uses reduction instead of conflation) (DeLanda [2006]2019). The upwards conflation (micro-reduction) refers to reducing the conception of a structure to an immediate result of agency. In DeLanda's explanation, it also refers to reducing the properties of the wholes to their component parts without any additional property other than the sum of their parts. The downwards-conflation (macro-reduction) prioritises the influence of structures over individual agency, characterised by Durkheim and Marx's stance on the inescapable individuals within a social structure. The central-conflation

(meso-reduction) specifically refers to the concept of 'structuration' developed by Anthony Giddens, who treats structure and agency as 'ontologically inseparable' or constitutive (Archer 1982; cf Giddens 1984,1996; Elder-Vass 2010; Bhaskar 2016; Archer 2020). From an emergentist's ontological position, Elder-Vass proposes an explanatory approach that recognises the emergent powers of both human agencies and social structures. The social structures to which Elder-Vass refers here are similar to how 'social constructions' are interpreted in assemblage theory and ANT, which are a real-world arrangement of lower-level components, such as an organisation, an institute, or a nation-state³⁸. Both Elder-Vass and DeLanda recognises the emergence and ontological irreducibility of such structures, but they also advocate for the possibility of their 'explanatory reductionism', or 'being taken apart', when investigating the complex interactions between the entities within them (Elder-Vass 2010; DeLanda [2006]2019).

Incorporating these traditions, this research embraces the non-reductionist approach in all the above dimensions while investigating the phenomenon of heritage in the case studies. By insisting upon the separation of ontology and epistemology concepts, this research emphasises that entities that are considered as heritage exist independently of our (changing) perceptions of them. Their existence contributes to their roles in the heritage assemblage, which are not exclusively dependent on the experience and perspectives of humans. By adopting the three domains of reality, the research stresses the significance of both emphasising the empirical data and the identification and abstraction of generative mechanisms.

Understanding the emergent powers that give rise to the (un)sustainable outcomes in the case studies will help elucidate the entities and their potential arrangement required to produce a tendency towards sustainable heritage management in China. Embracing the irreducibility of the three domains also means that the irregularity that can happen in an open system during the translation between these three domains must be well considered, and therefore, a case-specific laminated system needs to be explained, investigated and 'taken apart'. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that a deep and rich exploration into the case studies of this research can still provide transferable knowledge for a more integrated understanding of heritage.

This research also insists that the entities considered during the process of explanation should not be reduced to only human actors or their interactions with the environment. The effect of

³⁸ Elder-Vass, however, considers that his emergentist solution will also apply to more systemic structures such as capitalism, whereas ANT, especially Latour, seems to prefer avoiding the more abstract 'structures' or 'constructions'.

non-humans is an integrated part of the investigation. They are acting entities that form connections with other entities within the assemblage or system. They participate in the forming of generative mechanisms with other entities. These entities can also include structures such as organisations, departments, administrative frameworks, and even legislation and treaties. These structures and their components then possess emergent powers and can form generative mechanisms with other entities. Admittedly, this chapter has not addressed heritage discourse extensively so far, except for warning against the overemphasis of discourse which might lead to epistemic fallacy and linguistic fallacy. However, it should be clarified here that embracing the interdisciplinary ontology of reality means that discourse, perceptions, and values can also take on a life of their own and gain emergence. Therefore, this thesis is in no way dismissing the causal power of heritage discourse. Smith's influential application of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in heritage discourse analysis has indeed proven the significance of their inclusion (Smith 2006). This work only cautions against reducing the conception of the reality of heritage to just discourse and perceptions and emphasises that just as the distinctions exist between the causal powers of humans and non-humans, the effect of discourse and language should also be distinguished from those of, for example, transitive actions.³⁹

While strictly speaking, this research is not conducted by an interdisciplinary team, the necessity to integrate interdisciplinary research outcomes relevant to the subject matter and to achieve trans-disciplinarity within oneself is fully recognised. There is also an activist element to CR, where interdisciplinary research is targeted to produce not only an integrated understanding but also integrated policy. This research strives to do just that. The interdisciplinarity of the theoretical framework taken in this research seeks to not only contribute to heritage and sustainability research but also in decision-making and practices with a future-looking orientation. Sustainability, as has been reviewed in Chapter 2, covers an array of meanings and actions that extend their tentacles to almost all disciplines. On the other hand, the current categorisation of SDGs (and the indicators that stem from them) is practical and makes these goals operational and assessable (UN 2015). On the other hand, they are still short of integration between disciplines. As with heritage, this thesis maintains that the discussion of sustainability also requires the acknowledgement of a laminated system that can explain the generative mechanisms in different strata that contribute to the (un)sustainable

³⁹ To give a crude example, talking about a stone's weight in different units does not change the mass of the stone, but cutting the stone with various tools would result in different kinds of material changes of the stone.

outcomes. The theoretical model that addresses the issues of change, continuity and sustainability will be further discussed in Sec.3.7.

3.6 Unfolding the controversies – tracing the association with ANT

The previous sections in this chapter have established the ontological and epistemological position of this research by adopting and incorporating the theoretical basis of CR and assemblage theory. There is a deliberate lack of discussion of ANT to this point, as the ontological perspective of ANT has been much less clearly articulated than the other two traditions. ANT is sometimes characterised under the umbrella of ‘social constructionism’, which itself includes a wide range of sometimes polar-opposite positions⁴⁰. This categorisation is primarily based on Latour’s early works, such as *Laboratory Life* and the subsequent *The Pasteurisation of France*, where he studies scientific knowledge production as a social construction (Latour 1993a; Latour and Woolgar 2013 (1979)). However, his position wavers in various subsequent works. While he agrees that some natural phenomena such as the phases of Venus exist before our scientific knowledge of it is produced (Latour 1996), elsewhere he makes claims that fermentation (the action of yeasts) did not exist before Pasteur came along with his interpretation⁴¹ (Latour 1999).⁴² This lack of consistency is problematic when one tries to apply this theory to heritage research, as it adds to the confusion over what heritage refers to, as pointed out in Ch.2 and earlier in this chapter.

In his 2005 extensive introduction to ANT, yet again, Latour provides some explanation that somehow contradicts his earlier claims. He explains that when he refers to science studies as a social construction, he does not in any way mean that scientific facts are all just fabrication by humans. He simply uses construction in its more literal meaning – to construct, to build, and to assemble (Latour 2005). In this way, ANT’s overlap with assemblage theory becomes evident. Framing scientific research as an actor-network or an assemblage means that the knowledge is produced through an array of interactions of actors (humans and non-humans).

⁴⁰ John Law has indeed called ANT a form of post-structuralism and Latour has called himself with various terms, including a relativist, realist and even a positivist. More on this below.

⁴¹ For literal readers, it is sometimes difficult to tell whether Latour’s claims and statements are meant to be literal or whether he is making some sort of exaggerated and metaphorical claims. For example, when he said that ferments did not exist before Pasteur came along, whether he is indeed referring to the phenomena of ‘fermentation’ or referring to the definition by Pasteur makes fundamental differences – the former seems ridiculous in common sense whereas the latter is much more understandable.

⁴² For a more detailed critique of Latour’s contradictory claims on reality see (Elder-Vass 2015)

In this introduction, Latour seems to take on a more realist stance, which is perhaps why he calls himself a 'positivist' (Latour 2005; Alverson and Sköldberg 2018).

Although the less clear ontological position, together with the ambiguous explanations of some core definitions, can create confusion when one adopts ANT fully as a methodological position for research, incorporating it into this research has invaluable advantages. This chapter has already established the multi-deterministic nature of any phenomenon in an open system. It has also established that the entities that cause these phenomena are case-specific while not denying that there is a possibility to produce transferable knowledge regarding these generative mechanisms. While the philosophical foundation of CR and assemblage theory can potentially be applicable to a wide range of contexts, the former is still largely developed among British scholars, and DeLanda has indeed warned that all his cases are in a Euro-American context (DeLanda [2006]2019). As established by the review in Ch.2, much of the existing Anglophone literature on heritage research in China slips into a certain representational model of thinking in one way or another without first consulting the situation on the ground. Rather, it tends to look for empirical evidence that fits a presupposed conclusion. Abnormalities and irregularities that do not fit into those conclusions are often overlooked or explained away. Neglecting the process of tracing the associations sometimes leads to a false assumption of causality by incorrectly assigning emergence to some known structures that may or may not have caused the phenomenon observed in the specific cases.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, this research recognises the possibility and necessity of exploring the depth of reality by conceptualising and identifying generative mechanisms. On the other hand, empiricism is not necessarily implied by providing the stage for the actors to perform first or fully accounting for the actions that have taken place. Starting from the empirical does not necessarily mean staying there. Rather, it means that after leaving the empirical and venturing into *the real*, it is important to come back to the empirical from time to time. Such 'immanent critique' of going from the concrete to the abstract and back to the concrete is encouraged by critical realists (Sayer 2013). From Latour's descriptions, an ANT position adamantly stands against is the presupposition of invisible 'social' powers that are taken from previous research and applying them wholesale, without checking them or taking them apart. Therefore, it is inherent in the theoretical framework and approach established in this thesis that they should always be examined by consulting the empirical data when applied in other contexts. As has been admitted by Danermark *et al.*, CR is more the reasoning behind research rather than a method (Danermark *et al.* 2002). Therefore, CR and assemblage theory contribute more to the clarification of the theoretical approach for this research than to the construction of its methods, which will be addressed in Ch.4.

For ANT and assemblage theory, there are no 'internal relations' but only external relations. While for CR, although internal relations are not completely unchangeable, they are relatively stable and essential for those involved to be interdependent of each other. Sayer has suggested that both internal relations and external relations should be accounted for in research (Sayer 2013). As will be elaborated in the next section, when these actors change to the point where their relations also change, the actors and their relations have then gone through a morphogenetic cycle where a new type of relation and even new actors emerge. For example, for a historic building to become a designated heritage site, it must be registered on some sort of list. Of course, this list needs to exist somewhere, either a hand-written one or a digital one saved on a digital archive. The format of the list might have something to do with how the building is represented in the archive but does not change the relation between the building and list fundamentally. If an action (i.e. a policy) occurs which reduces the length of the list dramatically, then it might indeed change the relation between this building and the list – the building can be taken out of that list. On the other hand, if some dramatic change happens to the building, it can also lead to either the end of its relationship with the list or change to another form – the building is listed under a different category.

Furthermore, actor-network theorists are concerned more about the effect of the possible structures that travel through the components rather than the existence of these structures themselves. For Latour, if there is no trace to be seen among the actors, then there is no structure (Latour 2005). It is possible to agree with Latour to a certain extent in this context. While this thesis stands with CR and assemblage theory in that there are some more stable structures in the world that may not be observed directly but still exist in reality, it is also clear that there needs to be an emphasis on finding evidence for their effects and for verifying the causal chains from the phenomenon to the generative mechanisms. These structures and arrangements can be made manifest under different contexts in vastly varied ways due to their interactions with other entities specific to those contexts. The existence of a specific structure and the possible manifested outcomes being observed do not automatically lead to the singular causal chain between them. The structure's causal power might have travelled another path through its interactions with other actors. In Latour's words, all the displacement and stops must be 'paid for' (ibid.). However, whether these actors are essential elements of this path is a question that needs to be investigated further through the process of abstraction and conceptualisation, which will be addressed further in Sec.3.8.

While tracing the associations between actors, actor-network theorists insist that we need to '*keep the social flat*'. It is not always clear what type of 'structures' ANT is rejecting. At first, it reads as though they do not consider anything global to be counted as actors. However, upon closer reading, one can see that Latour's notion of keeping the concept of the social 'flat' is to

ensure that “any candidate with a more ‘global’ role to sit beside the ‘local’ site it claims to explain, rather than watch it “jump on top of it or behind it” (Latour 2005, p. 174). Therefore, it can be interpreted that they are insisting that a more global set of actors does not necessarily have a higher place in the hierarchy in terms of its effects. Elder-Vass has criticised that ANT does not recognise the emergent power of entities on a high level by ‘keeping the social flat’. He points out that Latour, even at a certain point, hints that there is indeed some ‘dotted line’ that connect the traceable associations to some pre-existing entities, but he never seems to clarify how or whether we arrive at those entities in our explanations (Elder-Vass 2008). As mentioned in the previous sections, both assemblage theory and CR recognise the emergent powers of structures on a higher level while acknowledging that these structures are dynamic and can be taken apart. In this respect, critical realists, although having clear categorisations of levels of scales, from sub-individual to worldwide, insist that there is no hierarchy between these scales and that interactions can travel either way (Bhaskar et al. 2017). Here, it is suggested that the insistence on their explanatory-reducibility, the fallibility of their emergent powers and the non-hierarchical consideration of global and local actors can perhaps form a common ground that might accommodate all three traditions.

Upon clearing away the major limitation of ANT in terms of the ambiguity of its ontological stance, we can now return to how else it is valuable to this research. Creating a traceable path and the extra caution against the pitfall of representationalism’s interference along this path lead to the advantage of incorporating ANT into the methodology of this research. Actor-network theorists emphasise the significance of ‘listening to the actors’ and tracing the associations between them without presuming any *a priori* invisible structures. Without sufficient testing and verification in a complex context such as China, which is unique in many ways and extremely diverse and dynamic, one simply cannot be sure that any existing assumptions of generative mechanisms and their emergent powers would apply and manifest themselves in the same way as elsewhere. On the other hand, it does not necessarily lead us to the conclusion that they would be manifested differently. It is simply not yet known.

Therefore, it is emphasised here that it is only when the controversies have been unfolded and mapped that one can start to identify who are the actors, what are their associations and how emergent powers have caused the events and phenomenon in the actual and the empirical domains. As will be demonstrated in the case studies, following the actors is essential to understanding how decisions were made and finding a path towards understanding the generative mechanisms at work. What ANT reminds us of is that the process of abstraction is not simply a spark of thought but a slow and laborious process starting from studying what is on the ground. The methods deployed to travel slowly along this path were chosen to collect and bring out as many traces as possible, not to arrive at some

sort of score of regularities and patterns by the sheer numbers, but to help arrive at a chain of causality that is as close to explaining what happens as possible.

3.7 The relational M/M approach and sustainability

The theoretical framework so far has been established to elucidate what heritage is and what might be the entities/ actors that have participated in forming the phenomenon of heritage as an assemblage or a laminated system. This section will further explore a specific approach related to change and continuity under these precepts in both synchronic and diachronic ways. Adopting this approach will further develop the theoretical framework to help the investigation of sustainability in the case studies.

The terms 'morphogenesis' and 'morphostasis' were coined by Walter Buckley, who developed the concepts under general systems theory (Buckley 1967). The morphogenetic/ morphostasis approach was later introduced and developed in CR literature by Margarete Archer, primarily applied in social science research to address the relationship between structure and agency and the formation and evolution of society and culture (Archer 1982,1996,2020). This approach has been adopted in research regarding sustainability in marketing, manufacturing, and environmental sociological studies (for examples, see Lyon and Parkins 2013; Tennant 2013; Thomas 2018).⁴³ These applications mostly concern the interactions between structure and agency. Lyon and Parkins (2013) combine these interactions with resilience theory and introduce a temporal dimension to discuss culture's role in communities navigating change. However, these concepts have rarely been used to explain sustainability in relational terms, and nor have they been applied in heritage research. Following the relational thinking described in assemblage theory and ANT, the concept of sustainability can be explained by interactions between entities and the emergence, evolution, and even obsolescence of their relations. These interactions and their impact on change and continuity can be very well illustrated by Elder-Vass' further development of the M/M approach while discussing 'emergence', where he demonstrates that a more dynamic relationship between morphogenesis and morphostasis should be considered (Elder-Vass 2010).

⁴³ There is also other literature using morphogenesis and morphostasis as a metaphor, referring to their definitions as a natural phenomenon in biology, such as 'urban morphogenesis' (for example, see Raimbault 2019). However, such uses, although related, are rather different from the way Archer and other critical realists use them. Due to the limited scope, this thesis will not venture further into this use of the terms.

In Buckley and Archer's literature, morphogenesis and morphostasis are understood mainly as two counteracting processes (Buckley 1967; Archer 1982). As Buckley defines, morphogenesis refers to "those processes which tend to elaborate or change ' system's given form, structure, or state", while morphostasis refers to "those processes in complex system environment exchanges that tend to preserve or maintain ' system's given form, organization, or state" (Buckley 1967). Elder-Vass introduces emergence and causal powers into these processes. He points out that while it is obvious that morphogenesis is caused by causal powers that enable fundamental changes of the entities and their relations among each other, the causal powers that sustain morphostasis are equally crucial. Entities do not stay static after their emergence (Elder-Vass 2010). This interpretation is compatible with this PhD research's position of viewing heritage as dynamic systems or assemblages. The associations that bind the entities within the heritage assemblage require continuous causal powers to be sustained. For example, once a religious site is established, the relation between the site and its worshipers requires both the actions that contribute to maintaining the site to a certain extent and the religious activities initiated by the worshippers. A similar explanation can apply to the previous example of a building being listed on a heritage registry. It requires continuous efforts to maintain the building to the standard based on which it would be qualified to be on the list.

Elder-Vass' account of these processes goes beyond describing them as two counteracting processes. He also points out how they can interact with and within each other (Elder-Vass 2010, pp. 33-39). According to him, the causal powers that uphold morphostasis are not change-resistant; instead, they allow morphogenesis to happen within a certain range by providing the resilience needed for the assemblage to continue existing. On the other hand, when a morphogenesis becomes so powerful that it fundamentally disrupts the previous morphostasis, several outcomes can happen. The entities might become completely obsolete as they are broken down into their parts (which might have been changed as well) without any tenuous associations between them. They might be changed to a state where the causal powers to uphold their associations are not strong enough that they become susceptible to any kind of change and enter a 'vicious cycle' that leads to the continuous process towards the obsolescence of their structures. However, they can also become more resilient by allowing new causal powers to participate and enter a new morphostasis or embark on their journey towards one (see Figure 2 for an indicative diagram of these processes). Furthermore, generative mechanisms that are themselves sustained in a more stable morphostasis are more likely to have continuous causal powers over other entities.

The dynamic interactions between morphogenesis and morphostasis above can be a very powerful tool to explain sustainability. As reviewed in Ch.2, sustainability can be understood

in relational terms. This thesis suggests that a sustainable world can be seen as partly tied by sustainable relations between actors- humans and non-humans. Therefore, a parallel analogy can be drawn between sustainability and morphostasis. From the description above, to uphold a sustainable relation between actors,⁴⁴ constant input of causal powers is necessary. The interactions between morphostasis and morphogenesis are also useful for describing changes within a sustainable relation, which does not have to be static. It can evolve and change over time within a certain range. For example, the relation between a heritage site and its community, including the site and the community, is subject to changes but does not necessarily become obsolete because of these changes. Only when such changes become disruptive enough then such a relation can be interrupted. In another scenario, a dramatic change can also bring this relationship to a completely new but still morphostatic state. To continue with this example, an adaptive reuse project might create a completely new relationship between the site and its users. If the reuse encourages new causal powers to uphold this relation, then a sustainable outcome is possible out of a morphogenetic cycle (see Figure 3 for a diagram of these processes in relational terms of sustainability).

The notion that a more morphostatic entity will have more enduring causal power is also useful to explain the possible contribution that sustainable heritage can provide for a sustainable world. Following the logic in the last paragraph, if the heritage in question is exercising its causal power on other relations in the world and is contributing to upholding their morphostasis, it is then contributing to the sustainability of those relations. Naturally, one would hope that such causal power could stay consistent, which entails that the causal powers contributing to upholding the heritage entity need to be consistent too. Now, the entities that provide such causal powers can well be the ones that benefit from a sustainable heritage entity. There can potentially emerge a virtuous cycle until the interference of other causal powers. For example, the existence of a heritage site can contribute to the continuation of social relations between the local community members by providing a public space for social interactions (the opposite is, of course, also possible), which in turn can create the potential for the community members to form a certain coalition that will contribute to maintaining this heritage space. Again, it should be emphasised here that in an open system, what is simulated here are tendencies rather than regularities. Other entities, such as the limit of financial resources or a restrictive policy, can interfere with the outcome within this cycle. Nevertheless, as will be seen in the case

⁴⁴ For example, between humans and natural resources, between a heritage community and its heritage, between members within a community, or between the producers and consumers of economic goods (e.g. a tourism business)

studies, such an explanation is helpful for understanding what happens, what could have happened, and what could happen when certain emergent mechanisms are in place.

This conceptual approach adopting the relational ontology and concepts of morphostasis and morphogenesis will be termed the relational M/M approach in this thesis. Through establishing this approach, this thesis adopts a critical position towards some of the assumptions in the discussion of sustainability and sustainable heritage management as critiqued in Ch.2, such as 'intragenerational equity' and 'intergenerational transmission'. By allowing the examination of the associations between actors in heritage assemblages without any presumed moralised position, such an approach does not characterise heritage entities as definitive contributions to intragenerational equity, but rather just relevant actors. Other relevant actors, including those holding contested opinions towards heritage conservation and management, are also allowed to be at the table of decision-making. Considering the life cycles of heritage assemblages as dynamic processes challenges the idea that heritage, like legacy, is something that can be 'transmitted' from one generation to another as it is. Within this framework, sustainable heritage is understood as assemblages of actors, including humans and non-humans, connected by enduring, evolving, and interacting relations. The primary analytical methods for the case studies under this theoretical framework will be further elaborated in Ch.4.

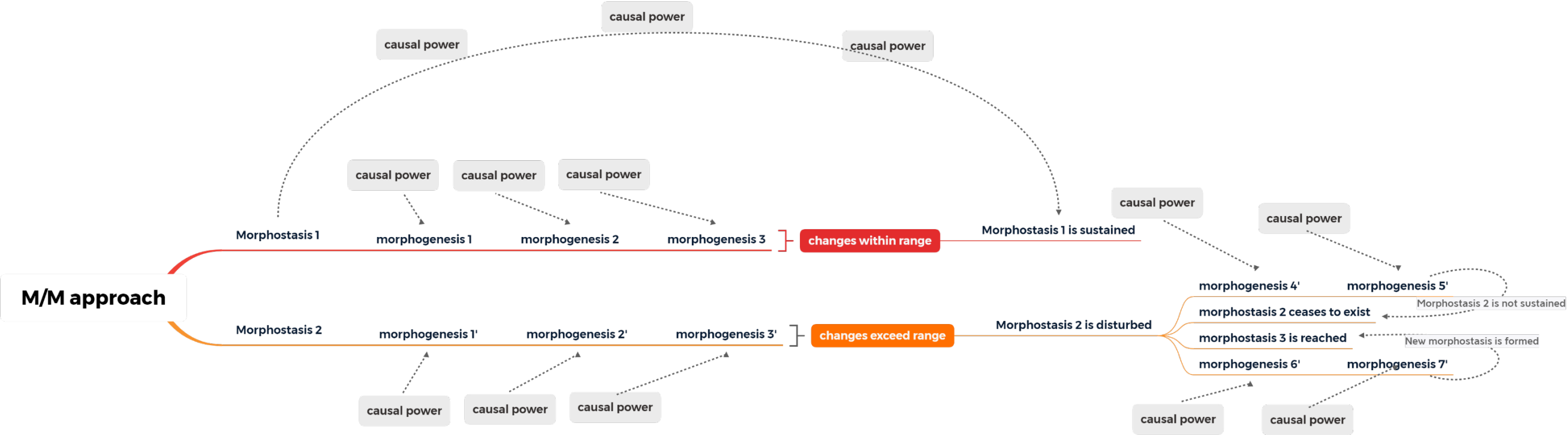


Figure 2 A Conceptual Model of the M/M approach to understanding emergence, change, and continuity

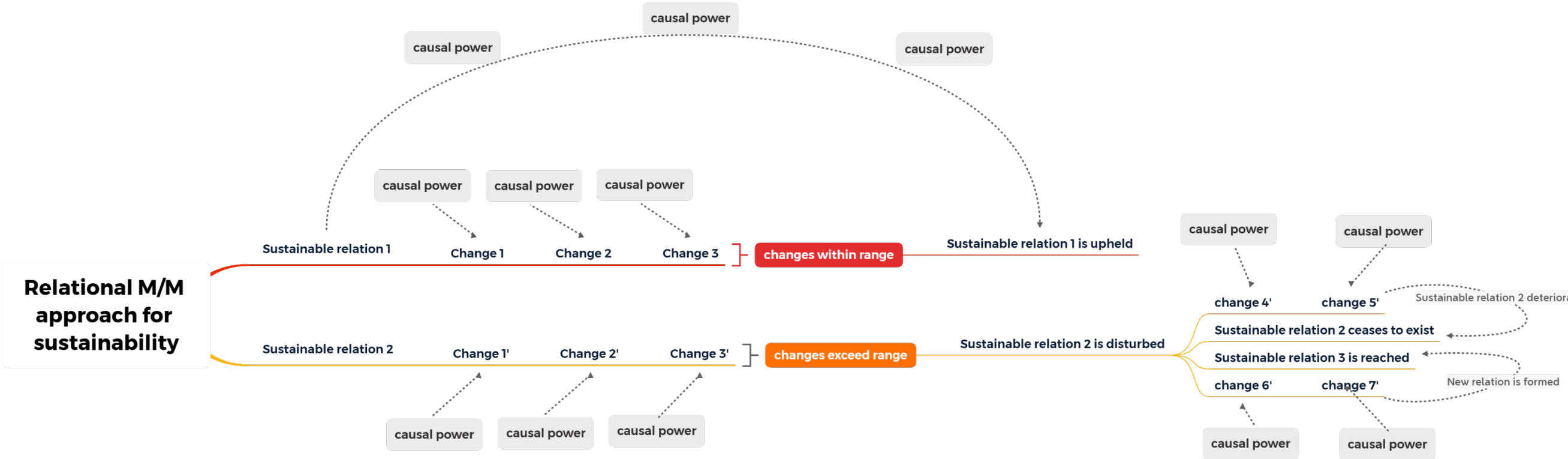


Figure 3 An abduction of sustainability based on the relational M/M approach.

3.8 Reassembling the generative mechanisms

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, this thesis argues that it is possible and necessary to arrive at transferable knowledge of a more abstract and synthetic explanation of the (un)sustainable outcome in heritage activities by adopting a critical realist position. Generative mechanisms in the domain of the real, as defined in CR, are relations between the parts that form a higher-level entity with an emergent property or causal power which cannot be reduced to the properties of the parts (Bhaskar 2008 (1975); Elder-Vass 2010). Identifying generative mechanisms is the core task of critical realists, which is generally achieved through abstraction (Danermark et al. 2002). It cannot be emphasised enough that any established 'structures' must not be taken for granted or assumed that they predict inevitable and observable events.⁴⁵

The question arises as to how to go from tracing the associations between actors to conceptualisation and abstraction. As discussed in the last section, tracing the association is essential and useful for uncovering the causal chains that travel through various actors during specific events. It is, therefore, useful to help discover the combination of generative mechanisms – the entities and their relations – that have contributed to the emergent powers that cause the events through conceptualisation. Abstraction goes further than explaining which specific persons or actions have caused specific events. It involves multiple processes which can help differentiate which parts and their relations are necessary for these events to happen and which ones are contingent and can be replaced without fundamentally altering the results.

Since it is not possible to isolate these mechanisms through laboratory experiments in an open system, such an abstraction is done through thought experiments. There are several types of thought operations to deploy. It should be clarified here that the generalisation from a CR perspective is not the same as empirical extrapolation, and therefore, this thesis is not trying to generalise from a few cases for a much larger scale. As alluded to so far in this chapter, generalisation in this thesis refers to uncovering the *tendencies* that generative mechanisms have in producing certain events or phenomena. Abduction and retrodution are two means to reach the domain of the *real* from the domain of the *empirical* and the *actual* (Danermark et al. 2002).

⁴⁵ As Danermark *et al.* states,

"The abstractions are necessary to enable us to explain and understand concrete phenomena, but it is important to remember that in each research process the concrete phenomena must be the starting point of the abstraction process."

(Danermark et al. 2002, p. 50)

Compared to the usual logic inferential methods such as induction and deduction, abduction and retroduction are utilised to create new knowledge during the research process that goes beyond testing existing theories (deduction) and generalising empirical regularities (induction). Abduction is the redescription or re-contextualisation of empirical events to gain a deeper knowledge of our understanding of the case at hand, sometimes by referring to certain conceptual or theoretical frameworks. This kind of abduction is defined by Umberto Eco (1986) as 'undercoded abduction'. The examples mentioned in the last section where sustainability is 'redescribed' using the concepts of morphostasis and morphogenesis are indeed a brief use of abduction. There will be more of such thought operations further in the case studies.

Retroduction is a thought operation starting from analysing a concrete phenomenon and moving towards an abstract reconstruction of what are the basic and necessary conditions for such a phenomenon to happen. Since identifying the generative mechanisms that contribute to the (un)sustainable outcomes of certain actions is one of the main objectives of this thesis, retroduction is the main method that will guide us from the laborious connection-tracing towards the identification of the entities and their relations that are necessary for these mechanisms to have their causal powers. As cautioned in Sec.3.6, however, no generative mechanism is presumed, and all can be taken apart, examined and, indeed, reassembled. It should also be clarified that there can be different levels of abstraction in the process of retroduction. It can be in a high-level abstraction that addresses the philosophical nature of the subject matter. It can also be a lower-level abstraction that is intended to explain the generative mechanisms that contribute to the specific phenomenon (Danermark et al. 2002). This thesis aims to achieve a level of abstraction closer to the latter type, explaining specifically the fundamental mechanisms contributing to (un)sustainable heritage management in China. However, there will still be two levels of scope regarding these mechanisms. Some of them might be more specifically related to early timber buildings discussed in the case study, while some of them will be applicable to a broader range of heritage and relevant activities in the country. How abduction and retroduction will be applied to the case studies in this research will be addressed further in the next chapter.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has established the overarching theoretical framework for this thesis. It has set up the ontological and epistemological positions of this research within the subject field of heritage, incorporating the complementary components of CR, assemblage theory and ANT, and constructs the theoretical framework for understanding heritage and sustainability upon these positions.

The fundamental position upon which we understand what heritage is and how we know about it has been established in this chapter. This characterisation of reality sets the premise for one of the main objectives of the thesis - identifying the generative mechanisms to understand the crucial contributions to the (un)sustainability of heritage management in China. The position adopted by this thesis counters an anthropocentric view of heritage by incorporating assemblage theory and ANT, recognising non-human actors and their agency or causal powers. This position is coherent with the latest 'post-discursive' turn of heritage studies that emphasises bringing materiality into a dialogical relation with conceptuality by considering non-human and human actors as equally crucial and interacting components of heritage as an assemblage. Sec.3.2 and 3.3 lay down the premise upon which the dichotomies between 'Western' and 'Non-Western' approaches as well as tangibility and intangibility can be critically redefined.

This chapter further explores a conceptual model inspired by CR to understand and investigate the causal relations between the observable phenomenon and the generative mechanisms and a non-reductionist approach adopted by both CR and DeLanda's assemblage theory. The concept of a 'laminated system' is borrowed to illustrate the multi-deterministic and interdisciplinary nature of heritage. It characterises generative mechanisms as being on different levels that collectively contribute to the matter at hand, which points to the necessity of understanding and studying heritage in an interdisciplinary way. The non-reductionist approach includes four aspects: the separation of ontology and epistemology against epistemic fallacy, linguistic fallacy and an anthropocentric view of being in Bhaskar's terms; the non-collapsible relation between conceptualisation and empirical experience of reality; the inclusion of human and non-human actors and agencies and the multi-deterministic and laminated nature of reality; and lastly, the irreducibility of higher-level entities to their lower-level components.

This chapter also critically reviews some of the ambiguities in ANT's ontological position but highlights the advantage of incorporating it methodologically in this research. This incorporation is embedded in a unique and complex context, such as China, that can present much fluidity and unpredictability as to how some known mechanisms might manifest and exercise their causal powers in the empirical realm. It emphasises the necessity to 'study from the ground up' and follow a laborious and slow process of unfolding controversies and tracing the associations between actors as advocated by ANT without any presumption before moving beyond the empirical domain. This necessity is the rationale behind some of the research methods, especially the process of explanation building, which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Sec.3.7 is dedicated to establishing an alternative theoretical framework for understanding and assessing sustainability and heritage. Building upon Elder-Vass' development on the two concepts of morphogenesis and morphostasis, this thesis suggests the possibility of viewing sustainability in relational terms as enduring relations between actors. By referring sustainability to a morphostatic state of relations, it describes the possible relations and interactions between change and continuity within sustainability. It emphasises that changes are possible within a certain range with the relations between actors still sustained, while also pointing out that a new type of sustainable relation is possible even after the previous relation is interrupted or becomes obsolete by the disruptive changes. It is vital to keep this possibility in mind as the discussion advances in Part 3 and 4, where the conditions required for this possibility to materialise will be examined in the case studies and explored in Ch.10.

The last and most crucial process for knowledge production within this thesis lies in a point of arrival for the long arch that started from setting up the fundamental positions, through the slow process of empirical studies, to the abstraction and synthesis of the case studies. Abduction and retroduction are adopted as two thought operations that will be deployed throughout the case studies and Ch.10. Where and how these two methods will be used at specific points of the thesis will be discussed further in Ch.4. Having established the theoretical backbone of this thesis in this chapter, the next chapter will discuss the more specific methods used in the research design, data collection, and data analysis.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Overview

The theoretical framework and, primarily, the relational M/M approach established in Ch.3 can be considered as the 'building' of the theatre that frames the complexity of issues that this research intends to investigate. This chapter identifies the set of methods used to design and conduct the investigation. It explains the rationale behind the choice of Case Study Research as a blueprint for the research design, its compatibility with the fundamental philosophical position elaborated upon in Chapter 3, and its advantages for answering some of the research questions set out in Ch.2. The type of design for the units of analysis and the criteria for the case study selection within the case study region are identified. It introduces the various sources of data collected for this research and the collection methods. These methods differ slightly in each specific study, and it will be elaborated upon further in each study chapter (Chs.7-9). It also explains three steps of data analysis and the particular methods for each step. Finally, the chapter reflects upon the limitations of the data collection and analysis.

4.2 Case study research

The research opportunities revealed in Ch.2 and the theoretical framework established in Ch.3 inform the methodology and methods adopted for the research design and its implementation. Particularly, revealing the complex associations in heritage assemblages and following through to 'listen to the actors', as is advocated in ANT, require in-depth investigation into the experience and practices on the ground. In addition, the incorporation of Critical Realism (CR) brings a focus on causality into the research. As explained in the last chapter, from a Critical Realist perspective, one of the objectives is to investigate the causality in empirical studies and to identify the generative mechanisms through abstraction. However, before this step, as has been argued in Ch.3, it is paramount to trace the causal chains of events to understand the causal powers at play.

Therefore, case study research is chosen as a methodology to guide the research design, as it allows in-depth empirical investigation and analysis. The case-based methodology can be deployed to 'help elucidate causation and to specify the range of applicability of our account of causal mechanisms' (Byrne et al. 2009, pp. 2-3). Thus, the case study is advantageous for achieving the objectives set out in Critical Realism (Easton 2010). As mentioned in Ch.3, the case studies are not meant to provide a basis for empirical extrapolation. Instead, the empirical studies provide the basis for abstraction through abduction and retroduction to uncover the fundamental conditions, the generative mechanisms, that give rise to the observable phenomena. The theoretical framework established in Ch.3 provides a path for the 'analytical generalisation' of the case studies to understand sustainable heritage management (Yin 2008,

p. 86). Therefore, the reporting of the cases focuses not only on the common features across the case study region but also on the abnormalities and unexpected outcomes that would have been excluded in the usual empirical extrapolation. Incorporating ANT in this PhD research's methodology requires that the case studies' presentation be close to the data. Therefore, the data analysis starts with a qualitative description for explanation building, which is outlined in Sec.4.5. This research design is particularly deployed to answer the research questions related to China's heritage management complexities and to identify the generative mechanisms for sustainable heritage management. These cases and their ensembles are treated as complex systems or assemblages, within which causality can also be understood as 'complex and contingent' (Byrne et al. 2009, p. 2). From a critical realist perspective, this understanding of cases is coherent with reality framed as multi-deterministic and interdisciplinary.

This PhD research focuses on a case study region, within which three cases are selected for further scrutiny. Therefore, the 'embedded single case' model is used for the research design (Yin 2008, p. 92). This model describes a 'case' in one coherent context, with units of analysis embedded within a large case. The inquiries of this PhD research in China are conducted on two levels – a broader 'case' that covers the situation of the entire case study region and smaller 'units of analysis' where these specific cases can be examined in detail (ibid.). In this PhD research, the 'case' and the context refer to a particular group of heritage sites in a case study region. The 'units of analysis' refer to the specific case studies selected in this region. This model allows the research to examine the complexities within these case studies, enhancing the understanding of causality. In contrast, the investigation across the case study region provides an overview of the diverse situations within the regional and national contexts. Tracing the causal links within these cases is achieved through several analytical methods, including 'explanation building', 'time-series analysis', and 'cross-case synthesis'. The data analyses are conducted within a coherent 'logic model' (Yin 2008, pp. 212-255).

The logic of this PhD research is based on the relational M/M approach established in Ch.3 (Figure 4). The case studies' data is presented and analysed through the lens of this framework, following the theoretical proposition outlined in Ch.3. The other three analytical steps are developed further based on the research opportunities and objectives identified in Ch.2. First, 'explanation building' is used to compile a narrative of causal links through qualitative description. Second, complex time-series analysis traces the event timeline and captures the dynamic nature of associations between actors in the case studies. Finally, cross-case synthesis, namely the juxtaposition of the specific cases, is crucial for identifying the generative mechanisms and understanding the relationship between heritage and sustainability of broader society.

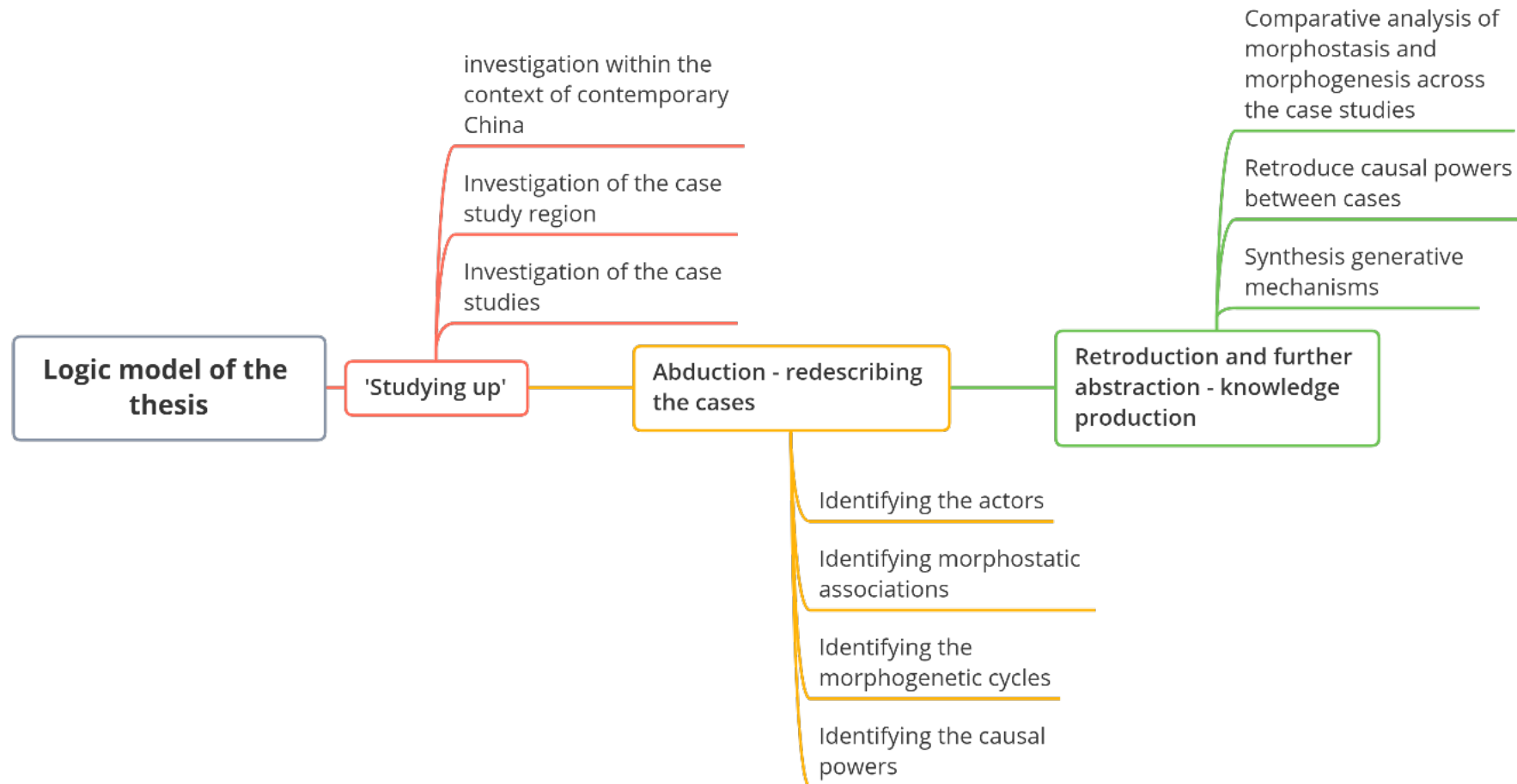


Figure 4 Logic model of the thesis

The specific application of these methods in the case studies will be further explained in Sec.4.5.

4.3 Case study selection

As premised in Part 1 and elaborated upon further in Ch.5, heritage management in contemporary China manifests itself in various ways across different regions and heritage types. The scope of this PhD research determines that a focus on a specific area and heritage type is necessary to reveal the complexities sufficiently in the case studies. The case study region in China is chosen upon the completion of a decade-long national scheme, which is the most widespread and heavily invested top-down scheme regarding the restoration of historic timber buildings in the country. It symbolises a significant national investment of resources into cultural heritage. Moreover, the early timber buildings in this case study region are among the most typical heritage recognised by China's current administrative and legislative system and heritage professionals. The conservation and management approach to this type of heritage entities shapes much of the approaches taken towards other types of heritage. The rationale for choosing these heritage sites with early timber buildings is further explained in Ch.6. Within the case study region, a set of criteria is devised to identify the scope of field investigation:

- 1) The sites chosen in the case study region are all national Protected Cultural Heritage Sites (PCHS) with early timber buildings (pre-14th century), which means they are entitled to the highest priority when it comes to state and local resources, and the state and local administrations acknowledge their significance. This criterion also keeps the context of the selected cases relatively coherent, controlling some variables in an open system. It helps keep the 'noise' down for the cross-case synthesis.
- 2) The sites have all been through major restorations and environment improvement projects in recent years, and most of them are included in the national scheme, the Southern Project (*Nanbu Gongcheng*). It means that the physical state of the buildings is relatively sound, and there are supposed to be basic infrastructures and safety facilities on site. Similarly, this criterion also helps control the variables regarding the physical state of the sites, making it easier to focus on the issues regarding their management and sustainable future.
- 3) They are primarily located in a rural or semi-rural environment, embedded in human settlements or close to them, including sites in and around townships and rural villages. The relationship between the sites and the local communities is distinctive in this type of spatial composition compared to those in an entirely urban or completely secluded environment. Sites in a rural or semi-rural setting demonstrate diverse human and non-human associations, which

are the focus of this case study. This criterion also guarantees that there are local community actors in the cases. The sites in the other two types of environments are also worthy of attention regarding their sustainability. However, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to address those scenarios sufficiently.

Besides the above criteria for selecting the sites for field investigations in the case study region, the three cases presented in Chs.7-9 are chosen based on additional criteria and the initial data collection of the fieldwork. The presence of controversies and the accessibility of data are among the primary criteria. First, the controversies include those within the case, such as those presented in the Guangrenwang Temple case (Ch.8), and the exceptional circumstances in the case study region, such as the Longwang Temple case (Ch.9). The controversies can also be observed over a more extended period, such as those presented in the Baiyu Temple case (Ch.7). Second, data accessibility is determined by whether sufficient first-hand data is accessible and whether second-hand data can complement the absence of first-hand data. The possibility to observe the temple fairs (Chs.7 & 9), the extensive publication of actors' opinions (Ch.8), and the availability of previous management plans and restoration portfolios and reports (Chs.7 & 9) make the three cases more suitable than the rest of the sites.

More importantly, the three cases are selected to help answer the research questions, particularly identifying the generative mechanisms giving rise to the (un)sustainable outcomes in the case study region through cross-case synthesis. Several combinations of conditions are considered across the cases. First, the cases present three scenarios regarding the post-restoration interventions, one with a high-profile and heavily invested intervention (Ch.8), one with small-scale and grassroots interventions (Ch.9), and one with nearly no post-restoration intervention or any prospect of it (Ch.7). These three scenarios cover most of the situations seen across the case study region during this research. Second, these three scenarios lead to the various degrees of the presence of local and external human actors. A prominent presence of external actors can be observed in the Guangrenwang Temple case (Ch.8). The active engagement of local actors is apparent in the Longwang Temple case (Ch.9), and the Baiyu Temple case (Ch.7) presents a lack of capacity or presence from any prominent actor. Third, the cases present three tendencies regarding their future. The Baiyu Temple and Guangrenwang Temple cases (Chs.7 & 8) demonstrate challenges in facilitating their sustainable future. In contrast, the Longwang Temple case (Ch.9) illustrates a promising condition rarely observed across the case study region.

4.4 Data collection

The data collection for this PhD research was conducted through desk-based research and fieldwork. The data was obtained from four types of sources, including 'documents, archival records, interviews, and direct observations' (Yin 2008, p. 175). The first two sources were mainly from desk-based research. However, some documents and archival datasets were collected during the fieldwork, such as the Southern Project archive, including the restoration designs and records and previous management plans. The interviews were conducted in the case study region and beyond, while the direct observations were only in the case study region. The four sources were corroborated to strengthen the reliability and validity of the case studies, documenting the chains of evidence to construct narratives of causality in the case study chapters (Chs.7-9) and the discussion chapter (Ch.10). The interviews, direct observations, and case-related documents are essential to provide a multi-angled lens to understand the complex web of actors and associations.

The desk-based research concerns collecting documents and archival records on two levels: those informing the broader context of China's heritage system and those related to the case study region and selected case studies. The first level includes national and provincial policy, legislative, and regulatory documents relevant to heritage conservation and management in China. They also include relevant international and national professional standards. Besides providing information for the case studies, these documents are examined critically as part of the literature review in Chs.2 & 5. The second level involves case-specific documents and records, such as the transcriptions of the historic stone steles and other inscriptions on-site, the historic and contemporary chronographies, previous restoration design and documentation, management plans, administrative documents relevant to the cases, and news and magazine articles relevant to the cases. These documents are primarily accessible online, while the restoration design, records, and management plans are only accessible in the off-line digital form through personal contacts rather than a public channel, despite they should be publicly accessible. The archival records include heritage records of the national PCHS published by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH)⁴⁶ and other statistical records from the census. Similarly, the PCHS heritage records, despite being in the public domain, are only accessible through an online portal that requires institutional credentials. Therefore, it should be acknowledged that some of the information is not readily

⁴⁶ This department has been renamed National Cultural Heritage Administration (NCHA) in 2018. However, SACH has been widely used in Anglophone academic literature. Therefore, SACH will still be used in this thesis to avoid confusion.

verifiable if one cannot get access to the relevant institutional affiliation and that there is always a margin of error in any statistical records consulted.

4.4.1 Fieldwork

Two fieldwork studies were carried out in the case study region, the south and southeast parts of Shanxi Province, Taiyuan, the capital city of Shanxi Province, and Beijing, the capital of the PRC. The first fieldwork took place in Beijing and Changzhi, Jincheng and Yuncheng Municipalities of Shanxi Province. Between these municipalities, 53 national PCHS with early timber buildings across 16 counties were investigated, among which 48 were included in the Southern Project. All of them have been restored in recent years. The first two days in the case study region were scheduled for pilot investigations. Initial connections with the local contacts were made, and pilot on-site investigation and interviews were conducted. The pilot days allowed rapport building with the local contacts and adjusting the documentation methods and interview approaches. An initial selection of the case studies was made during the first fieldwork, partially based on the initial finding of the on-site investigation. The schedule was adjusted during the fieldwork to allow more time to investigate the case studies. The second fieldwork includes mainly interviews with actors in Beijing and Taiyuan, such as the heritage professionals and state and provincial level officials involved in the Southern Project.

A total of 71 interviews were conducted during the two fieldwork investigations. The semi-structured focused interviews were conducted with six categories of actors, including a) national officials in SACH and provincial-level officials in the Cultural Heritage Bureau of Shanxi Province; b) local-level officials in heritage management and other relevant departments (municipal, district, and county levels); c) on-site managers and caretakers of the PCHS; d) local community members; e) heritage professionals; f) local craftsmen and artisans. A set of seven to eight questions was designed for each category to understand the actors' backgrounds, responsibilities, relationships with other actor groups, their opinions towards the conservation and management of the PCHS, the challenges to fulfilling their responsibilities, and their visions for the future (see Appendix 14 for the interview questions for each category). Each interview lasted for 60 minutes on average, while extra time was set aside for rapport building. The interviews were conversational, with moderated directions based on the interview questions. Interviews with on-site managers or caretakers were primarily conducted as walking interviews within the heritage sites, while the rest were conducted as sit-down interviews. A routine on-site investigation in the case study region includes interviews with site managers, caretakers, and, when possible, local community members and craftsmen that have specific associations with the sites. Local-level officials were interviewed for each municipality and county with many cases. In addition, more relevant actors were interviewed for the three in-depth case studies based on their connections with the cases. The interviews

were beneficial for understanding the day-to-day challenges of managing these sites and the complex causality behind them. It is also worth noting that actors such as the on-site managers and caretakers were rarely consulted or interviewed on such a scale in heritage research and practices in this region. Therefore, this PhD research is also an opportunity to make their voices heard. Besides interviews, direct observations were made during the fieldwork in the case-study region. The routine observations on-site include the physical situation of the PCHS, their settings, and people's behaviours and interactions with the space, such as religious activities and other spatial use.⁴⁷ The on-site direct observations were documented with field notes, photographs, videos, and mapping. The direct observations provided valuable first-hand data, which was critical for observing and recording spontaneous, unpredictable, and sporadic events. In addition, they are essential for corroboration with other data sources, as they are often not recorded in any other second-hand data set or would be remembered and reflected differently by the interviewees.

4.5 Data analysis

As outlined in the research design, the data analysis is conducted through explanation building, time-series analysis, and cross-case synthesis. For each step, specific methods are deployed based on the theoretical framework and relational M/M approach established in Ch.3 and the data collected in the case studies. The explanation building and time-series analysis are conducted within each case study chapter (Chs.7-9), while cross-case synthesis is carried out in Ch.10 (Figure 5).

Adopting ANT's stance on studying from the ground up, explanation building must start from presenting the cases as close as possible to the data. Therefore, 'qualitative description' is not only a means to present the data but also an analytical method that aims to build a narrative towards a causal explanation. The qualitative description has the advantage of staying close to the data, which is essential for tracing the associations between the actors within the assemblages and understanding the causal chains of events (Sandelowski 2000). Besides qualitative description, explanation building also involves thematic discussions and controversy mapping (Yaneva 2016). The thematic discussions help further understand the complexity of the case studies, highlighting the underlying issues emerging through the data. For the more complex case (Ch.8), controversy mapping helps navigate between the various

⁴⁷ For example, the Longwang Temple case (Ch.9), which involves ethnographical observations of the temple fair, includes religious and social activities, organisational and managerial involvement in the temple fair, and traditions and practices performed on and around the sites.

discourses, attitudes, and actions and to elucidate the most contested issues within the case. The application of controversy mapping has an overlap with the time-series analysis, as is explained below.

The time-series analyses in the case studies are analytical processes to travel from the data-near qualitative description towards abstraction through abduction. These processes include two steps, a relative time-series analysis and a chronological one. As mentioned in Ch.3, abduction involves 'redescribing' the cases through a conceptual lens to gain a deeper understanding. For the case studies, this is achieved by identifying the *morphostatic* associations (labelled as Ms x) within and beyond the heritage assemblages, the *morphogenetic* cycles that these associations have gone through (labelled as Mg x-y), and the causal powers that contributed to the emergence, sustaining, transformation, and obsolescence of these associations. These cycles are traced and visualised in the relational M/M cycles diagrams in Chs.7-9.

The relational M/M cycles diagram constructs the relative timeline of the *morphostatic* associations' life cycles. However, it does not characterise the strengthening or weakening of these *morphostatic* associations over time. Therefore, the *morphostatic* timeline is deployed to highlight these associations' temporal and dynamic aspects in chronological order. It should be noted that the *morphostatic* timeline is qualitative, and the strengthening or weakening of the associations is not quantified. The *morphostatic* timeline maps the *morphogenetic* cycles with the events presented through empirical data, reinforcing the logical connection from the empirical to the abstract. More importantly, the *morphostatic* timeline and relational M/M cycles diagram in the case study chapters illustrate the conditions for the tendency of heritage assemblages' sustainable future.

The three methods explained above, the qualitative description, the relational M/M cycles diagram, and the *morphostatic* timeline, complement each other. The 'qualitative description' is essential for presenting the 'raw material' for further analysis and covering details that would otherwise be left out in the abstraction processes. Therefore, it should be emphasised that this step is crucial for ensuring that all voices are represented as thoroughly as possible. The other two methods are critical intermediate steps to connect the empirical data to the generative mechanisms. The explanation building and time-series analyses provide the basis for further cross-case synthesis in Ch.10, which is achieved through comparative analysis and retroduction.

As mentioned in Ch.3, retroduction is a reconstructive thought operation to generate new knowledge and understanding from empirical cases. For this research, retroduction involves comparing the initial analytical results within each case study and synthesising the essential

generative mechanisms, a combination of actors, associations, and conditions. It explains the causality of heritage management's (un)sustainable outcome in the case study region. Further abstraction in this process in Ch.10 proposes a hypothesis of the generative mechanisms for sustainable heritage management of China's PCHS.

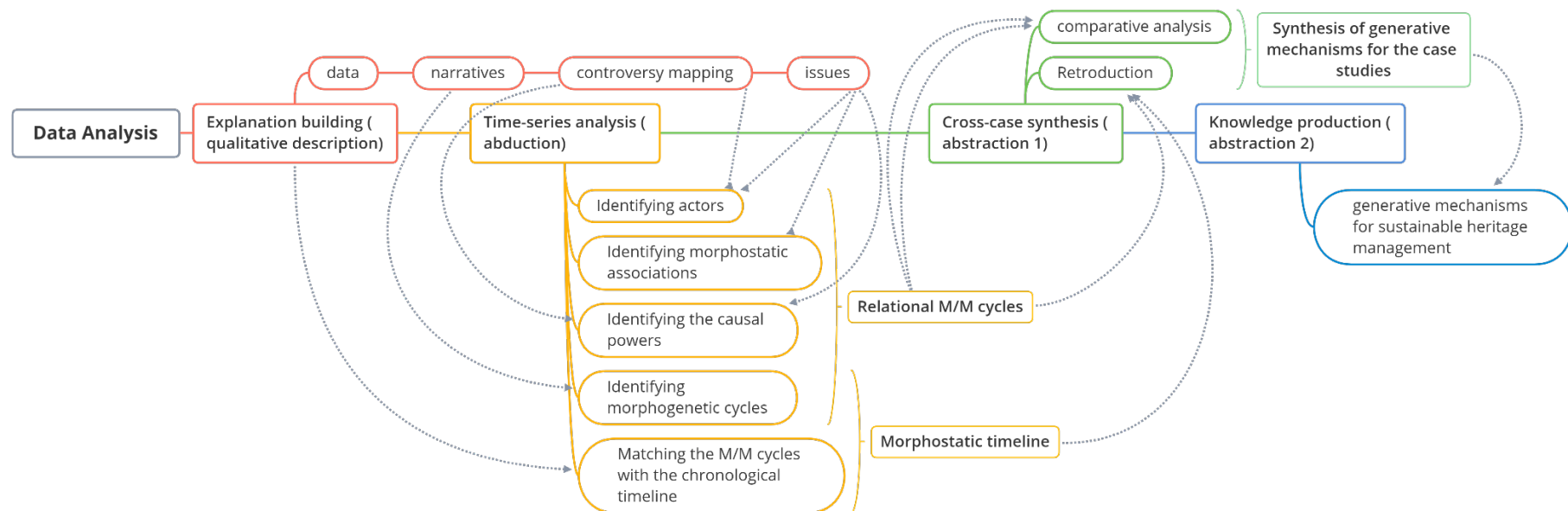


Figure 5 Data analysis diagram

4.6 Limitations and research ethics

Nevertheless, there are limitations and regrettable incidents during the data collection process and the amount of data collected. First, as mentioned above, some of the relevant administrative documents in China are not readily available even though they are supposed to be in the public domain. Second, the local contacts were, in many ways, introduced to me through a top-down administrative system.⁴⁸ Many caretakers were only willing to be interviewed when they knew that their line managers, usually the local officials, had agreed to it beforehand. It was possible to build a rapport with the caretakers during an extended interview, and most of the interviewees had been candid during the interviews. However, some interviewees inevitably considered me a representative of the local government or a researcher who possesses more knowledge, and therefore, more power than them, despite my best effort to avoid such an impression. In some situations, the local officials were also present, as stated in the supplementary interview records. While it is valuable to observe the dynamic and interactions between actors, it is also inevitable that the caretakers or local community members might feel intimidated and less free to speak. Therefore, it is essential to recognise that the interviewees' opinions are always situated in a specific space and time. Third, not all relevant actors were willing to be interviewed or recorded, although the former situation was minimal. Notes and other sources are incorporated to complement such situations. Multiple sources of data are corroborated to minimise these limitations' impact on this research's validity.

Limitations are also recognised during the implementation of these analytical methods. First, there have been critical reflections on whether qualitative description as a research method results in insufficient interpretation, such as debates over the dilemma between staying loyal to the empirical data and moving towards an abstract explanation (Sandelowski 2000). Actor-Network-Theorists caution against adhering the empirical data to some 'invisible powers or structures' without a sound and logical process. Therefore, if considered in isolation with the other methods, the explanation building process can seem descriptive. On the other hand, some data would inevitably be left out during the time-series analysis and cross-case synthesis, which could still impact the conclusion when considered through a different lens. Such a limitation is also present in data collection, a process in which data is already selectively collected, despite the intention to avoid bias. Finally, the analyses focus more on one scale than another based on the explanation building process. It is recognised that

⁴⁸ For example, it was necessary to have the local officials' endorsement or permission to contact the caretakers on-site.

analyses on other scales might bring further understanding to the cases. Therefore, the findings of this PhD research are corrigible and subject to criticism.

Research ethics have been observed and practised throughout this PhD research, from data collection to their presentation in the thesis. All human participants have consented to their participation in the research through written or oral consents. All participants were made aware of the data privacy and other relevant policy regarding the information provided by them, including anonymisation and their rights to withdraw or alter their information and contribution.⁴⁹

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has established the road map from the theoretical framework to the case study research. It identifies the path from the general discussion in Ch.3 that can be translated and applied to empirical studies. It argues that case study research is an appropriate research design blueprint to enable empirical studies, compatible with this thesis' philosophical position and the objectives that aim to answer the research questions. It specifies that a single embedded case study is selected as the model to cover the case study region and the specific units of analysis. For the case studies, four data sources, documents, archival records, interviews, and direct observations, are collected with desk-based research and fieldwork studies. The data is analysed in three steps, explanation building, time-series analysis, and cross-case synthesis, under a coherent logic model embedded in the theoretical framework. Research methods including qualitative description, abduction (relational M/M cycles diagram and *morphostatic* timeline), comparative analysis, and retroduction are deployed for the analytical and abstraction processes. The following Part 3 will dive into the specific contexts of China's heritage management, the case study region, and the scrutiny of three case studies.

⁴⁹ For the purpose of anonymisation, especially for the caretakers of the heritage sites, all the heritage sites are coded as 'initial of their municipality + Temple + X', except for the three examined in the case studies. For example, a temple in Changzhi Municipality would be coded as CZ Temple 1. There is no particular order in the numbering. All local officials from municipal to county levels are coded as 'local official X', provincial level officials as 'provincial official X', state officials as 'state official X', heritage professionals as 'heritage professional X', and community members (including craftsmen and artisans) as 'community member X'.

Part 3 Interrogation: Let the Actors Perform

Chapter 5 Heritage in China

5.1 Overview

The first two parts have laid down the foundation for the case studies of this research. Part 1 introduced the research initiatives and reviewed the extant literature on the latest developments of the Studies of Heritage and sustainability studies and introduced the early development of modern heritage philosophies in China briefly. Part 2 has established the theoretical framework as the backbone of this thesis, identifying the pathways and methodology to investigate the conditions and causal powers contributing to the (un)sustainable outcome of heritage practices. It argues for a relational understanding of sustainability and illustrates the changing and sustaining of the associations between actors by adopting the *morphogenesis* and *morphostasis* concepts.

Building on this foundation, Part 3 scrutinises the sustainability of heritage management in contemporary China by elucidating the various actors and their associations in play, tracing the causal chains of events, and identifying the causal powers that contribute to the (un)sustainable outcomes of heritage management in the case studies (Chs.7-9). Chs.5 and 6 are entryways into these case studies by providing a contextualised overview and introduction to China and the case study region. After the early development of the modern heritage system outlined in Ch.2, the country went into nearly half a century's turmoil through wars, natural disasters, and radical ideological movements, which led to the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s-1970s. China's heritage management in the post-Cultural Revolution era set off in the context of the rapid economic development since the Opening Up in 1978 and the official ratification of the World Heritage Convention in 1985 has presented even more complexities in the 21st century (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2021).

This chapter provides another literature review focusing on China, following the same themes identified in Ch.2. It introduces the characteristics and philosophical development of heritage activities in post-Cultural-Revolution China, the current heritage-related legislative and administrative framework, and the relevant national policies. It also reviews the state policies and academic literature on sustainable development and their relevance to heritage practices. Furthermore, this chapter introduces two forms of participation from non-state actors and provides an overview of heritage professionals' role and communicative nature among other actors.

5.2 Heritage in post-Cultural-Revolution China

In the last three decades, heritage in China has experienced an unprecedented 'boom', or even 'craze' and 'fever' (Yan 2018b; Zhu and Maags 2020, pp. 10-14) (Figure 6). As the country has become one with the second most World Heritage sites globally, closely tailing Italy, it demonstrates not only its strong interest in getting international recognition in the field but also the increasing attention given to cultural heritage domestically (UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2018). The development of the cultural heritage industry is made possible not only through the resources brought by the economic development of the country since the 'Opening Up' (SACH 2008b), but also partly due to the perceived 'threat' associated with the heritage sites lost, or potentially lost, to the process of the very same development. During the early stage of the economic reform in the 1980s, 'use first' was the heritage principle rather than conservation, which had led to many heritage sites, even the listed ones, being lost in the rapid economic development process (Gruber 2007). The perceived 'threat' is one of the main characteristics of heritage policies and public discourse in post-Cultural-Revolution China (Yan 2018b, pp. 37-38; Maags 2020).

Zhu and Maags (2020, p. 13) contend that this 'heritage fever' is not only a state-led political move of strengthening the ruling party's power and reinforcing a unified narrative of national identity, but also a trend experienced by the Chinese populace. An array of actors, including entrepreneurs, academics, and other individuals, participate in heritage activities enthusiastically and consume 'heritage products' with eagerness, often with active participation and collaboration from the local governments. The 'heritage boom' is manifested as increased state funding for heritage projects and academic research. The active engagement of academics in higher education institutions in heritage practices has blurred the division between heritage academics and professionals. It is one reason why most extant heritage literature in China focuses on practices and technical aspects. Even the philosophical debates often have an explicit 'activist' undertone.

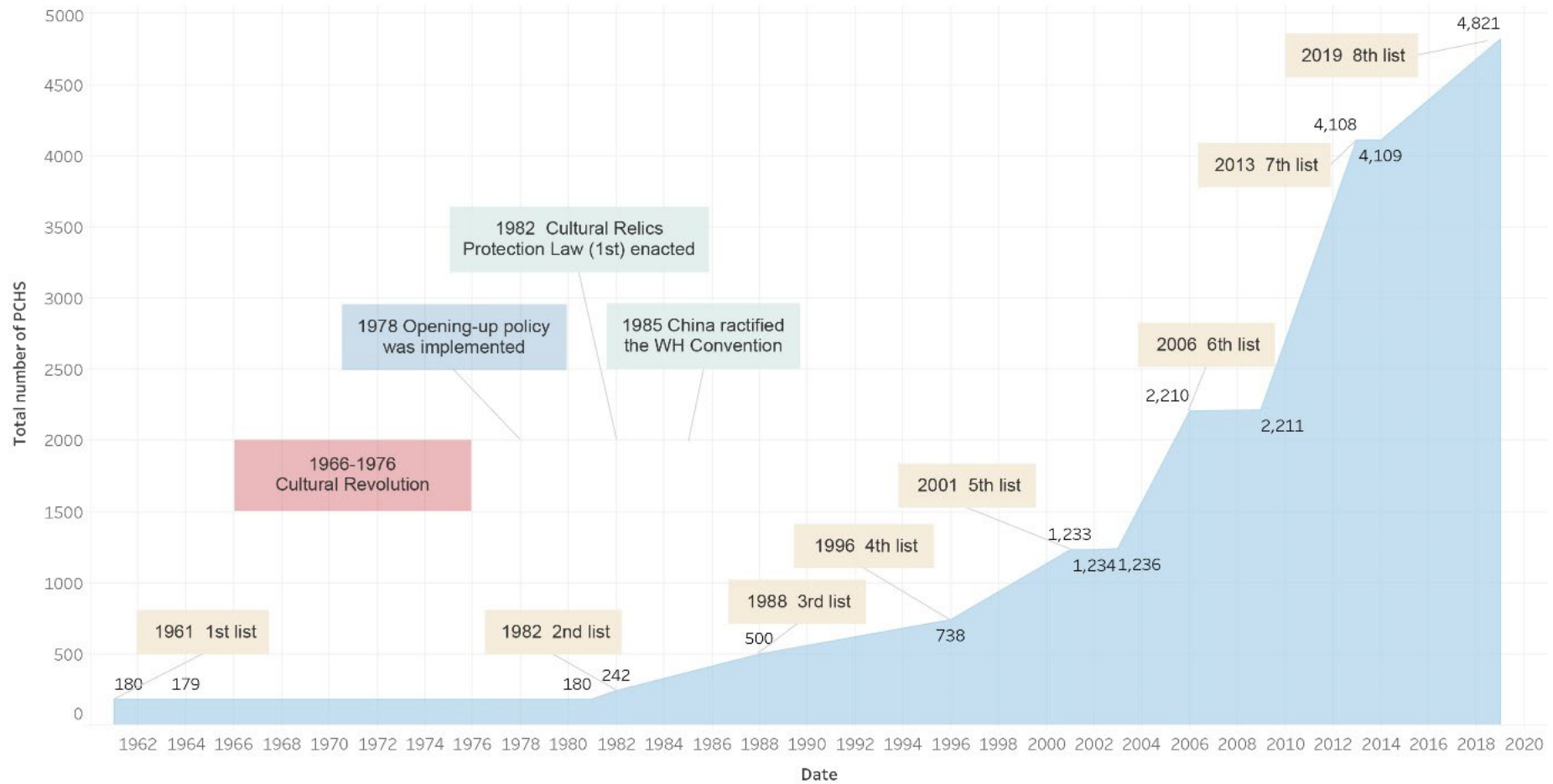


Figure 6 The number of national Protected Cultural Heritage Sites (PCHS) listed from 1960-present. Data source: (SACH 2020)

Yan (2018b) identified three phases of China's heritage discourse development since the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. Even though the phases are identified based on cultural heritage discourse, the division also coincides with significant changes in political, administrative, social, and academic aspects in the country. To clarify, the post-Cultural Revolution era in this thesis covers the last two phases defined by Yan: the 'transitional phase' (1985-2005) and 'cultural heritage phase' (2005 till now), but also includes the period from 1982-1985. 1982 is a crucial year to start the 'transitional phase' as it was when the first Cultural Heritage Protection Law was enacted and the second list of national PCHS was published.

As discussed in Ch.2, the urgency and the implied 'threat' that heritage faces are characterised by Harrison as a notion tightly bound with modernity, which also gave rise to the heritage boom in the late modern period (Harrison 2013). As will be shown below, this notion of 'threat' is permeated in China's heritage discourse, research, and practices, especially in the post-Cultural-Revolution era. The turbulence during the Cultural Revolution only strengthened such a mentality as Chinese intellectuals sensed the 'threats' that both an atrocity such as the Cultural Revolution (the 1960s-1970s) and the rapid economic development brought by the 'Reform and Opening-up' period that came after the 1970s could pose on Chinese heritage, and in a broader sense, the 'Chineseness' that contributes to the national identity.

Yan (2018a, p. 30) has examined how the "universal model of cultural conservation and national practices" have interacted in China since 1949. He emphasises that the evolution of China's conservation philosophies is very much a negotiated process between the 'Western' ideas introduced by the international community through the programme of World Heritage and the "local historically rooted concepts and practices" (ibid.). Similar to the situation discussed in Ch.2, heritage practitioners in China are also confronted with challenging issues that require critical discussions on a value system that was initially based on a modernist scientific and canonical approach towards heritage, especially for monuments and sites. This value system was constituted by three main categories, historical, artistic, and scientific values. The 2015 revision of the Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China (China Principles) was one of the attempts to rectify the incompatibility of this value system and the increasingly expanding coverage and comprehensive understanding of heritage (ICOMOS China 2015).

The 2015 revision added cultural and social value categories to cover the values associated with the sites that cannot be described under the three initial categories in the previous version

(ICOMOS China 2015)⁵⁰. The 'China Principles' is a non-law-binding professional standard document published by ICOMOS China. Despite not being a legislative document and remaining a standard solely for a narrow range of heritage, the 'immovable tangible heritage sites', it was the first time that these intangible associations were crystalised in a national guideline. Although the standard's language still follows a 'value-based' approach, including these two categories of values was one step towards a 'people-centred' approach. However, the assessment criteria of these values and how they can be translated to the strategy for interventions beyond tangible heritage remains vague. They were also written with relatively new categories in mind, such as vernacular dwellings, cultural landscapes, and urban landscapes. However, as will be shown in the case studies, these issues not only exist in recently recognised heritage categories but are also present in heritage that is perceived to be a 'typical' category of 'immovable cultural heritage sites' (*buke yidong wenwu*).

Evidence of access to critical academic commentaries in Anglophone literature only started to emerge in Chinese heritage literature very recently and are still limited to academic discourse. Nevertheless, a review of Chinese heritage literature in the 2000s yielded some inspiring findings, which shows a glimmer of a theoretical breakthrough in understanding heritage. A PhD thesis from 2006 by Zhu Xianggui of Minzu University of China discusses the theoretical basis for China's cultural heritage legislation (Zhu 2006). Zhu incorporates theories from ecology studies and places the legitimacy, philosophical foundation, and scientific foundation of cultural heritage legislation within a sustainable ecological system. Zhu points out the limitation and compartmentalisation of the current legislative framework in addressing intangible and natural heritage and suggests placing heritage in a world ecological system to move beyond an anthropocentric approach to heritage to better address the connection between human society and nature in the process of achieving sustainable development goals. Another collection of works come from a conference in 2006 titled 'Cultural Heritage and Development of Society' (*Wenhua Yichan He Shehui Fazhan*). Although these works are more

⁵⁰ Article 3 of the 2015 version states that "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." In the commentary of this article, it specifies that "Social value is the value that society derives from the educational benefit that comes from dissemination of information about the site, the continuation of intangible associations, as well as the social cohesion it may create.", and it identifies three types of cultural values, which include "i. Diversity, as revealed through ethnic culture, regional culture, or religious culture. ii. Nature, landscape and setting of a site that have been imbued with cultural attributes. iii. A site's intangible heritage." (ICOMOS China 2015, pp. 48-49)

records of the presenters' speeches rather than academic articles, they address the diversity of cultural heritage from multi-disciplinary perspectives of anthropology, geography, and ecology (Chen 2006a; Min 2006; Qiao 2006; Sun 2006; Wang 2006a; Zhang 2006). These reflections are further elaborated by Liang (2009), who points out the two trends of heritage conservation research – expanding the notion of heritage and increasing attention on the intangible aspects of heritage. However, these discussions within academia have not substantially impacted the planning and legislative decision-making, where the tangible aspects still play a dominant role, especially in built heritage. This situation will be further elaborated when discussing the case study region and case studies.

Nevertheless, researchers with anthropology, geography or landscape backgrounds are becoming increasingly active in heritage debates and practices, which brings the intangible aspects and public involvement more and more into the heart of heritage public discourse and practices (for examples, see Xu 2019; Qi 2020). These discussions have become increasingly prevalent in public events related to heritage. A ten-part series titled 'Cultural Heritage Studies' features multidisciplinary collections of heritage research that encompass both the intangible and tangible aspects of heritage and have thematic focuses on heritage studies from subject fields such as cultural anthropology, ethnology, literature, and sociology (Department of Cultural Heritage and Museology of Fudan University 2000,2001; Fudan University Cultural Heritage Research Centre 2003,2012,2013,2015). These disciplines' participation in heritage research is part of the global shift in the Studies of Heritage. The themes of discussions show some similarities to those discussed in Ch.2, primarily manifested as increased attention to the intangible and social aspects of cultural heritage.

On the other hand, these discussions primarily focus on the 'new categories' of heritage rather than the philosophical premises of all heritage practices. Conservation, management, and academic commentaries of the 'typical' categories of monuments and sites such as ancient tombs, architectural monuments, and carving caves, inevitably rarely escape the technical- and material-focused scope, even when they address some significant debates on the 'Western' or Eastern' approaches such as restoration, authenticity, and reconstruction (for examples, see D'Ayala and Wang 2006; Zhu 2012a). The existing literature regarding early timber architectural heritage remains focused on technical issues of restorations, documentation, and conservation planning (for examples, see Yang 1994; Zhang 2010b; Li 2011; Shi and Li 2011). It is also concerned almost solely with the conservation of their tangible materials with few exceptions (for an example of such exception, see Xu 2014). The complexities of the intangible associations with these heritage entities, such as religions, identity, and memory, are often neglected even though they have prompted some fierce public debates over the years (for example, see Tam 2018ab). Fundamentally, despite the expansion

of interdisciplinary involvement, these debates in Chinese literature rarely question critically the rationale behind heritage conservation and the potentially contentious implication of these measures to the broader population of society.

In the recent Anglophone academic critical commentaries on China's heritage scene, two aspects of dissonance have been highlighted. One concerns the power relation between state actors and non-state actors (for examples, see Zhao 2013; Zhu and Li 2013; Yan 2015). It has been mentioned in Ch.2 that there have been emerging yet insufficient discussions on how local actors can also play a part in the negotiation with the dominant narrative and state-led AHD through individual agencies. The other aspect concerns the negotiations between a supposedly imported 'Western' approach and the aforementioned 'Chineseness' both advocated by state-actors and non-state actors, and the particular tectonic characteristics of Chinese timber structures (for examples, see D'Ayala and Wang 2006; Zhu 2011,2015; Lai 2016; Zhu 2017; Zhu and Maags 2020).

As discussed in Ch.2, the perceived distinctiveness of traditional Chinese philosophy from the Western AHD can be misleading. For example, the dynastic political interruptions in China's historical times are often characterised as having contributed to the lack of surviving historic buildings, demonstrating Chinese traditional society's lack of interest in preserving the historic built environment. Several historic events⁵¹ are used as evidence to deduct that preserving historic materials was not part of the traditional philosophy of Chinese culture (for examples, see Zhu and Maags 2020; Zhang 2022). However, such a characterisation is far too simplified. The historic materials that remained, such as those in the case region of this PhD research, show that these 'destruction' acts, albeit significant in scale and highly political and symbolic, do not apply to all historic environments in China. Indeed, the destruction of heritage is not an exclusive phenomenon in China but a conventional tool of oppression when one power seeks to overwrite the legacy of another.

As will be further discussed in Ch.6, there is sufficient evidence showing that the social organisation on a local level that maintained and recreated historic buildings, including the local communities and craftsmen, had shown keen consideration of preserving and reusing previous building materials and architectural forms (Xu 2003; Chen 2006b). Similarly, as will be shown in Chs.6-9, the heritage discourse and practices in today's China show apparent hybridity and ambivalence. On the other hand, as Yan (2015) points out, a state-led AHD that seemingly adopts a traditional 'Eastern' world view can impose the same kind of authority and

⁵¹ Such as the burning of Xianyang, the capital of Qin Dynasty by Xiang Yu, the burning of books by the first Qin Emperor, and the 'destruction' of the Yuan Dynasty capital by the Ming Dynasty rulers

preference for expertise over local knowledge, much the same as the Western AHD. A more fine-grained and nuanced characterisation of these two aspects has long been needed.

5.3 The current legislative and administrative system

The modern setup of China's legislative and administrative system for heritage protection can be traced back to the late Qing Dynasty. The earliest legislative mention of the protection of ancient objects (*guwu*) and historic sites (*guji*) was in the *Urban and Rural Local Autonomy Regulations (Chengzhenxiang Difang Zizhi Zhangcheng)* enacted in January 1909 (Zhang 2009). Later in the same year, *Measures for the Protection of Ancient Sites (Baocun Guji Tuiguang Banfa Zhangcheng)* was issued (Lai 2016). The early emergence of a modern legislative tool for protecting materials from the past was barely put into action as the imperial period came to an end just two years later.

The Republic of China (ROC) government enacted the *Law on the Preservation of Ancient Objects (Guwu Baocun Fa)* in 1930, following a few other preliminary documents, including an internal memo and a temporary regulation in 1916, and a regulation in 1928 addressing the needs to protect historic remains from the imperial past (Zhang 2009). These legislative actions demonstrate that preserving the past was still a concern for the ROC administration even when it tried to transform the country into a modern nation (Lai 2016). However, these efforts turned out to be short-lived. The government department responsible for implementing the legislation was soon dysfunctional as the Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937 (Huang 2012). As outlined in sub-sect.2.3.4, most research and conservation efforts were conducted through *Yingzao Xueshe's* work supported by prominent intellectuals during the wars that followed. It was only until the 1960s that a new administration of PRC resumed state effort.

In 1961, after about a decade of preparation, the *Interim Regulation on the Management of Cultural Relics Protection (Wenwu Baohu Guanli Zanzheng Tiaoli)* and a relevant memo from the State Council were issued (Zhu 2012a). This interim regulation set out the initial scope of what would be 'selected' as 'cultural heritage' and that the management and conservation of these PCHS are responsibilities of local administrations and they should be included in the construction and development planning of the respective regions (State Council of PRC 1961). The first list of 180 national Protected Cultural Heritage Sites (PCHS)⁵² was also issued in the same year (SACH 2020). However, the country went into the Cultural Revolution not long

⁵² The term '*wenwu baohu danwei*' has been translated in various ways in academic publications and official documents. Literally, it means 'protected cultural relic unit'. In this thesis, 'Protected Cultural Heritage Site (PCHS)' will be used as a more straightforward translation.

afterwards, and the construction and progress of this administrative and legislative system were halted. It was not until 1982 that a second list was issued when the first version of the *Cultural Heritage Protection Law* (CHPL) and the *Regulation on the Protection of Historic and Cultural Cities, Towns, and Villages* (RPHCCTV) was enacted (Zhang 2009). The CHPL addresses the conservation and management of PCHS of all levels and 'movable cultural heritage objects' while the latter is concerned specifically with the protection of historic settlements. The RPHCCTV was a pre-emptive action to tackle the foreseeable threat from the rapid development that would be encroaching on historic settlements after the post-Cultural Revolution 'Opening-Up' policy was issued in 1978 (Zhang 2009). Although they both concern the conservation of historic places, they are implemented under two separate administrative systems, which will be elaborated on below. The CHPL was subsequently amended six times in 1991, 2002, 2007, 2013, 2015, and 2017 (NPC of PRC 1991,2002,2007,2013,2015,2017). The most significant amendment was from 2002 when the number of articles in the legislation increased more than twice (NPC of PRC 2002). In 2011, the *Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Law* (ICHPL) was enacted (NPC of PRC 2011). It addresses the protection of various traditional cultural expressions and the material and tangible space that are related to them. Parallel to the relation between the World Heritage Convention and the ICH Convention, the ICHPL established a management mechanism that has borrowed from the fundamental logic behind the one with PCHS while also embodying some distinctive characteristics⁵³.

Despite the increasing attention towards ICH and the overlap between nature and culture in some categories, the PCHS (*Wenwu Baohu Danwei*) system is still the most established and relevant legislative and administrative framework regarding heritage, both regarding the philosophical debates over it and its implementation on the ground. It covers a wide range of heritage types, such as historic buildings (individual buildings or ensembles), cultural landscapes, archaeological sites, memorial sites, and cultural routes. It provides these sites with a protection status and the relevant entitlement to the legislative support and resources for their conservation. It also brings restrictions to what can happen in and around these sites and legal responsibilities to the owners, users, and administrative bodies for their protection and management.

As implied by the name *danwei* (unit), the framework is tailored for tangible and immovable cultural heritage sites rather than including natural heritage (except for the natural components in cultural landscapes), movable objects and intangible heritage expressions. However, it does

⁵³ For in-depth analysis and discussions of the ICH legislative and administrative system and their implementation, see Maags (2018), Zhu and Maags (2020).

not mean that these elements are entirely excluded from this system. It only means that the tangible and immovable cultural heritage is the crucial element for an entity to be listed as PCHS. In many cases, the natural settings, historic objects, and the intangible aspects of the heritage are closely related to the sites, such as the significant natural setting of the historic tombs, the stone tablets that are closely related to the temples' history, or the traditional festivals specifically connected to those sites. They are usually included in the protected unit as 'affiliated cultural relics' (*fushu wenwu*) and 'heritage environment' (*wenwu huanjing*) (both tangible and intangible environment), but they do not receive the entitlement to protection independently from the protected units, at least not from the same system. The PCHS framework consists of five administrative levels – national, provincial, municipal, county (or district) PCHS and 'listed sites' with minimum legal protection. This hierarchy is not only reflected on the protection status and the acknowledgement of the heritage sites' significance but also on the responsible administrations, financial resources, and expertise requirements regarding any interventions towards them. For heritage sites on each level, there is a specific administration who is responsible for their safeguarding and management. It is a sophisticated administrative framework with a strong characteristic of top-down management, but also one that enables heritage sites to be managed locally and with limited resources (Blumenfield and Silverman 2013).

For the national PCHS, the national authority is responsible for approving or rejecting any major interventions such as conservation management plans, restoration projects and infrastructures, as well as monitoring the implementation of its protection. The provincial government is responsible for announcing the project documents that are approved by the national authority and, by doing so, confirming their legality. It is also responsible for monitoring the implementation more closely and reporting any illegal conduct to the national authority. The municipal and county/district levels are responsible for implementing the everyday maintenance as well as supporting the projects on site. Similarly, they are also responsible for reporting any major misconduct to the upper-level administration (SACH 2016; NPC of PRC 2017; State Council of PRC 2017b). During the drafting of the project documents, which are prepared by conservation professionals with corresponding qualifications, they would have to go through consultations with the authorities of all the levels, starting from the local level.

In this sense, even for the national PCHS, the local and provincial level administrations play significant roles in their conservation and management. The provincial authority has a powerful position before it agrees to send the documents to the state level for approval. Such a position has been strengthened even more in recent years as the administrative process has been

gradually decentralised (SACH 2008a; NPC of PRC 2018).⁵⁴ The provincial government is responsible and has the authority to invite the lower-level officials into the consultation processes, although the lower-level officials most often do not have a strong lever in these consultation meetings due to the hierarchy between administrations. On the other hand, the local level officials have a strong influence, albeit less explicitly, when it comes to the implementation (See Appendix 3 for processes of formulating and implementing conservation and management plans for national PCHS). The discussion above shows that the vertical structural dimension of control within the PCHS administrative framework is straightforward and hierarchical, while in operation, actors who possess lower political power can still exercise impactful causal powers on heritage. Chs.6-9 will further reveal both the unpredictability and tendency of these administrative and legislative frameworks and discuss how causal powers have interplayed within the case studies.

At present, there are several administrative systems involved in the management of PCHS working in parallel (Figure 7). The Ministry of Culture and the State Administration of Cultural Relics were set up in 1949 when the PRC was founded, which would become the state administration responsible for the intangible cultural heritage and tangible cultural heritage entities, respectively. On the state level, both the management of PCHS and ICH is placed under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT).⁵⁵ The PCHS are the responsibility of the SACH, an independent bureau under the jurisdiction of the MCT, whereas ICH is managed directly by the ministry (Tam 2019).⁵⁶ Besides these two administrative bodies, there is yet another group of heritage entities listed under a separate legislative and administrative system, as suggested by the legislative jurisdiction discussed above. The historic villages, towns, and cities are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development

⁵⁴ In 2013, A *State Council Institutional Reform and Function Transformation Plan* was issued. Since then, the State Council has been announcing cancelled or decentralised administrative processes such as permit and action approvals in various state departments almost every year, accelerating the administrative decentralisation process. Some approval processes previously carried out by state departments were assigned to provincial departments. Some of these decentralisation actions have had an impact on how heritage interventions are approved, which will be discussed in the next sub-section.

⁵⁵ The Ministry of Cultural and Tourism was founded in March 2018, which merges and replaces the previous Ministry of Culture and China National Tourism Administration (NPC of PRC 2018). This merge will inevitably bring yet more changes to the management of PCHS. It is, however, beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss these potential changes in detail.

⁵⁶ The management of ICH is under the jurisdiction of an internal department of the MCT, called the Secretary Department of ICH (State Council of PRC 2018).

(MOHURD), which publishes an independent list of protected entities. This list is mostly different from the list of PCHS, but sometimes there can be overlap.⁵⁷ Despite the frequent presence of religious associations with heritage, neither the tangible heritage entities (PCHS, movable heritage objects and historic settlements) nor ICH is directly under the jurisdiction of the State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA), which manages religious affairs. SARA is placed directly under the United Front Work Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (UFWD). At the local levels, the management of PCHS and ICH is the responsibility of the corresponding cultural departments and, mirroring the state level, usually belongs to two separate offices. Similarly, religious affairs are managed by the religious departments in the local government (Tam 2019).

In China today, there is no explicit mention of religious connotations or activities in any current legislation or regulations of cultural heritage, including the legislation of ICH, whose scope includes some ceremonies, festivals and traditional folk customs which have religious connotations or are rooted in various folk beliefs (NPC of PRC 2011,2017). Only in the Guideline for Open Access of Historic Buildings, issued by SACH in 2020, were 'religious activities' mentioned. It recommends that religious activities in historic buildings should abide by the relevant legislation and regulations issued by SARA. In 2004, the state published the Regulation on Religious Affairs (revised in 2017). According to this regulation, the 'religious venues' (*Zongjiao huodong changsuo*) are required to be registered with SARA as either a permanent religious space or a temporary one (SARA 2017). Although not mentioning PCHS, it is stated in the regulation that activities in the religious venues should follow cultural heritage legislation and regulations, implying the acknowledgement of certain religious venues being PCHS. Some of the religious activities happening around the PCHS are considered to be ICH expressions (Tam 2019). According to the ICHPL, the provision of physical venues for the inheriting of these traditions is encouraged (NPC of PRC 2011). The ICHPL also states that any physical remains, including historic objects or places, should be protected and managed according to the CHPL.

⁵⁷ Although rarely consulted during the management of cultural heritage entities, there is another legislative and administrative mechanism relevant to the concept of heritage as defined in this thesis. A similar mechanism that includes legislation, administrative bodies, and a multi-level system of protection status assigned to certain areas or entities has been established for natural resources. The Environmental Protection Law (EPL) was enacted in 1989 and revised in 2014. The administrative body for implementing this legislation is the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE), which replaced the previous Ministry of Environment and State Administration of Environmental Protection in 2018.

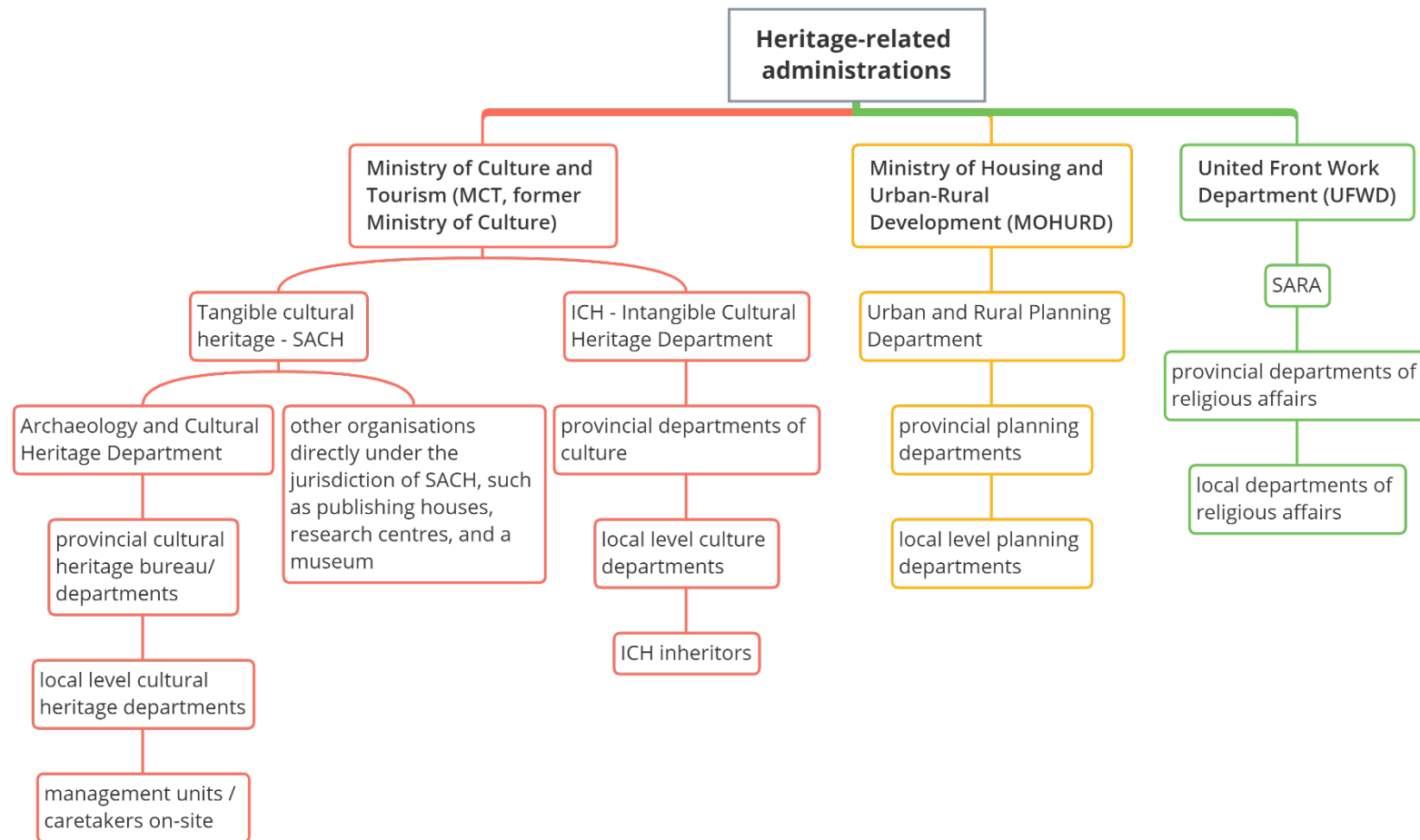


Figure 7 Current heritage-related administrative system in China, based on information collected from the fieldwork of this PhD research and from (MCT 2021; MOHURD 2021; SARA 2021)

These parallel administrative bodies relevant to heritage constitute a horizontal dimension of control. It concerns the relationship between the administrations of cultural heritage and other relevant governmental bodies, including the ones mentioned above and others such as planning, construction, and tourism. Although, in theory, each administration enjoys the autonomy of decision-making within their jurisdiction, the power held by such administrative bodies is far from homogeneous (Smith 2015). There is a tendency not to cross over the borders between administrations to avoid overstepping each other's authority, nor is there sufficient communication between them (Provincial official 1 2018).⁵⁸ SARA and other religious administrations remain distanced from the direct management of the sites, while the cultural heritage sector tolerates the religious practices on-site with a cautious approach and shows little desire to elevate the religious connotations of these sites as part of their 'heritage values' (Local official 3 2018; Local officials 1&2 2018). On the local level, the heritage departments are in a relatively more challenging position because of this horizontal dimension. They not only have to follow the directives of the upper-level administrations but they are also restrained by the overall strategic policies of the local level government (Caretaker of JC Temple 19 2018; Local officials 1&2 2018). While the provincial and national level administrations' priorities may still focus on heritage despite the uneven distribution of powers between the ministries, it has been argued that the objective becomes even less determining and subject to competition with other priorities when it is operated on a local level (Blumenfield and Silverman 2013; Lee and du Cros 2013).

The vertical and horizontal dimensions of control discussed in this section constitute the essential context for understanding the heritage phenomena and management in China. Their manifestations on the ground and how their causal powers interact with other actors will be further examined in the next few chapters.

5.4 National policies on heritage

In 1982, the same year when the first CHPL was enacted, the state announced a policy to return the property ownership of some of the religious places to religious organisations (Xi 1985). During this process, some of the properties were handed back to religious associations other than temple committees. One of the reasons for this is that the traditional organisational structure in temples has changed since 1949 and was disrupted during the Cultural Revolution, during which most monks/priests were evacuated from the temples as their functions were

⁵⁸ For example, many PCHS are not registered as religious venues even if they are regarded as sacred places, and there are religious activities happening on those sites.

transformed. For that same reason, some of the properties remain collective or public properties, managed by the village committees or the local authorities during the implementation of the religious policies after 1982 (Tam 2019).

In China, the '16-character Strategic Policy'⁵⁹ is one of the earliest and most long-lasting overarching national policies relating to cultural heritage. In response to the sense of 'threat' to heritage as discussed in Sec.5.2 and Ch.2, this policy was initially formulated during the first National Conference of Cultural Relics Protection in 1992 and was later refined and legalised in the 2002 revision of CHPL (NPC of PRC 2002). The first phrase of this overarching policy slogan, which dictates the priorities of legislative and administrative tasks of the public sector for cultural heritage entities as identified in the CHPL, explicitly states that 'rescuing' is prioritised above all. The '16-character Policy' is a crystallised form of the responses towards the various types of threats as well as a change of discourse regarding heritage. It has remained the one overarching policy in all the subsequent versions of CHPL (NPC of PRC 2002,2007,2013,2015,2017).

Besides the 16-character Policy, the shifting focus of SACH's policies in the last two decades has shaped the landscape of heritage management in the country. The first decade of the 2000s saw an increasing interest in, and emphasis on, conservation management plans of the PCHS, which was partly influenced by the advocacy of SACH's director then who has a professional background in urban planning (Editorial Department of Archicreation 2006). In the years after 2012, SACH started to promote several other emphases such as 'protection and use (*baohu liyong*)', and 'revitalising the heritage (*rang wenwu huo qilai*)' (Li 2013b; Central Office of the Communist Party of China and Office of the State Council 2018). These focuses are strongly influenced by the specific values that are held by the directors of SACH but are also a result of the increasing consideration for the sustainable management of PCHS, which surfaced during the last decade (Tam 2019). Particularly, the second policy focus, 'revitalising the heritage', refers to several aspects of heritage management. The character '*huo*' has two meanings in Chinese. It could mean 'alive' as well as 'flexible'. In this context, it refers to calling for more flexible solutions for keeping, extending, or reinjecting vitality in heritage sites and objects through measures such as adaptive reuse, participatory interpretation and education in museums, involving the private sector in heritage projects, and tourism development (Lv 2015; Guo 2016b). For museums and heritage objects, revitalisation can mean developing a creative cultural industry that brings history into popular culture, and

⁵⁹ Referred to as '16-character Policy' from hereafter. The policy includes four short phrases which are 'conservation as the main purpose; rescuing as the priority; reasonable utilisation; and enhancing management' (*baohu weizhu, qiangjiu diyi, heli liyong, jiaqiang guanli*).

treating images and related themes of heritage objects as cultural resources for commercialisation (Yu 2017; Lu 2020). This policy is no longer limited to tangible heritage but is also prevalent in the discourse of ICH (Xiang 2020).

There are emerging changes in the state policies that indicate an increasing willingness to decentralise some of the heritage management responsibilities from the central government to local governments and even the private sectors. In 2013, the State Council announced the cancellation of the approval process “to change the functions of, to hypothecate or to transfer the non-state-owned national PCHS which are restored with government funding”. This approval process was previously implemented by the local level heritage administrations (State Council of PRC 2013). It suggests that the state intends to loosen the restrictions for the adaptive reuse of the non-state-owned national PCHS (Tam 2019).⁶⁰ In 2017, SACH issued the *Temporary Guideline for Open Access of Heritage Buildings*, which became the official guideline in 2020. The guideline is not an administrative regulation or law and does not specify the scope of ‘heritage buildings’ and whether they have PCHS status or not. Nevertheless, as a recommendation from a state administration, it is a clear indication of the state’s willingness to encourage open access to heritage buildings. It suggests a few categories of potential functions of heritage buildings such as community services, cultural exhibition, tourist attractions, business and hospitality venues, and other non-profit institutions and offices, but it also states that the function of heritage buildings need not be limited to those. Compared to the restraint and caution over for-profit activities still present in the 2017 amendment of the CHPL, this SACH guideline takes a stride towards more flexible and diverse use of heritage buildings.

Besides the use and reuse of heritage resources, state policies regarding sustainable heritage management and conservation have started to address maintenance and preventive conservation of historic buildings. A proposal to improve the ‘annual repair’ (*suixiu*) system, a historic mechanism implemented by the imperial courts, was raised by a CPPCC (Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference) member to SACH in 2019. The 2018 *National Management Guideline for Dedicated Fund for Cultural Heritage Conservation*, issued by SACH and the Ministry of Finance, mentioned specific funding for preventive conservation of immovable cultural heritage sites for the first time. SACH’s response to the CPPCC member’s

⁶⁰ It should be noted that even though the process was cancelled as early as in 2013, the implementation and attitudes from the administration varies from case to case. The uncertainty and complexity in such situations can be demonstrated by other cases concerning the adaptive reuse of historic religious space (for example, see Tam (2018ab)).

proposal states that the administration will further the effort to develop a preventive conservation and maintenance system for cultural heritage sites (SACH 2019).

5.5 Sustainable development and heritage

The earliest official adoption of a sustainable development strategy in China was related to the UN Agenda 21. After the UN action plan's publication in 1992, China issued the China Agenda 21 in 1994, outlining the state's commitment to developing national policies, strategies, legislative and administrative tools to tackle the challenges of sustainable development (State Council of PRC 1994). The China Agenda 21 mentions cultural diversity and culture's relevance in education and living quality improvement briefly without mentioning heritage, which is coherent with the narrative in the UN Agenda 21 (UN 1992a). The China Agenda 21 states that economic development must be the centre of its governance to improve its citizens' living quality and elevate the country's standing and influence in the world while acknowledging that the rapid development mode with a large population and scarce resources had led to exploitation of the vulnerable environment. It also states that the SD strategy in China, which was very much a developing country at the time, needs to have an explicit focus on development (ibid.). The idea of 'development' here was specifically referring to economic development, which was considered the essential path towards alleviating poverty in the agenda. Although China's economy has been developing fast and steadily since 1994, the focus on economic development remains front and centre in China's SD strategy, albeit pronounced less explicitly in recent years. The focus on development has a strong influence on how heritage is integrated into the SD strategy. Following the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (WSSD 2002), the 2003 *21st Century Action Plan for Sustainable Development* published by the State Council started to pay more attention to the social welfare system and ecological preservation and advocated for a transformation of economic development mode to achieve 'high efficiency, low consumption, and low pollution'. The mention of culture remained limited and vague (State Council of PRC 2003).

China's *Progress Report on Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* from 2019 outlines the implementation progress of the 17 SDGs in the 2030 Agenda (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of PRC 2019). On the one hand, the report demonstrates how the compartmentalised nature of the SDGs and the limitation of quantitative indicators can be exacerbated in implementation. The sections regarding social sustainability highlight the quantitative goals that the country has reached, such as reduced maternity and infant mortality rates, improved access to education, and an increased proportion of women in decision-making and management roles, while the less quantifiable aspects, such as community resilience and social cohesion, are less than fully addressed. It does not necessarily mean that no progress has been made in these aspects, but the lack of specific measures in the

SDGs indicators means that states do not necessarily include them in their policies and strategies, which is apparent regarding heritage. As discussed in Ch.2, the indicator and SDG regarding heritage are overly simplified and quantitative, which only refers to the funding assigned for heritage conservation. In China's 2019 progress report, these limitations are also present, even though heritage has been increasingly integrated into China's development strategy. Indeed, the section on best practices in five selected areas in the 2019 progress report indicates the broader relevance of heritage in China's SD strategy. One of these areas concerns the revitalisation of rural areas. In the example of best practice, the rural revitalisation in Zhanqi Village, ICH is mentioned as one of the reasons for the good results of its success. Despite this brief mention, it is coherent with how heritage discourse has been integrated into a 'development' narrative in China, which will be elaborated on below.

State-commissioned publications and commentaries often highlight that the development of heritage conservation and management must become fully integrated with the country's SD strategy and Five Year Plans by playing an active role in contributing and stimulating the local economic development and involving a broader range of society in these processes (Luan et al. 2008; Li et al. 2009; Xu and Que 2015). This 'development' narrative is coherent with heritage policies discussed in the last sub-section, such as 'revitalising cultural heritage'. It also has an impact on broadening the involvement of various sectors in heritage activities since integrating heritage in development breaks away from the perception that participation in heritage activities is only the privilege and responsibility of the public sector and heritage professionals. This aspect is demonstrated by the increasing advocacy for encouraging 'public participation' (*gongzhong canyu*) and 'social participation' (*shehui canyu*) in heritage activities, which will be further discussed in the next section.

Compared to Anglophone literature, Chinese academic literature on sustainable conservation or management of heritage and the relationship between heritage and SD has significantly less emphasis on topics regarding environmental aspects but shows a particular interest in the concept of continuity. For example, Xu and Que (2015) explore an assessment framework for sustainable heritage conservation in the Asia Pacific region, which consists of three assessment criteria: the continuity of authenticity, the management mechanisms, and heritage values. Discussions on practices often address the adaptive reuse, continuous monitoring, preventive conservation, and maintenance of heritage space. On the topic of adaptive reuse and the dynamic continuity of heritage values, there is a disparity of literature focus among various heritage types. Early discussions on adaptive reuse focus on industrial heritage, which extended to recent heritage and vernacular heritage in the last few years (Lu 2001; Wang 2006b; He 2010; Liu 2010; Hangzhou International Urbanism Research Institute and Research Institute of Urban Management of Zhejiang Province 2014; Sun 2015; Ye 2016).

Discussions on the dynamic continuity of heritage values have a close connection with the concept of 'living heritage', which, until recently, was closely associated with cultural landscape, vernacular heritage, and ICH. However, as will be demonstrated through the case studies of early timber architecture, these issues are indeed relevant in discussing sustainable heritage management in all types of heritage. The representativeness of early timber architecture in such discussions will be further elaborated in Ch.6.

5.6 'Public participation' and 'social participation'

Participation in heritage activities has been expressed in various concepts. As discussed in Ch.2, participation can take the form of performative actions that define the heritage community. Participants in heritage activities can refer to the on-site local communities, stakeholders from various sectors, and a broader form of participation by the general public and members of society. While the terms '(local) community' and 'stakeholders' were introduced into heritage literature and practices in recent years, 'public participation' (*gongzhong canyu*) and 'social participation' (*shehui canyu*) have frequently appeared in policy documents, state media commentaries, and academic literature for quite some time. This section will discuss how these concepts relate to the connections between actors and sustainability in the heritage assemblage.

As discussed in Sec.5.2, the 2015 version of the *China Principles* introduced the social and cultural value categories into the official discourse of heritage, even though these two categories have not been adopted in the CHPL. The consideration of social values brings in the concept of participation and community. Besides discussing values, the 2015 *China Principles* also include more content regarding participation. Community participation is considered fundamental to heritage conservation in the China Principles. However, the text of the document shows that the drafters have a few particular categories of heritage in mind when it comes to community participation (ICOMOS China 2015). They imply that it is primarily applicable to categories that have an overt 'living' attribute, such as historic settlements, cultural landscapes, and ICH, which is coherent to the typological limitation imposed on the 'living heritage' concept as mentioned above.⁶¹

⁶¹ Commentary of Article 1 states that "(m)any categories of heritage such as historically and culturally famous cities, towns and villages, and cultural landscapes may have a close association with various forms of intangible heritage such as traditional means of production, ways of life and religious beliefs. Intangible heritage is an important medium for retaining the significance at a site and is a 'living'

More importantly, participation is considered more as the obligation or duty of individuals and organisations rather than a right or choice of the community members (Editorial of China Cultural Heritage 2006; Qi 2013; Ouyang 2018).⁶² This obligation of participation not only applies to the on-site communities but also to every member of the public. In this sense, public participation in heritage conservation becomes the responsibility of individuals rather than institutional decision-makers. Yang (2014) notes that even though the state government has acknowledged public participation as both an obligation and a right, the top-down administrative mechanisms in place mean that the public sector still plays a dominant role in decision-making, and it is difficult to guarantee the general public's rights to be informed, voice opinions, and participate meaningfully. Wang (2010) comments that besides government officials, experts and corporations have monopolised participation in the conservation and use of historic buildings, whereas local individuals are absent in these processes. However, despite the common acknowledgement of the power discrepancy among actors, most commentators conclude that the impact of a lack of public participation primarily manifests itself in a lack of fundamental public support for heritage conservation, rather than an adverse impact for the members of the public to exercise their powers through these heritage activities. This conclusion draws a contrast with heritage literature that is critical of such power imbalance as discussed in Ch.2.

As mentioned above, besides public participation, 'social participation' is another notion of participation frequently appearing in Chinese heritage discourse in recent years. The Social participation concept stem from the same premise of public participation as an obligation of individuals, but it entails more 'meaningful' participation in the decision-making and management practices of heritage entities. The discourse regarding this type of participation often implies that the participants are social enterprises rather than mere individuals. Individual members of the public are included, but discussions on how to facilitate and take advantage of the participation of social sectors suggest that the 'social forces' (*shehui lilian*) refer to collectives in the private sector, both for-profit and non-profit (for examples, see Li 2006; Qi 2013; Zhang 2017). These discussions suggest that social participation can alleviate financial

attribute..... Community participation is fundamental to conserving these categories of heritage." (ICOMOS China 2015, p. 48)

⁶² Article 8 of the China Principles states that "(p)articipation. Conservation of heritage sites is a social undertaking that requires broad community participation. The public should derive social benefit from heritage conservation." The Commentary explains that "(h)eritage conservation is a public cause and as such the public should feel a responsibility and obligation to it and should be encouraged to proactively support and participate in it. The results of co nservation should be accessible and enjoyed by all." (ICOMOS China 2015, pp. 50-51)

and human resource burdens from the administrations, diversify the means of heritage conservation and management, and broaden public support. Sun (2014, p. 1) suggests that social participation can be a form of participatory democratisation in heritage conservation through providing a dialogical communication mechanism involving various social sectors such as the government, general public, experts, media outlets, NGOs, and other grassroots organisations. However, Sun admits that existing channels for participation remain top-down and local governments, NGOs, and grassroots organisations' participation is more performative rather than meaningful. Ning (2014, p. 1) also comments that the discourse on social participation in current legislation and regulations remains vague and dysfunctional, albeit in an encouraging tone. Despite being beneficial in preventing harmful activities, they are also deemed to be restraining broader participation from various social sectors.

This idea of 'social participation' is closely associated with the use and reuse of heritage resources at an practical level, which is not so prominent within discussions of 'public participation'. As discussed in Sec.5.4, state policies have shown a tendency for encouraging and making it easier for actors from the private sector to participate in the use and management of heritage sites. In the meantime, relevant policies, legislation, regulations, and principles still highlight the significance of public interests within this process, suggesting that social participation involving non-government organisations does not necessarily translate into social benefits.⁶³ The 2015 *China Principles* added a chapter on 'appropriate use'. It defines that 'appropriate use' should be "sustainable and promote community wellbeing" (ICOMOS China 2015, p. 80),⁶⁴ suggesting that this requirement is necessary to tie social participation and social benefits together. The notion of sustainability is also in play here. Qi (2013, p. 1) identifies a connection between the 'sustainable conservation' of 'immovable heritage sites' and social participation, stating that sustainable conservation requires long-term planning and frequent involvement in the maintenance, conservation, and management of the sites, which

⁶³ Article 6 of the China Principles states that "(u)se of a site for the benefit of society is important, but such use should not diminish the site's values." (ICOMOS China 2015, p. 50)

⁶⁴ Commentary of Article 40 of the China Principles explains that "(a)ppropriate use is an important means of maintaining the vitality of a site in contemporary society and life and is a means of promoting the conservation of the site and its values." and that "(a)ppropriate use is use of a site such that public benefit is emphasized within capacity limits and without changing its characteristics or diminishing its values." It claims that "(u)se of a site will attract more public attention to heritage sites in general", "(i)n addition to broad ranging social benefits, a site also creates economic benefits and promotes the development of the local economy" and that "(s)ites are a commonwealth of society and as such procedures should be in place to ensure that they are used equitably and priority is given to its use for social benefit" (ICOMOS China 2015, p. 80).

have proved to be challenging for the public sector to undertake solely. In their opinion, social participation becomes beneficial and even necessary for 'sustainable conservation'.

It is worth noting that except for some implicit and sporadic mentions, most discussions of public and social participation in the Chinese context remain 'heritage-centric'. It suggests that heritage conservation is the ultimate goal, whereas participation, in all its forms, is merely a means to better achieve that goal. Except for the discussion of 'living heritage', which, as discussed above, is limited to a few categories of heritage, the public and social participation (including community participation) is rarely characterised as for the people or for sustaining the relationship between the physical remains of the heritage and its communities.

If viewing sustainability in heritage in a relational perspective, as discussed in Ch.3, then participation is both a process of forging and sustaining such relation and, arguably, part of the relation. As will be further elaborated with the evidence presented in the case studies, it can be argued that failing to consider participation in relational terms can lead to overemphasising its role as an obligation. At the other end of the spectrum, participation is viewed as an anthropocentric approach that neglects non-human actors' agency during this process. While the latter is not prominent in the Chinese context, it is equally problematic, as discussed in Chs.2 and 3.

5.7 Heritage professionals and the role of 'experts'

Heritage professionals play a significant role in decision-making as well as implementation processes. Their relationship with the other actors is complex and dynamic, and they sometimes overlap. These characteristics are demonstrated in their communication and interaction with other actors in heritage activities (Tam 2019). According to the interviews made for this research, heritage professionals are often considered by both the administrations and some community members to be the ones holding the capacity and knowledge to understand the significance of the heritage sites from the perspectives of their disciplines (Caretaker and community member of CZ Temple 8 2018; Local official 4 2018). Traditionally, heritage professionals mostly come from 'mainstream' disciplinary backgrounds, namely architecture, archaeology, history, and urban planning. The conservation strategies suggested for the PCHS by these professionals within the monuments and sites category have a strong tendency to prioritise their tangible remains, even if religious practices or other intangible associations are present.

Despite the technical nature of heritage professionals' involvement, their preferences are also influenced by the administrative system outlined above. The objectives, scale, and

administrative setup of most PCHS heritage projects, especially those of monuments and sites, all contribute to the fact that the 'rescue mission' for the tangible remains often overrides priorities made for other proposed interventions. Despite the increasingly diverse and multi-disciplinary discussions in academia and public discourse, 'experts', who are usually heritage professionals but take on the role of decision-makers at the consultation panel organised by the cultural heritage administrations, tend to take a more conservative position that leans towards the preservation of the tangible remains and settings. This preference is a result of both their disciplinary backgrounds as well as their responsibilities upon which are bestowed by the administrations. It is especially obvious when it comes to national 'experts' who sit in the consultation panels as the ultimate decision-makers on behalf of SACH (Tam 2019). As a result of the above-mentioned factors, the involvement of professional consultants in the decision-making process for most heritage sites bears a strong tendency to regard these sites primarily as historic places rather than anything else related to their other functions and associations (Heritage Professional 1 2018). Other professionals who work with the intangible aspects associated with the sites are rarely consulted in the context of the cases observed in this research.

Lee and du Cros (2013) characterise 'heritage managers' as playing multi-faceted roles in communicating directly with local administrations, appealing to, and even advising higher-level administrations, and directly or indirectly negotiating, collaborating, and communicating with local communities. Such communication not only happens between heritage professionals and other actors, but heritage professionals can also act as proxies to facilitate direct or indirect conversations between other actors. They are the only actors who have these characteristics, which make them potentially the most influential group of actors. However, as Lee and du Cros point out, they are still limited to the broader political and administrative constraints.⁶⁵ More importantly, due to the current short-term nature of heritage projects, heritage professionals rarely get involved in the implementation of long-term management, which can further deviate from their initial recommendations and intentions. The constraint of short-term planning and involvement has been acknowledged by heritage professionals and some administration officials, according to interviews of this PhD research (Heritage professional 5 2018; Heritage Professional 8 2018; Provincial official 1 2018; State official 1 2018). Recent efforts to facilitate long-term consultancy with local communities and local

⁶⁵ For example, regardless of their openness towards including more competing narratives and diverse actors into the heritage processes, the end results of heritage projects, especially those regarding national PCHS, are often trimmed down to a much more conservative version during the various levels of expert approval panels.

administration can be seen in the management of World Heritage sites such as Kulangsu (Heritage Professional 4 2018; Wei 2019). However, they are only exceptional cases that the current administrative system can rarely accommodate, let alone encourage.

Since the boom of heritagisation activities in the past few decades, heritage professionals, including researchers and practitioners, also became the key actors besides, and sometimes instead of, the local community members to forge a strong connection with the heritage sites. Their specialised knowledge and expertise enable a certain kind of association that would not necessarily exist between the heritage and its local communities. Regardless of the debates over the state's legitimacy over certain heritage entities, the association between heritage professionals and heritage does not always conform to the top-down authoritative characteristic of the administrative system. As discussed in Ch.2, much more nuance is needed in the characterisation of heritage professionals in the critical heritage discourse, and they should not be considered a homogeneous and static group of actors. As will be shown in the case studies, heritage professionals' involvement and influence on these sites' future trajectories are an undeniable reality that can lead to a variety of outcomes and deserves to be sufficiently acknowledged and analysed. Issues such as an insufficiently interdisciplinary team or their limited power in the implementation processes can be seen to contribute to the unsustainable outcomes of the heritage activities.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the national context of China regarding sustainable heritage management. It highlights 'threats' as a characteristic of heritage practices and philosophies in contemporary China, exacerbated by the destruction during the Cultural Revolution and the rapid economic development that followed. It reviews academic reflections on heritage ontology in Chinese literature, which shows similarities with the global trend where the social impact of heritage activities and the intangible aspect of heritage becomes increasingly prominent. These reflections also lead to multi-disciplinary conversations becoming more prevalent in the public discourse of heritage. However, it is revealed here that these reflections and conversations are mostly limited to the 'new' heritage categories and have yet to impact the planning and decision-making processes. It also contends that there are some biased assumptions about China's distinctive historic attitudes towards the built environment and how they contribute to reinforcing the Western/Eastern dichotomy criticised in Ch.2. These issues will be further challenged in the next few chapters.

This chapter introduces China's modern legislative and administrative setup and relevant policies related to heritage. It reveals the top-down characteristics of the administrative system

but also the trend of administrative decentralisation in recent years, which provides more local autonomy for heritage management. It highlights the compartmentalised nature of legislation and governance, the jurisdiction constraints and power imbalances between government departments. It points out the latest development in heritage policies where the use and reuse of heritage resources and broader participation from society have become prominent. The chapter outlines China's commitment to participate in the global effort of achieving the SDGs and its emphasis on development in the 1990s. It points out that the economic development narrative is still prominent even though the social and environmental aspects have gained more attention. Discussions and narratives on heritage and culture's role in sustainable development remain relatively limited and simplistic. Heritage conservation's contribution to SD is often taken for granted.

The chapter specifically discusses two prevalent notions of participation in the recent heritage discourse in China, 'public participation' and 'social participation'. While acknowledging that social participation as a form of private sector involvement can foster more meaningful participation in decision-making than expressing public opinions, it points out that participation in heritage conservation and management is considered an obligation rather than a right in policies, legislation, guidelines, and state commentaries, meaning that the responsibility to guarantee broader participation falls on the public rather than the decision-makers. Finally, the chapter sheds light on the multi-dimensional role of heritage professionals as mediators among actors, 'experts' that steer the approaches to heritage, and actors who forge an association with the heritage sites themselves. The following chapters (6-9) will discuss how these frameworks, policies, mechanisms, and notions are manifested in practice.

Chapter 6 The (un)Sustainable heritage – Introducing the Case Study Region

6.1 Overview

This chapter introduces the case study region, including its geographical and historical contexts, the early timber buildings in the region, the Southern Project restoration scheme, and an overview of the post-restoration situation on-site. It also reviews the types of private sector participation in the region and a relevant provincial strategy. Finally, it identifies the community composition for the sites in the case study region.

6.2 The region and its early timber buildings

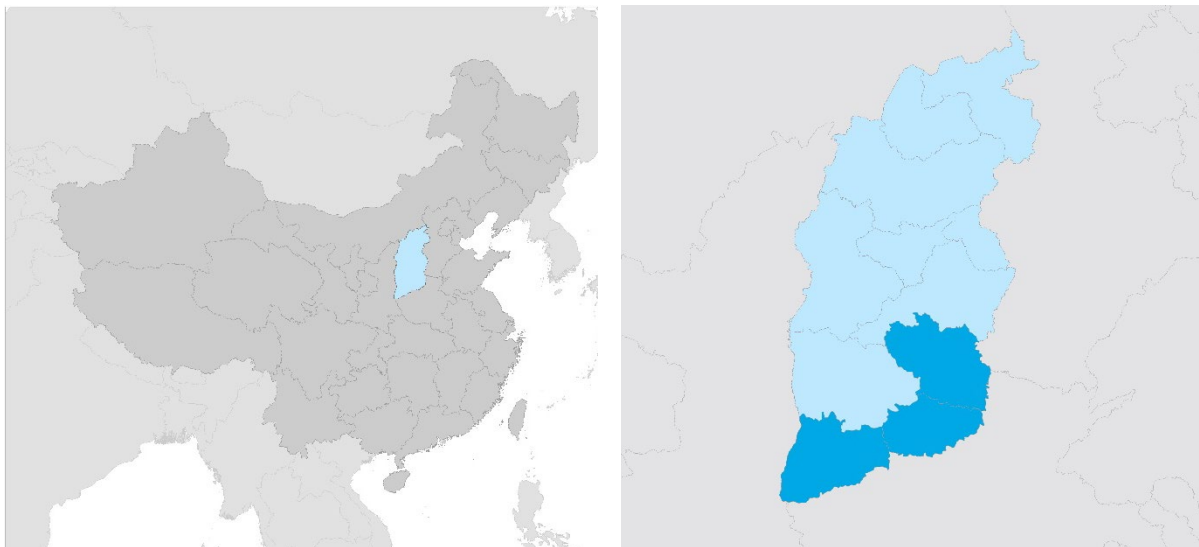


Figure 8 a) Shanxi Province in China; b) The case study region in Shanxi Province, figures adapted from GIS data (GADM 2021)

Shanxi Province has the highest number of national PCHS under the category of ‘ancient architecture’ among all provinces (SACH 2020).⁶⁶ The case study region, south and southeast part of Shanxi Province (Figure 8), holds the highest concentration of pre-Yuan Dynasty (1206-1368 CE) historic timber structures in China, which makes up for about 50% of all the surviving

⁶⁶ Shanxi Province has 366 out of 1880 national PCHS under the ‘ancient architecture’ category, the highest among 31 provincial administrative areas in mainland China. It also has the highest total number of national PCHS, 451 out of 4296 national PCHS nationwide, which is partially because ‘ancient architecture’ is the largest category of national PCHS.

ones in the country (Xie 2011).⁶⁷ This area primarily includes four municipalities, Changzhi, Jincheng, Yuncheng, and Linfen. For feasibility reasons, this PhD research focuses on three municipalities in this region, excluding Linfen. Shanxi (lit. west of the mountain) is on the west side of the Taihang Mountain Range and is surrounded by Taiyue and Zhongtiao Mountain Ranges on the south side. Much of its territory has a mountainous terrain. Cities and towns concentrate on the limited plain areas between mountains. Changzhi and Jincheng, usually characterised as the 'southeast Shanxi' (*jindongnan*), is cradled by Taihang, Taiyue, and Zhongtiao mountain ranges, a natural boundary separating it from Henan Province to its south and east. Yuncheng and Linfen, usually characterised as 'south(west) Shanxi' (*jinnan*), are in a relatively flat area, connected to a geographical corridor opening to Xi'an in Shaanxi Province (Figure 9). Several rivers run through the region, providing an essential source of water for agricultural activities and human settlements throughout history.

Archaeological evidence has shown that human settlements in this region can be dated back to Palaeolithic times. Archaeological excavations have discovered major sites from the Palaeolithic period, Neolithic period, and Zhou Dynasty (1046–256 BCE, part of China's Bronze Age), ranging from settlements, tombs, and prehistoric cities (SACH 2020). Historic routes and river ports discovered in the area and historical records throughout centuries also suggest that it was a significant transportation hub for commercial and political purposes and cultural exchange between the Central Plain and the west part of China (Zeng 2007). The four municipalities of the case region have been under the administration of the dynasties in the central plain since the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BCE) and had remained significant to the political, economic, and social organisations of the region (Xu 2003; Xu 2009). Despite these advantages, the mountainous terrain and local climate had increasingly become obstacles for communication, transportation, and sustaining agricultural activities in the 20th century. The import of opium into China from colonial powers such as Britain in the 19th century led to increasing cultivation activities of opium poppy on the agricultural land in Shanxi Province,

⁶⁷ There is no consensus of the exact number of surviving pre-Yuan Dynasty timber structures in China, as the dating of many of them are still contested. According to the research of the well-respected architectural historian Zejun Chai, there are about 440 pre-Yuan timber structures in China and 350 of them are in Shanxi Province, which makes up to 80% of the nation-wide total, and the southeast part of Shanxi holds half of the pre-Jin Dynasty (1115-1234 CE) timber structures of the entire country (80 out of 160) (Xie 2011). But there is also statistics from the Third National Cultural Relics Survey which estimates the four municipalities of the south and southeast Shanxi alone hold about 350 of the pre-Yuan timber structures (Peng 2011). Nevertheless, it is a consensus that Shanxi holds at least more than 75% of the pre-Yuan timber structures while the four municipalities of South and Southeast Shanxi hold about 50% of them (China Relics News 2016).

which exacerbated the already declining agricultural economy in the region and brought significant damage to the productivity of the land. Archaeological evidence and historical records show that coal mining has existed in Shanxi since at least the Iron Age. The rich and high-quality reservoir of coal is highly relevant with the recent history of Shanxi, during which it attracted colonial interests, was defended by the local population, became the prominent support of its local economy, and caused significant destruction of the natural environment (Zeng 2007). The move towards economic reform and decreased reliance on coal mining has been the provincial government's policy in the last decade (State Council of PRC 2017a).

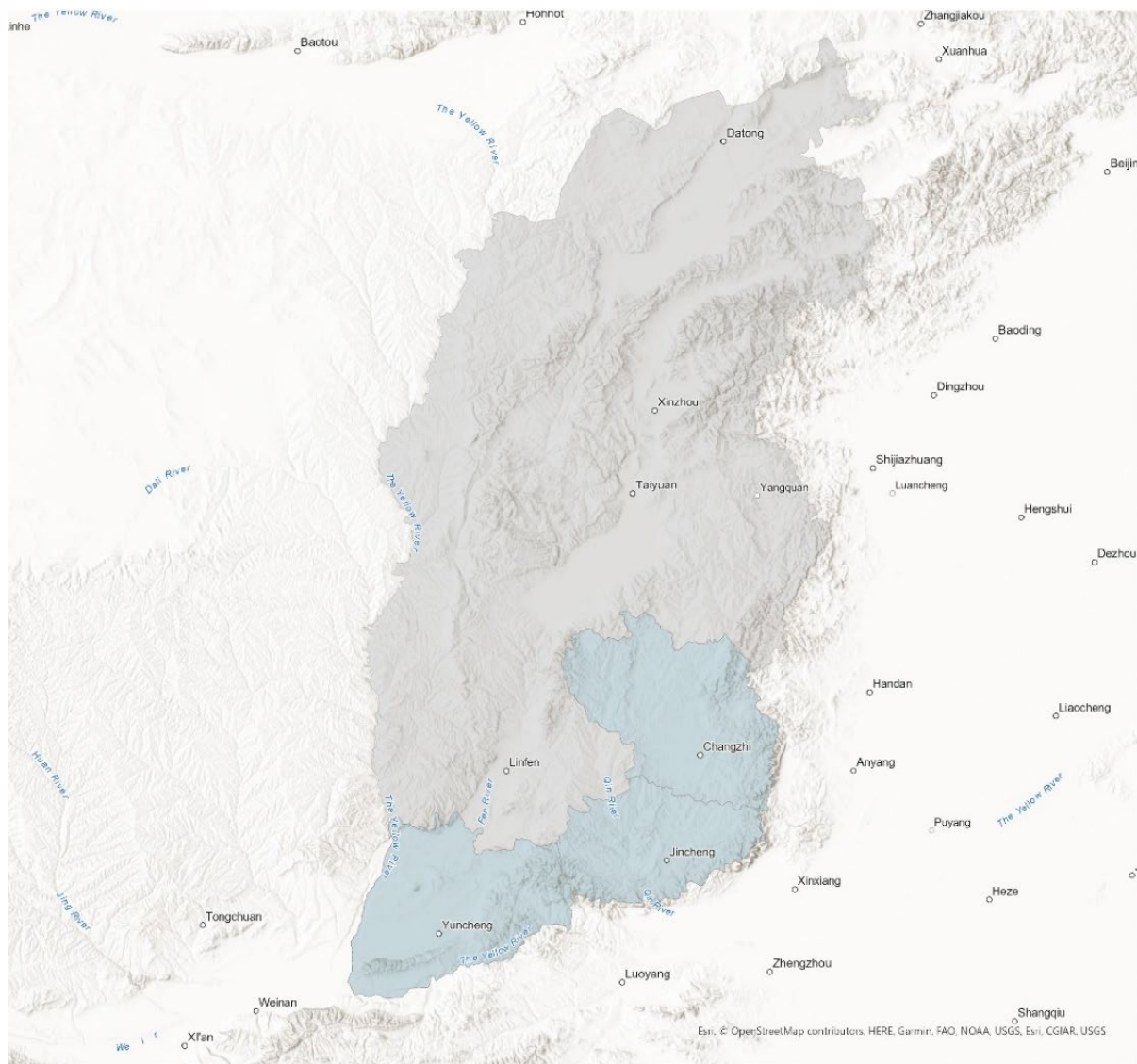


Figure 9 Terrain of Shanxi Province, figure adapted from GIS data (GADM 2021; OpenStreetMap 2021)

The pre-Yuan timber buildings discovered in this case study region are the most significant surviving archaeological materials known above ground for informing and constructing the

timber architectural history of China (Figure 10 - Figure 13). Despite having distinctive regional characteristics, the early timber buildings show clear resemblances to descriptions in a historic craftsman's manual published by the central administration in the 12th century, *Yingzao Fashi* (Treatise on Architectural Methods and State Building Standards) (Li 1103) and various influence resulted from the dynastic and political changes from 11-14th centuries (Xu 2003; Xu 2009). The region also holds rare examples of 9-10th century structures. The acknowledgement of their significance as tangible materials for studying China's architectural history has led to their heritagisation on a national level in the last two decades. All known sites with early timber buildings have been designated national PCHS, more than half of which were designated after 2006.⁶⁸



Figure 10 Main hall of Dayun Temple (940 CE), Pingshun County, Changzhi Municipality (Tam 2011b)



Figure 11 Main hall of Tiantai Monastery (930 CE), Pingshun County, Changzhi Municipality (Tam 2011c)



Figure 12 Shijia Hall of Qinglian Temple (1089 CE), Jincheng Municipality (Tam 2018ae)



Figure 13 Main hall of Jiwang Temple (1023-1032 CE), Wanrong County, Yuncheng Municipality (Tam 2018r)

⁶⁸ Among these sites, only two of them were designated as national PCHS before 1982, Yonglegong Taoist Temple in Ruicheng County, Yuncheng Municipality and Guangsheng Temple in Hongtong County, Linfen Municipality (SACH 2020).

About 95% of these national PCHS with early timber buildings are, at least historically, religious spaces.⁶⁹ A majority of 74% are Buddhist or Taoist – the two mainstream religions in China. The rest of the temples are worshipping spaces for folk beliefs and other deities (Table 1). For many of the sites, the subjects of worship do not necessarily belong to only one religion/belief, or their religious status has changed over time. Nevertheless, the statistics show that among these early timber historic buildings, a dominant majority of them are, or at least once were, spaces for worship (Tam 2019).

Table 1 Percentage of religious functions among all religious sites with pre-Yuan Dynasty structures in the case region

| Religious functions | Percentage of religious functions among all religious sites |
|---------------------|---|
| Buddhist | 40.0% |
| Taoist | 34.0% |
| Other beliefs | 26.0% |

The recent history of these sites deserves some attention as well. During the first three decades after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) (1949) and especially during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), many of these religious sites ceased to be temples and were turned into venues with secular functions, such as schools and grain storage spaces, as part of the 'socialist transformation' movement.⁷⁰ Many of them were also confiscated as public or collective properties at the same time. For some of the sites, worshipping activities were discontinued, while for a small number of them, according to the memories of senior villagers in the case study region, the worshipping activities still took place rather quietly even though the sites were not officially temples anymore (Caretaker of JC Temple 6 2018; Exhibition initiator of Longwang Temple 2018). This situation was not exclusive to this area but was happening throughout the country (Smith 2015). After the Cultural Revolution, most of the 'socialist organisations' in these sites gradually moved out. A small number of them

⁶⁹ The statistics are based on the historic purpose of the sites upon their construction but not necessarily the representation of their current functions. The evolution and current states of their functions will be further discussed soon below.

⁷⁰ The evolution of use of temples went through several different periods from 1949 to the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1978. It was not a linear development. Nevertheless, many of them had at least lost their religious status at some point, if not permanently. For more analysis on this period see Smith (2015).

remained in use for secular public functions, while many others faced an uncertain future. In the meantime, the ‘heritagisation’ process picked up speed after the Cultural Revolution, and many of these sites were designated as PCHS. As a result of a national movement to utilise heritage as the testimony of the “richness of China’s indigenous culture”, some of them became temples again (*ibid.*, p. 212).

As mentioned in Sec.5.2, the dynastic changes and destruction of historic buildings from previous dynasties when a new one was established, which have been suggested as a general historic condition and characteristic of China’s historic built environment, can be challenged with evidence from the case study region. While such a condition might be applicable to places with high political relevance such as palaces, major cities, and some prominent religious sites, the same cannot be said for the vernacular built environment which supported ordinary people’s housing, commercial, and worshipping needs. As will be shown in the following case study chapters (Chs.7-9), textual evidence from historic stone steles and construction history supported by architectural evidence of the early timber buildings in the case study region suggest that the historic social organisation that maintained and managed these places, most of which are local religious spaces, did not necessarily get disrupted by dynastic transitions despite being influenced by them. Research into the formal elements used by historic craftsmen in this region even suggests that there was a trend to adopt ‘retro’ features from previous dynasties in new constructions during the Song and Jin Dynasties (960-1234 CE), which contradicts the generalisation that China’s historic built environment was always entirely reconstructed during dynastic changes (Xu 2003). On the other hand, the social changes and urbanisation in contemporary times have brought dramatic transformation to the communities and the way of living around them in recent decades.⁷¹ With the dwindling and ageing rural population and a more and more secular society, the current state and future of these sites with their early timber buildings are entangled in these changes too.

As discussed in Ch.2, the international influence on conservation philosophies in contemporary China is prevalent, but the process of internalisation and adaptation is also not to be neglected. This situation is especially prominent in the case of timber architectural heritage. These are the most dominant type of architectural heritage sites in China recognised as ‘cultural heritage’ since the founding of the PRC, along with significant archaeological sites. Among all the six categories of national PCHS in China, ‘ancient architecture’ comprises 43.76% of the total amount. This percentage has been relatively consistent in the seven lists

⁷¹ According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China, the rate of urbanisation grew from 38% to 56% from 2001 to 2015. Rural population dropped from 54.1% to 41.5% from 2007-2017 (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2017).

of national PCHS that were designated from 1961 to 2013 (SACH 2020). It indicates that despite a much broader understanding of what constitutes 'cultural heritage sites' now, the most 'typical' heritage sites are still ancient architecture, and in the case of China, timber architectural heritage is the most dominant in this category. In this sense, the conservation philosophies of timber architectural heritage reflect the most fundamental preferences that have rippling effects on other categories of heritage. The intangible associations of historic temples in the case study region related to faith, social organisation, and cultural traditions have attracted increasing research interests from various disciplines in recent years (Cheng 2020; Li 2020; Zhao 2020). However, they seldom directly connect the built environment with these associations (for exceptions, see Chen 2020a,b) and have rarely addressed the sites with early timber buildings (for an exception, see Xu 2014). Therefore, they have yet to influence the conservation and management strategies of these national PCHS.

According to the fieldwork for this PhD research, a majority of these sites are still treated as 'museum objects', and associations with elements and actors that do not have a direct connection with the tangible existence of early timber buildings are often neglected in attempts to achieve the adaptive reuse of these sites. Chs.7-9 will scrutinise several cases in the region to pave the way for critical discussions that encompass the various narratives and associations of these sites' multi-dimensional identities, which can hopefully inform future strategies on heritage in a broader sense.

6.3 Heritage 'rescued' - the Southern Project

As mentioned in Ch.5, the 'rescuing mission' prompted by destruction during the Cultural Revolution and the rapid economic development that followed has been manifested through various state-led conservation projects since the '16-character Policy' was articulated. One of such campaigns initiated in the 2000s concerns the case study region. The national scheme *Nanbu Gongcheng* (the Southern Project) lasted for a decade from 2005 to 2015, during which restoration projects of 105 national PCHS with pre-Yuan timber structures were carried out (China Relics News 2016). The sites included in the Southern Project have all been designated national PCHS. The primary purpose of the scheme was to rescue these early timber structures. Unlike most of the previous 'rescuing' projects, the 'threat' that prompted this project was not any dramatic disaster, but mainly negligence and lack of maintenance. Some of the structures had not gone through any major restoration in the past two centuries, resulting in their severely dilapidated state (Tam 2019). It is also fair to say that the project's initiative was a result of academic research which accumulated over the last few decades and revealed the significance of these historic buildings as evidence of China's architectural

evolution (for examples, see Zhu 1958; Yang 1994; Chai 1999a; Xu 2003; Xu 2009; Chai 2013).

The Southern Project involved various institutions, such as conservation and research institutes, HEIs, construction companies, and local construction teams, over several phases, including formulating restoration proposals, the implementation of restorations, information and process documentation, and other associated projects such as the infrastructure improvement projects and conservation management plans (National Heritage Centre of Tsinghua University 2015). The research and design institutions involved were mainly from Shanxi Province and Beijing, while the construction teams were mostly local. According to interviews with the project manager of the information and process documentation project, local officials and craftsmen, the local construction teams, although rarely with specialised qualification for conservation projects, do still often include senior craftsmen who are the inheritors of traditional building crafts (Heritage Professional 1 2018; Heritage professional 5 2018; Local officials 7&8 2018). Their involvement often led to a different approach or choice of materials during the repair on the ground compared to the restoration proposal produced by academic and research institutes (Local official 4 2018). According to some of the state-level, provincial-level, and local level officials, conservation architects from the state and provincial level research institutes, and caretakers who observed or even participated in the Southern Project, there are mixed opinions regarding the quality of the restorations (Caretaker of JC Temple 2 2018; Caretaker of JC Temple 3 2018; Caretaker of JC Temple 15 2018; Heritage professional 5 2018; Local officials 1&2 2018). One of their concerns relates to the short-term nature of most restorations. Although the Southern Project lasted for ten years, each restoration mostly lasted for one to two years, from the design proposal to the completion of the restoration.

The information and process documentation component of the Southern Project demonstrates that there is some consideration regarding sustainable management from SACH. According to the documentation project's manager, it was the first time where systemic documentation of the restoration processes was put in place in China (Heritage Professional 1 2018). There were several objectives of this initiative. First, it created an archive recording these sites' interventions during the Southern Project, including new discoveries of research significance, relevant projects such as conservation management plans, and traditional crafts that were used and discovered during the processes. Second, it was a training programme aimed at young local officials, students, and young employees in conservation institutes, construction companies and teams to learn about traditional crafts and repairs on the ground. They were responsible for compiling the documentation files in text and photographs and stayed on-site throughout the duration of the restoration process. According to the documentation project

manager, their backgrounds varied, which had a considerable impact on the discrepancy between the quality of documentation. They were mostly not university educated, but some of them studied subjects related to historic buildings. While some were pressured into participating by their families, some showed true commitment and have secured a higher position in the industry after this programme. Third, through establishing such an archive and training, it aimed to invite the younger generation to participate in passing on local crafts and expand the base of heritage professionals on the local level (*ibid.*). Despite these objectives, this initiative's focus, along with the Southern Project's overarching strategy, remains limited to tangible buildings. According to the documentation project manager, it is a shared regret among many participants of the Southern Project that the social and cultural associations of these sites with their local communities were largely neglected (*ibid.*).

The dwindling number of senior craftsmen has been a serious concern over the continuation of these traditional crafts, which are considered not only intangible heritage expressions but also essential to the repair and maintenance of historic buildings. According to the local officials and craftsmen interviewed during this PhD research, many craftsmen have left the industry because of the demanding physical work it involves and the low economic and social status associated with traditional building crafts (Caretaker and community management unit officer in Dongyi Village 2018; Local official 9 2018; Local officials 7&8 2018). Despite the recent state policies that have encouraged elevating the social status of traditional craftsmen by providing them with the 'ICH Inheritor' status and popularising traditional crafts, interviewees from various actor groups expressed pessimism towards the survival of traditional building crafts and retaining skilled craftsmen (Wang and Yuan 2017; Caretaker and community management unit officer in Dongyi Village 2018; Local craftsman of CZ Temple 15 2018; Local official 9 2018; Local officials 7&8 2018; Pang 2019).

Besides the restorations, conservation management plans of some of these 105 sites were drafted during the Southern Project, and most of them had an infrastructure improvement project (*huanjing zhengzhi*, lit. environmental improvement) after their restorations. The conservation management plans were funded by SACH within the budget of the Southern Project, while the infrastructure improvement projects were funded through the provincial development budget, which was subsidised by the state (Heritage Professional 1 2018). The main components of the conservation management plans, which are legally binding once approved, include providing thorough heritage value assessments, evaluation of the current state of conservation and management, redrawing the boundaries of the 'protected zone' and 'construction restricted zone(s)' and specific restrictions on building volumes and heights within these zones. There are corresponding legal requirements on what can or cannot be done within these zones. For example, according to the CHPL, there can be no new

construction within the protected zone (NPC of PRC 2017). The conservation management plans also provide strategic guidance towards a broader scope of issues beyond the preservation of the sites' tangible remains, including its infrastructures, interpretation and presentation strategies, use and reuse strategies, and any other case-specific issues. The infrastructure improvement projects usually concern only the provision of infrastructures for fire safety, security against looting and thefts, lightning protection, and simple landscaping of the site's surroundings. Both types of projects are relevant to the sustainable management of these sites, and their impact on the specific sites in the case study region will be further examined in the case studies in Chs.7-9.

6.4 The post-restoration situation

After the Southern Project restorations, the physical state of the eligible historic buildings in the case study region has mostly been improved. However, a significant operational challenge is now laid in front of them – many of them do not have a daily maintenance system in place or sustainable functions. During all nine interviews conducted for this PhD research with local-level officials (municipal and county levels) in the management departments of cultural heritage, they unanimously mentioned that the use of these buildings is one of the most significant challenges (Local official 3 2018; Local official 4 2018; Local official 5 2018; Local official 9 2018; Local official 10 2018; Local officials 1&2 2018; Local officials 7&8 2018). They expressed concerns that when buildings are not regularly used and maintained, their physical state will deteriorate much faster. Some of the most impacted sites were already suffering from infestation and leaking at the time of the fieldwork, just a few years after their restorations. During the interviews, officials in the cultural heritage administrations are aware of the religious functions of the sites but are extremely cautious in discussing this aspect even if they do not consider religious activities to be negative (Local officials 1&2 2018). Some interviewees do not consider the religious function to be a single sustainable solution for the sites in the case region (Caretaker of CZ Temple 5 2018; Caretaker of JC Temple 9 2018; Local official 3 2018; Site managers of JC Temple 4 2018). All the interviewees in the public sector praise adaptive reuse as a promising solution, and 'cultural functions' are often considered a politically correct and quick answer (Local official 3 2018; Local official 4 2018; Local official 5 2018; Local official 9 2018; Local official 10 2018; Local officials 1&2 2018; Local officials 7&8 2018; Provincial official 1 2018; State official 1 2018). However, when they are asked how these 'cultural functions' might be sustainable financially and managerially, some of the local officials showed reluctance regarding feasibility (Local official 3 2018; Local official 10 2018; Local officials 1&2 2018).

Based on the status of accessibility and functions, several categories can be summarised to help illustrate the current situation of these PCHS (Tam 2019). Among the ones visited during the fieldwork, about 35% of them are accessible to the public (Category A), either for no cost or with a small charge. The rest of the sites are hard to define because many of them are mostly closed except for several occasions during the year when they are open for villagers or worshippers to use or for sporadic amateur enthusiasts of historic buildings to visit. For the convenience of analysis, the ones that are still being used occasionally for religious practices are identified as ‘partially accessible’ (Category B), while the ones that no longer host any religious activities as ‘non-accessible’ (Category C) (Table 2).⁷² (Further descriptions of and examples from these categories see Appendix 4).

Table 2 Current status of accessibility of visited sites during fieldwork⁷³

| Accessibility | Accessible | Partially accessible | Non-accessible |
|------------------------------|------------|----------------------|----------------|
| among all the sites | 36.8% | 43.9% | 19.3% |
| among Buddhist sites | 45.5% | 36.4% | 18.2% |
| among Taoist sites | 26.3% | 68.4% | 5.3% |
| among sites of other beliefs | 40.0% | 26.7% | 33.3% |

6.5 The Safeguarding Civilisation Scheme and private sector’s involvement

Since 2017, the Shanxi Provincial government has launched a provincial campaign called ‘Safeguarding Civilisation’ (*Wenming Shouwang Gongcheng*), with the primary aim to ‘revitalise cultural heritage’ (*‘rang wenwu huo qilai’*) (Tam 2019). One of the campaign’s focuses is to encourage the private sector to participate in the use of cultural heritage and ‘adopt’ some of the heritage sites (Provincial Government of Shanxi 2017).⁷⁴ Such an

⁷² It should be noted that the status of these sites is not static. They could change between categories for any specific reason at any time. The calculation is based on the data collected through the fieldwork for this PhD research.

⁷³ Although Buddhist temples seem to have a slightly higher percentage to be accessible and those with other beliefs seem to have a higher percentage to be non-accessible, there is not enough evidence other than this statistic that indicates the correlation that temples with a more ‘mainstream’ religious function are more likely to be accessible.

⁷⁴ The campaign organised a few public events to promote the ‘adoption’ scheme and has published a booklet including the introductions of the first sites that are open for adoption (Bureau of Cultural Heritage of Shanxi Province and Shanxi Association of Industry and Commerce 2018). Although the

'adoption', which is essentially the 'social participation' as discussed in Sec.5.6, would involve investing in the daily maintenance and management of the sites. They are then given the right to use these sites if the function complies with the relevant legislation and regulations. However, as of the time of the fieldwork for this PhD research in 2018, according to the local and provincial level officials, the scheme has yet to inspire the enthusiasm of the broader private sector, the reasons for which include a lack of detailed regulations, directives on practicalities and successful precedents to provide confidence (Local official 10 2018; Local officials 1&2 2018; Local officials 7&8 2018).

Since the campaign is still in a very early stage at the time of the fieldwork, it was not possible to assess the outcome yet. According to officials from the local authorities, some municipalities, such as Changzhi, allow such adoptions with only municipal and lower-level PCHS for now. Other municipalities, such as Yuncheng, had already started to allow such adoptions for the national and provincial PCHS (Local officials 1&2 2018; Local officials 7&8 2018). In either case, most local-level officials express concerns about the lack of enthusiasm from the private sector, the profit-seeking nature of the private investment, and the lack of relevant precedents and regulations to guide the process (Local official 4 2018; Local official 5 2018; Local officials 1&2 2018; Local officials 7&8 2018). There are indeed many aspects of concerns regarding the campaign's implementation, such as what type of functions would be compatible with the sites, how sustainable would the operations be, how to calculate the return of the investment, and what kind of role would the public sector be playing (Local officials 1&2 2018; Provincial official 3 2018). Nevertheless, it demonstrates the willingness of the public sector to invite broader participation of the private sector in the decision-making process. The task for the administration is to figure out what kind of role and how they can be involved.

Before the official announcement of the scheme in 2017, there had been a series of pilot projects for 'adopting' historic buildings in Quwo County, Linfen Municipality since 2011, when

campaign does not limit the 'adoption' to non-national PCHS, according to the provincial and local level officials, the national and provincial PCHS will only be open to the scheme if it works on the lower level PCHS.

The provincial government of Shanxi announced the 'implementation protocol' for the campaign in 2017, which is followed by several similar announcements from the local level governments. The protocol encourages all walks of society to participate in cultural heritage conservation in various ways, including participating in caretaking and safeguarding the unguarded heritage sites, funding the restoration projects, and investing in the utilisation of the heritage sites in exchange for the right to use for a period. For more details on the scheme see Provincial Government of Shanxi (2017), Municipal Government of Changzhi (2017), County Government of Changzhi (2018), Liang and Liu (2018), Yu and Wang (2018).

the county administration issued a *Methods for Historic Building Adoption and Conservation* (Ning 2014). In the case study region, before any of these local and provincial schemes, there have also been some precedents of private sector management of national PCHS sites in the case region. They only compose a minority of the cases in the region, and their stories vary. They demonstrate some evident challenges for the provincial scheme going forward, which will be elaborated in the case studies. (See Appendix 5 for examples of these challenges in the case study region)

One type of private sector participation is presented as private companies' investment in heritage projects. In this case, the private sector does not necessarily get involved in the long-term management of the sites but only relatively short-term projects. Even though the investment bears a tone of philanthropic action as participating in heritage activities is seen as fulfilling the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), the companies usually hope that such projects would improve their reputation and public relations. This type of private sector involvement is one of the categories encouraged under the Safeguarding Civilisation scheme. Its potential implications will be further discussed through a case study in Ch.8.

6.6 The case study region's community composition and participation

Three dimensions of actors form the main composition of communities of these PCHS sites, forging various associations with the sites by ways of physical proximity, religious beliefs and practices, social and familial connection, and shared interests in historic buildings and heritage. Since most of these sites are in semi-rural or rural environments, the first dimension refers to the local communities, such as the residents of the surrounding villages and towns, who have a frequent and permanent physical presence at the sites, both historically and currently. The second dimension of communities comprise people who are both near and further away from the sites. For the religious sites, there is a worshipping community that includes both the residents of the surrounding and nearby villages, who frequent the temples monthly and those who might live further away but would come back to the temples for temple fairs and visit relatives and friends in the village during annual festivals. The individuals within this dimension can also be the members of the other two, especially the first one, but their connection with the sites is forged and sustained through their religious beliefs rather than physical proximity. As for the third dimension, since the PCHS in this case region are among some of the oldest surviving timber structures in the country, the south and southeast part of Shanxi receives much attention from enthusiasts of historic buildings. Despite only a small group of the population, their influence on public discourse has become more prominent in the last decade,

especially since the emergence of social media platforms such as Weibo. However, their physical presence on site is usually infrequent and short-term.

The term 'community' covers an array of representatives of opinions, needs and power, and therefore, it manifests in various ways of participation from the community members. This is especially the case with the third dimension of community. Enthusiasts of historic buildings, while sharing similar passion, can have various educational backgrounds, personal preferences, and motives for actions, which can indeed create conflicts (See Appendix 6 for an example of such conflicts in the case study region). In the case study region, the local community can either play the role of caretakers, part of the collective ownership of the sites, worshippers, or temporary volunteers. Individuals of the community do not hold much power in the decision-making process regarding the national PCHS, but collectively they are part of the forces that are transforming the sites. Their participation manifests mainly in three aspects in the case study region.

The first aspect is represented by the caretakers. They are the first responders for the security and hazard prevention for the sites and for basic housekeeping. The technical maintenance of the historic buildings is not considered their responsibility but requires interventions from the local authority. According to interviews with the caretakers, their involvement in the decision-making process depends on the individuals' level of activeness and how receptive the local authorities are (Caretaker of JC Temple 2 2018; Caretaker of JC Temple 18 2018; Director of management unit of CZ Temple 3 2018). The caretaker mechanism is a 'grass-roots' management tool for the national PCHS in the case region, which is part of the top-down administrative system described in Sec.5.3. Officially, they are appointed by the local authorities, but many of them volunteer to be in this scheme. Some may have already been the caretakers of the sites for many years before the official appointment. Most of the caretakers are local residents who share a strong sense of responsibility and belonging towards the sites. (See Appendix 7 for further description of the caretakers' profile and opinions)

The second aspect is demonstrated by the organisation of community committees. Most of the villages or towns have community committees that also play a role in the daily management, use, and safeguarding of the heritage sites in their communities. Like the caretaker system, village community committees (*cunweihui*) are the grass-roots part of the state's administrative system with characteristics of both top-down management and a certain extent of local autonomy and representation. In the case study region, many of the sites host temple fairs once or twice a year, and the community committees usually organise these activities, including funding, recruiting volunteers, hiring, purchasing, managing, and

safeguarding the sites during the temple fairs.⁷⁵ The case of Longwang Temple in Dongyi village, which will be elaborated on in Ch.9, suggests that the more active and involved the community committees are, the more enthusiastic and prouder the community members are towards the sites.

The third aspect, related to the religious community of the sites, is manifested through the community members' participation in religious occasions. They are present during festivities and participate in various activities, including worshipping, volunteering, performing, and engaging in commercial activities such as selling snacks and miscellaneous goods. Their participation is less organised and consistent than the first two aspects. For the smaller temples, the worshippers' connection with the sites is both spiritual and social since those from outside of the local community usually have a social connection with the people in the local area. For some of the larger temples, the religious community can include people who travel to the temples only for worshipping without any social ties with the local residents.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Exceptionally active involvement can be observed in the case of Longwang Temple, where the community committee manages and organises the temple fair and installs exhibitions and other functions in the temple. A similar situation can also be observed in Dongyue Temple in Yuquan village, Zhongzhuang village in Yangcheng County, and Baiyu Temple in Jiaodi village. As a committee, the community members have more power to collect resources from various channels and create synergies with nearby villages.

⁷⁶ It will be further elaborated in the case studies that the general involvement of the local communities in the decision-making process remains low. According to the interviews with community members, caretakers, and local officials, there are two possible reasons. Firstly, their designation as national PCHS sometimes weakens the sense of ownership among the local communities. It is revealed in several interviews that the local community thinks the responsibility of taking care of these buildings now belongs to the state only (Community members at JC Temple 4 2018; Interview on March 13th. 2018; Local craftsman of CZ Temple 15 2018). In some cases, the lack of ownership feeling is aggravated by the shrinking religious and rural populations. Secondly, the local community's involvement is not always encouraged. Regulations, the local authorities' priority to ensure the safety of these sites and the concern of the unpredictable implementation of religious policies sometimes prevent the local community from engaging with the daily use and management of the sites. On the other hand, as will be discussed in the case studies, the heritagisation of these sites does not necessarily lead to reduced involvement from the local communities. Various actors' exercising their causal powers in the processes can lead to various outcomes. More importantly, heritage is only one form of association that the local communities can form with sites. There is potential for more associations to be forged and enhanced when other causal powers come into play.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter brings the conversation into the case study region, the South and Southeast parts of Shanxi Province, where a high concentration of early timber buildings survived and a national restoration scheme, the Southern Project, was implemented. It introduces the regional condition of the heritage sites with early timber buildings that will be the focal points of the following three case study chapters. It provides an overview of the post-restoration challenges that these heritage sites face regarding their sustainable management and the latest development regarding the private sector's participation in their use and reuse. It also illustrates a picture of these sites' communities by identifying their composition and ways of participation. The dynamic, unpredictable, and diverse interactions and associations between human and non-human actors in these sites will be further elaborated in the next three chapters, where the post-restoration development of three distinct cases is discussed.

Chapter 7 A Closer Look I – Jiaodi Baiyu Temple

7.1 Overview

Chs.5 and 6 have presented a review of the national context in contemporary China regarding heritage and the overview of the case study region. The issues seen in the national PCHS (Protected Cultural Heritage Sites) with early timber buildings in the region beg further investigation. The next three chapters take a closer look into three cases presenting distinctive yet relevant conditions that lead to various degrees of (un)sustainability of the sites. Using the relational M/M approach as established in Chs.3 and 4, the case of Jiaodi Baiyu Temple demonstrates how the associations between actors within a heritage assemblage may face the risk of decline and obsolescence due to the lack of involvement from actors. Together with the next two cases, it illustrates a picture that can help identify the generative mechanisms contributing to the (un)sustainable situations seen in the case study region, which will be further discussed in Ch.10.

The restoration of Baiyu Temple under the Southern Project took place in 2015. Information about the temple's pre-restoration situation was not collected during this PhD research fieldwork, which started in 2017, but from the fieldwork carried out in 2013 for formulating the conservation management plan.⁷⁷ The fieldwork was carried out over three times throughout most part of 2013, including on-site observation and survey of the site's general conditions and its surroundings, observations, and interviews with locals during the annual temple fair, and consultation meetings with local and provincial experts and administrations. Most data collected during the 2013 fieldwork is archived in the conservation management plan's annexes and documented in other publications, which will serve as the secondary source of data. Data regarding its post-restoration situation, the latest condition of its conservation management plan, and the effect of the 2015 restoration were collected during the research period of this PhD. The methods for data collection have been outlined in Ch.4.

⁷⁷ I was the leading planner of this project from 2013-2015, responsible for the data collection, local and provincial level consultation meetings, and the initial drafting of the plan. The project carried on without my participation until 2019 when the plan was finally approved by SACH.

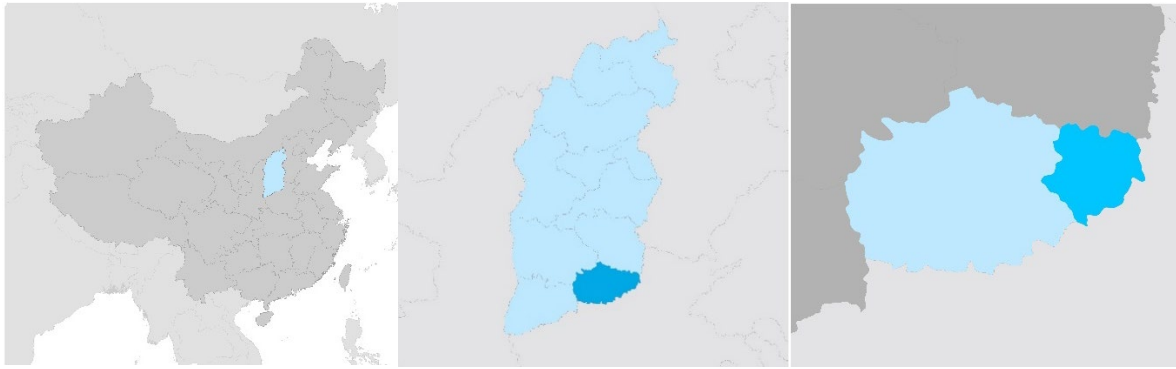


Figure 14 a) Shanxi Province in China; b) Jincheng Municipality in Shanxi Province; c) Lingchuan County in Jincheng Municipality. Base map GIS data: (GADM 2021), adapted by Lui Tam.

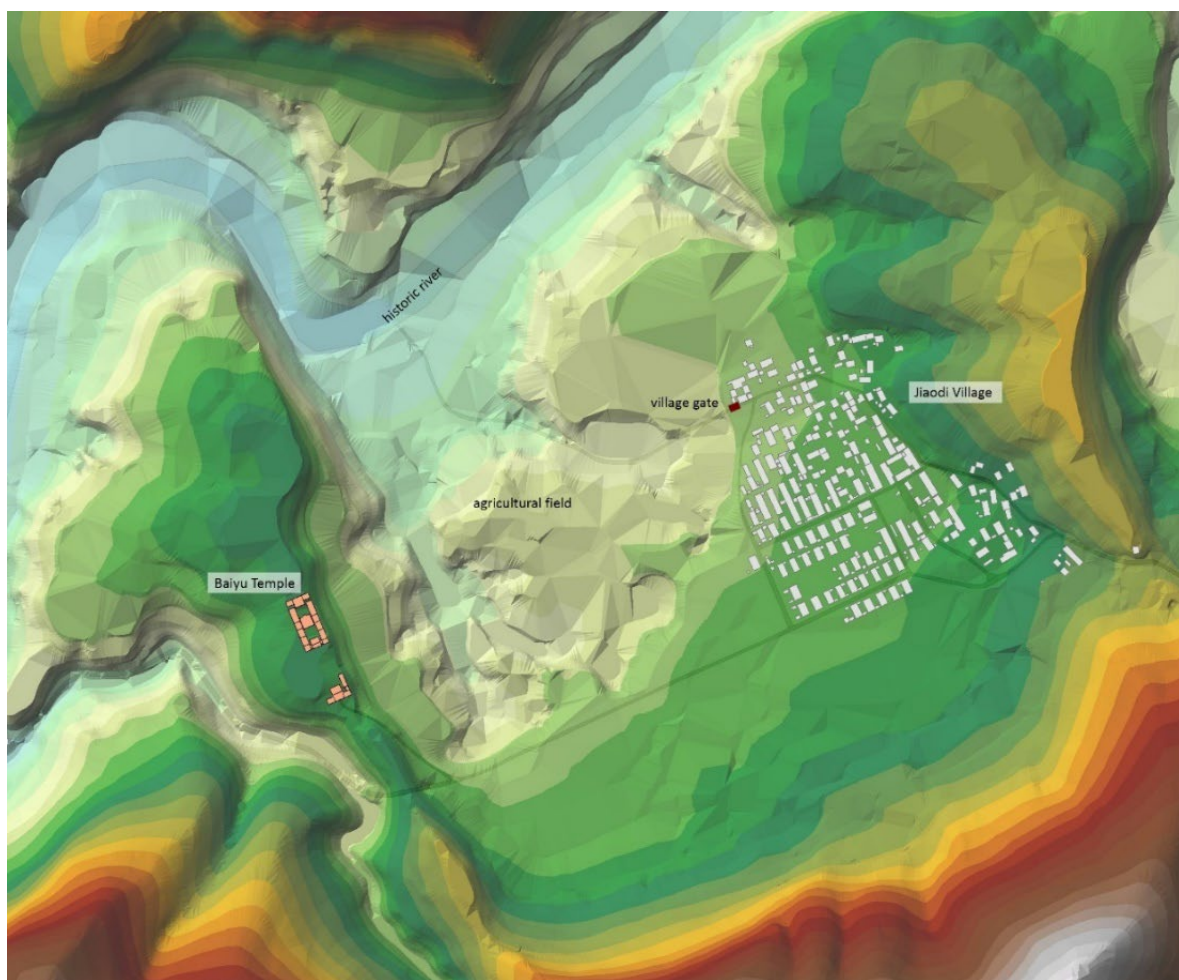


Figure 15 Topographical map indicating the terrain surrounding Baiyu Temple (CHCC 2015) (adapted and translated by Lui Tam).

7.2 The pre-restoration situation

7.2.1 The temple

Baiyu Gong (Palace of White Jade) is a temple in Jiaodi Village, Nanlucheng Town, Lingchuan County, Jincheng Municipality (Figure 14 - Figure 15) (See Appendix 8 for the introduction of the temple's history and its setting). Jiaodi Village is situated deep in the mountainous and rural part of Lingchuan County, about 17 kilometres from the county's township. Before the restoration, the temple's physical state was in a dilapidated condition. The east *kanlou* (viewing tower), its connecting corridors, and the west 'ear' hall of the Sanshenfo Hall were in ruins. The wall next to the west 'ear' hall had come down. Part of the west side hall's roof had collapsed. The east side of the south courtyard, which was probably guarded by a short wall on top of the retaining wall, was open towards the cliff. The other standing buildings showed various degrees of decay due to the lack of maintenance, possibly since an overall repair in 1997 (Figure 16). The concrete extension of the stage added in 1987 covered some of the wooden carvings of the initial façade (CHCC 2015).

The temple was used as a primary school before its religious function was resumed. It was recorded that some statues were left in the temple when the primary school moved in, but they were destroyed to make more room for the classrooms (Lingchuan Chronicle Editorial Board 2009). In 2013, before the restoration under the Southern Project, the stage behind Sanxian Hall was enclosed by walls, windows, and doors possibly added during the school period. The blackboard, desks, and stools used in the classroom were still there. There was also the trace of an added ceiling, the frame of which still remained in 2013 (Figure 17- Figure 20).

There is a caretaker who lives in the temple. According to other villagers, he is somehow an outcast of the village but was offered to stay in the temple as a caretaker (Community members 1&2 2018). He lived in the 'ear' hall of Sanxian Hall before the restoration. In this sense, the temple also functioned as a refuge for him. Before the restoration, there was no proper electricity supply in the temple, and the caretaker arranged an informal network to meet his daily needs. Safety was indeed a concern, and no sufficient firefighting equipment was on-site except for a few fire extinguishers tucked away in corners around the temple (CHCC 2015). According to the caretaker, after the restoration, he does not live in the temple anymore because the electricity had been cut off, and no water supply was established (Caretaker of JC Temple 10 2018).



Figure 16 Plan of Baiyu Temple and photos of main buildings, as seen in April 2013 (CHCC 2015) (translated by Lui Tam).



Figure 17 Added windows and door at the stage, as seen in April 2013 (Tam 2013a).



Figure 18 Blackboard from the school period inside the stage, as seen in April 2013 (Tam 2013c).



Figure 19 Desk and stool from the school period inside the stage, as seen in April 2013 (Tam 2013d).



Figure 20 Frame of the added ceiling from the school period in the stage, as seen in April 2013 (Tam 2013f).

7.2.2 The festival and the wider community

Just like many other cases in the region, there is an annual temple fair at Baiyu Temple on the 15th day of the fourth month of the Lunar calendar. According to the caretaker, the temple fair's length varies slightly from year to year but usually lasts for about three to four days, during the 13th -16th day of the lunar month (Caretaker of JC Temple 10 2018). The observations described below were made during the temple fair of 2013. They provide valuable information about how the temple's space was used during the festival, the scope of the temple's community before the restoration, and suggest what conditions might be necessary for the temple to sustain its connection with its community.

One of the most notable impressions of the temple during the festival compared to a typical day is that the lonely little temple came to life in every sense possible. The buildings were

adorned with colourful decorations. The shrines before each deity were arranged for people to pay their tributes (Figure 21). A few villagers from Jiaodi Village set up a snack counter at the entrance, serving various freshly steamed cakes and fried pastry (Figure 22). A traditional opera team from the local area was invited to perform for the festival. They set up their temporary accommodation and 'green room' in the two side towers of the stage. From early in the morning, worshippers from Jiaodi Village and the surrounding villages arrived gradually either by cars, motorcycles or on foot, depending on the travel distance. They were usually groups of families, including members of all generations. They would dress up and bring an assortment of gifts for either relatives or friends, firecrackers, incense sticks, and tributes such as fruits and pastries for the deities. Most worshippers would pay tribute to the deities in the main halls along the axis, burn firecrackers in front of the Yuhuang Hall, and visit the other deities in the temple, depending on their specific wishes for the year (Figure 23).



Figure 21 The shrine of Yuhuang decorated for the temple fair of 2013 (Tam 2013k).



Figure 22 Snack stand at the entrance during the temple fair of 2013 (Tam 2013l)



Figure 23 Firecracker burning in front of Yuhuang Hall during the temple fair of 2013 (Tam 2013e).



Figure 24 Traditional opera performance for the deities (Tam 2013m).

The opera performers had two tasks, performing for the deities, and entertaining the villagers. Before the restoration, the stage behind Sanxian Hall was not available, so the deities' performance took place on Yuhuang Hall's porch. It highlighted the purpose of this part of the performance, as the deities were the only real audience while everyone else could only see the performers' backs (Figure 24). The performance in the afternoon took place on the 1923 *wulou* (dance tower). The 1987 extension was used as the stage, whereas the historic stage acted as the backstage. One of the performers, who had been performing for this temple for decades, confirmed that the 1987 extension was constructed because the historic stage was deemed too small. For the villagers, the performance in the afternoon was where the entertainment began. Most people sat in the front courtyard, while some took advantage of the slope's height on the west side (Figure 25).



Figure 25 Opera performance for the villagers during the temple fair of 2013 (Tam 2013j).

The temple fair is an occasion for both religious and social activities. This annual festivity is where people in Jiaodi Village showcase their hospitality. Many families opened their doors to treat their friends or relatives to a meal, while free noodle soups were offered to the organisers and volunteers from other villages at the community centre. As shown in Figure 26, although Jiaodi Village has always been the primary organising village for the temple fair, there were at least nine other villages in the surrounding area that participated to various extents as of 2013. Seven villages were active organisers, meaning they contributed both financial and human resources, while the other two were only participating in the temple fair. Before the restoration, most expenses went into hiring the opera performance crew. It highlights how the temple and the temple fair acted as the centre of the community and helps identify who formed this community (CHCC 2015). It is coherent with the historical situation as described on the historic stone steles (see Appendix 8 for the description of the steles' inscriptions). In 2013, it appeared that the association between the temple and the villages was vibrant and would be able to continue. However, the subsequent interventions of the temple and social and economic

changes in the area would soon pose a significant challenge to this association, which will be elaborated on in the next two sections.

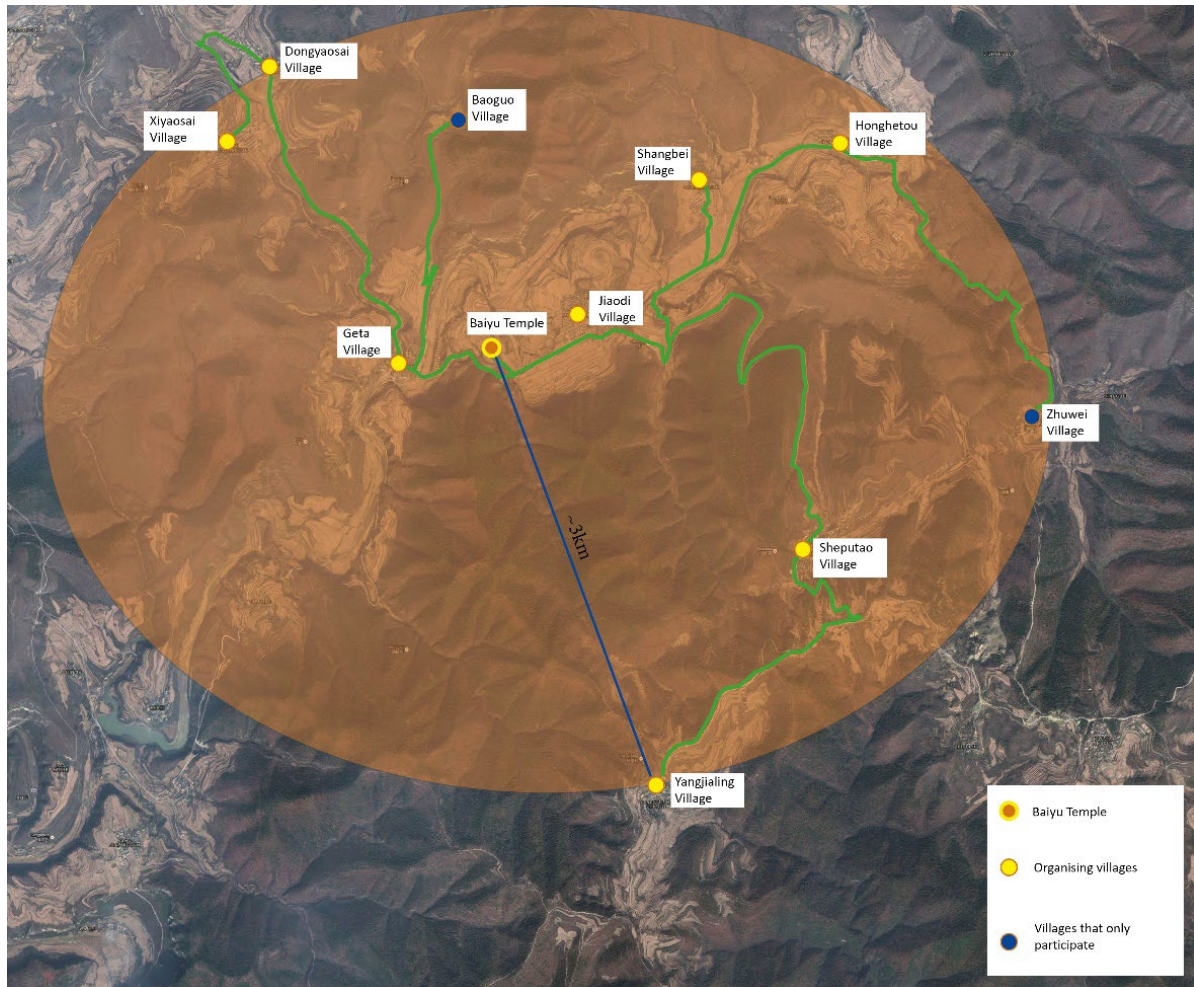


Figure 26 Villages that organised and participated in the temple fair as of 2013 (CHCC 2015) (adapted and translated by Lui Tam).

7.3 The conservation management plan and restoration under the Southern Project
Ideally, a conservation management plan is supposed to provide strategic guidance for the restoration design, identifying problems that can be resolved and demands that can be met through the restoration. The management plan is also meant to consider the sustainable management of the heritage site beyond the specific interventions concerning its historic material remains. However, the following analysis on the case of Baiyu Temple will demonstrate that the ineffective coordination of these two projects for the site and the disciplinary limitation of heritage professionals have set up a preamble for the potential

obsolescence of the associations between the temple and the community, which will be further discussed in the next section.⁷⁸

Before the analysis, it is necessary to summarise what the first draft of the conservation management plan was recommending and what interventions were proposed and implemented in the restoration. The management plan includes recommendations on the conservation of the site's heritage components, new boundaries for the conservation area and the surrounding construction restricted areas, interventions for environment improvement, interpretation and presentation, utilisation and management, and further research. There is one aspect in this management plan that differs slightly from plans for similar sites in the case study region. The plan has included a section highlighting the intangible and social aspects of the temple, such as the temple fair and its scope of influence on the local community. It also includes recommendations for managing, supporting, and promoting the continuation of the temple fair (CHCC 2015). As discussed in Ch.6, these aspects are rarely recognised sufficiently in the PCHS included in the Southern Project, as they are considered secondary to the tangible remains of the historic buildings. In this respect, the restoration design of Baiyu Temple is no exception overall. However, one intervention is out of the ordinary and worth noting. The restoration reconstructed the extension at the back of Yuhuang Hall as a shrine for Weituo, a Buddhist figure. The back of the Yuhuang Hall was indeed used to worship Buddha, and there is some indication of an extension from the stone base (See Appendix 8). However, no evidence was found or provided in the restoration design regarding what the structure would have looked like nor what it was for. The first draft of the management plan objected to this proposal, but the reconstruction went ahead.

7.3.1 Compartmentalised effort and a mismatched planning

If a restoration is scheduled alongside the drafting of the management plan, it is reasonable that the two teams of practitioners should communicate and coordinate so that their efforts can be maximised for ensuring the interventions' effectiveness. However, in the case of Baiyu Temple, no recommendation from the conservation management plan was effectively adopted during the restoration. Several factors can be identified to have caused the lack of

⁷⁸ According to the SACH archive, the funding for drafting Baiyu Temple's conservation management plan was approved in 2011 (SACH 2020). For unknown reasons, it was only until 2013 when the project started. In early 2013, the drafting of the conservation management plan for Baiyu Temple was underway and the first fieldwork took place in April. The management plan was within the scope of the Southern Project and meant to be scheduled in coordination with the restoration. The SACH archive shows that the restoration project was approved to start in 2013 and the restoration design was approved in 2014 (SACH 2020).

communication between the two projects. These factors range from the state administrative level to the implementation processes on site.

Although the starting time of the restoration design and management plan's drafting was coordinated, because of the state's emphasis on the Southern Project, the restoration was considered a priority over the management plan, which is evidenced by the discrepancy between funding being directed to both projects and the expedited approval process for the restoration design.⁷⁹ As such, although there was an overlapping period between the two projects, the restoration design was completed while the conservation planning was still in process. The approval and implementation of the restoration were on a fast track and was completed by 2015. Conversely, even though the conservation plan's initial draft was finished in 2014, the final approval was postponed until 2019 (Figure 27). This delay not only renders many recommendations made towards the restoration design in the plan completely invalid but also means that the initial fieldwork research for the management plan became significantly out of date after the restoration and needed to be updated. More importantly, completing the restoration before the management plan means that little strategic guidance based on a comprehensive understanding of the site was adopted by the restoration design, which is the key intention of having a plan.

Besides the mismatched schedule, the project-based model of PCHS conservation and management creates a compartmentalised environment which contributes to the fragmented approach taken towards the PCHS' management. The conservation management plan was drafted by a conservation consultancy centre based in Beijing, while the restoration design was by a provincial research institute based in Shanxi. Essentially, the project schedules and the issue of whether to have consultation meetings between the two institutes were subject to the decisions of the heritage professionals, the local, provincial, and state-level consultation panels. Theoretically, any one of these parties could initiate collaboration and communication between the two teams. However, there is no mandatory requirement for it to happen. More importantly, while the conservation management plan is supposed to be an all-encompassing strategic document, the project-based model means that the conservation management plan is 'just another project' like the restoration. Eventually, the first draft of the management plan included an evaluation and recommendations regarding the restoration design, but they were not communicated to the restoration team (CHCC 2015).

⁷⁹ According to SACH's archive, the funding for the conservation management plan was 300,000CNY, whereas the funding for the restoration in 2014-2015 amounted to 6,900,000CNY. Even if one only looks at the funding for the formulation of the restoration proposal, which amounted to 1,900,000, it is still disproportionate compared to the conservation management plan project (SACH 2020).

| Date | Conservation Planning | infrastructure improvement project |
|------------|--|--|
| 2011 | funding approved by SACH | |
| 2013 | | funding approved by SACH |
| 2013.03-11 | initial research and first draft | proposal design |
| 2013.11 | | first draft submitted |
| 2013.12 | interim consultation with county authority | |
| | draft revision | proposal revision |
| 2014.02 | draft consultation with provincial authority | proposal approved by SACH |
| 2014.05 | second consultation with provincial authority and revised draft | |
| 2014.12 | | restoration completed |
| 2015 | | infrastructure improvement project completed |
| 2016.04 | another round of research and evaluation of the post-restoration situation | |
| 2017 | several rounds of revision and consultation meetings with provincial authority | |
| 2018.01 | approval panel with SACH | |
| 2019.06 | conservation plan approved by SACH | |

Figure 27 Timeline of the conservation management plan project and the restoration and infrastructure improvement projects (CHCC 2015; National Heritage Centre of Tsinghua University 2015; CHCC 2018)

The interviews with engineers and conservation architects of the Southern Project and local level officials reveal that it is also a common phenomenon that the restoration implementation can have major differences with the restoration design (Heritage Professional 2 2018; Heritage professional 5 2018; Local officials 1&2 2018; Local officials 7&8 2018). There are several scenarios for these discrepancies to happen. First, the local craftsmen in the construction team may consider that they have better insights regarding the appropriate interventions based on their experience and on-site observations. They might opt for more practical or convenient solutions than those conceived by the conservation architects who drafted the

restoration proposal. Second, during the disassembling of the buildings, there might be new evidence emerging. In this scenario, if the new evidence is significant, the conservation architects are usually consulted, and the restoration design is revised based on the new findings. However, according to the interviews with the local officials and on-site observations, the changes were sometimes not communicated with the conservation architects (Local official 4 2018; Local officials 1&2 2018; Local officials 7&8 2018). The third scenario is that the restoration design has not addressed some of the interventions directly, but the construction team consider it necessary to implement them. Comparing the post-restoration situation with the restoration proposal shows that the third scenario is evident regarding the dance tower (*wulou*). The design proposed to restore the missing balustrade on the front façade of the stage but did not mention what to do with the 1987 extension (Institute of Shanxi Ancient Architecture Conservation 2013). The 1987 extension was demolished during the restoration. Although it was unlikely that the conservation management plan had any impact on the restoration since it was not approved at the time, this intervention was implied in the first draft of the conservation management plan and has its root in the conservation principles that dominate heritage practices in China, such as considering these later structures as obstructions. The next sub-section will further discuss the conservation philosophy behind the management plan's recommendation, the restoration, and the construction team's decision regarding this extension.

7.3.2 Disciplinary influence

The conservation management plan followed a relatively standard template for this type of PCHS. The site was considered a somewhat typical case, with one temple complex located in a rural area, without any remarkable challenges that come with a complex urban environment, a difficult terrain, or extraordinary types of heritage elements. The priority to preserve the physical remains of the historic structures, especially the Jin Dynasty (1115-1234CE) main hall, is coherent in both projects. The conservation management plan suggests not only removing the 1987 extension of the *wulou* but also all the 'inappropriate interior and exterior elements' added in 'recent times', which refers to post-1949 additions such as those from the school period and the 1980s-1990s (CHCC 2015). Although the restoration design did not explicitly mention it, the construction team did exactly as the management plan suggested despite the lack of communication between the two projects (Institute of Shanxi Ancient Architecture Conservation 2013). It indicates that all the professionals involved operated upon a similar premise, one that prioritises older historic structures than remains from the recent past. This premise views the history of the temple as frozen and fragmented periods distanced from the present rather than a continuous process that flows through time. If these decisions were viewed in their vacuum without considering the rest of the projects, the

heritage professionals were indeed operating through a form of AHD (Authorised Heritage Discourse) to a certain extent.

However, the two out-of-ordinary decisions mentioned above, albeit small, should not be overlooked and call for a nuanced explanation. The intangible aspects of the temple were noticed and incorporated throughout the management plan, from defining heritage attributes, value assessment, impact evaluation and recommendations. Regarding the religious activities, the management plan includes recommendations of not only managing these activities for the safety of the historic structures but also proactively promoting and sustaining these practices through public sector support (CHCC 2015). It indicates that the heritage professionals working on this project were aware of these intangible aspects' significant role in the temple's heritage-making process in the present and its sustainable management going forward. However, these intangible associations were never considered a core component of the strategy by the expert panel despite the planners' intention and advocacy.

As for the decision over the reconstruction of the extension at the back of Yuhuang Hall, the management plan stands strictly with the principles advocated by the Venice Charter on minimal intervention and no reconstruction based on conjecture. The restoration design did not provide the reasoning behind the reconstruction. However, the decision to also reinstall a statue of Weituo in the shrine after the reconstruction suggests that at least in effect, the reconstruction not only concerns the building but has also enhanced the temple's connection with its worshippers.

Both decisions discussed above demonstrate that regardless of the dominant philosophy, which, in this case, adheres to the 'Western' approach, there is always a possibility that some decisions or actions deviate from that approach and may have an impact on the heritage assemblage of this site. However, since the 'Western' approach still governs much of the decision-making by the heritage professionals and the administrative bodies and experts responsible for the approval of the projects, not much deviation will be able to escape the systemic constrain without significant transformation of the system.

7.4 An uncertain future

As discussed in Ch.5, despite the conservation management plans are law-binding once approved, their effectiveness can also be significantly undermined in the process of implementation due to either inaction from the administrative body, the plans' lack of suitability to the situations on-site, its poor timings, or the lack of priority in the political agenda in general. According to an interview with a local official from Lingchuan county in 2018, the management plans of the PCHS in the county, either approved or not, mostly ended up on the shelf without effective implementation (Local official 4 2018). While the management plan of Baiyu Temple

was only approved in 2019 and it is still too early to evaluate how it would be implemented, the interview with the local official indicates that the plan's effectiveness will be somewhat limited, which means the recommendations to support and promote the intangible aspects of the temple are likely to remain on paper.

As alluded to above, while it might seem a minor intervention not even deserving to be mentioned directly in the restoration design, the decision to remove the stage extension from 1987 has indeed had a much larger impact than expected. According to the on-site observation and interviews with the village chiefs in 2018, the dance tower (*wulou*) had become too small for the opera performance after the extension's removal. The organisers of the temple fair adapted to build a temporary stage in the village for the villagers to watch the performance. The village chiefs lamented that it had become increasingly challenging to organise the temple fair due to the recent economic downturn in Lingchuan despite the keen willingness from Jiaodi Village. They commented that due to the poor harvest in recent years prior to 2018, several surrounding villages stopped contributing funds to the temple fair and only wanted to participate. Besides the usual expenses, the need to build an extra stage in the village exacerbates the financial burden for Jiaodi Village (Caretaker of JC Temple 10 2018; Community members 1&2 2018).

According to the caretaker of the temple, after the restoration, the temple remains locked during normal times (Caretaker of JC Temple 10 2018). While it might seem plausible to assume that locking the temple for the safety of the historic buildings would limit the use of the temple and, therefore, weaken the association between the temple and its worshipping community, information gathered during the fieldwork for this research has proved that the restriction is not actually so significant. Just as most sites in the case study region, Baiyu Temple remains open for the local worshippers twice monthly, and temple fairs are allowed to continue. As demonstrated above, however, the most devastating factors that can jeopardise the vitality of the temple and its community's connection are related to the economic challenges in the region, in this instance, critically exacerbated by an intervention from the restoration to remove the stage extension. At the time of the 2018 fieldwork, the vitality of the association between the temple and its community appeared to be on a downward slope compared to the pre-restoration situation.

7.5 Analysis with the relational M/M approach

This chapter has traced the tracks along which the temple and its community have been transformed and evolved. Examining the movement of and interactions between the actors in this heritage assemblage has elucidated the causal chains that have led to the phenomenon

as seen today. With the method of abduction, it is possible to identify the connections between actors that have formed the heritage assemblage of Baiyu Temple and 'redescribe' the phases and changes of the associations between actors using the relational M/M approach as established in Chs.3 and 4. Mechanisms that had exercised significant causal powers for this case will be identified (See Figure 28 for an analytical diagram of Baiyu Temple's M/M cycles and Figure 29 for the morphostatic timeline of the associations within the Temple's assemblage, also refer to Appendix 8 for information on the temple's history redescribed below).

Before the temple on today's location initially came into being, there was already a morphogenetic cycle as implied by the 1212 steles regarding the old *Donghaishen Ci*. The morphostasis of this temple's connection with its worshipping community (Ms0) was formed and sustained by the causal power that originated in the worshipping of the God of the East Sea around the country at the time. By 1212, Ms0 became obsolete as the physical remains of the old temple became dilapidated (natural decay of the physical remains as morphogenetic process Mg0-1), and the old temple was deemed too small for the growing community (the worshipping community growing as Mg0-2). The causal powers that triggered the two morphogenetic processes (Mg0-1 and Mg0-2) were originated from the natural elements that contributed to the decay and the community members' faith. It is possible to identify that the previous lack of contribution from maintenance also led to the obsolescence of Ms0. Ms0's obsolescence was succeeded by the emergence of the move and construction of the temple in 1212 (Mg1-0) and led to a new morphostatic status of the connection between the temple and its worshipping community (Ms1). The causal powers that contributed to Ms1's emergence included the willingness and resource contribution from its worshipping community.

The subsequent interventions, constructions, repairs, and introduction of new deities all contributed to sustaining and even enhancing Ms1 (Mg1-1 – Mg1-4).⁸⁰ These morphogenetic processes brought changes to the temple and its community but did not bring a disruptive force strong enough to destabilise Ms1. The faith of the community can be seen to have had critical causal power contributing to the stability of Ms1. During this period, new associations were also formed. The 1870 stele suggested that associations between the natural environment, the community, and the temple emerged at some point when the pine forest was planted for the maintenance of the temple (Mg1-5). These associations formed another morphostasis (Ms1-1) that was both a manifestation of Ms1 and a contributing factor to its stability. Actions such as establishing a contractual agreement within the community to enforce

⁸⁰ Only the known events are numbered. However, it is reasonable to believe that many more morphogenetic cycles had happened. The list indicated in this section is, therefore, not exhaustive.

rules to protect and maintain the forest contributed to sustaining Ms1-1. However, in 1870, Ms1-1 was on the brink of obsolescence after suffering from a lack of causal power to sustain it for a prolonged period (Mg1-6). According to the historical records, the community started to forget where the forest was or even its existence. The installation of the 1870 stele (Mg1-7) contributed to prolonging the existence of Ms1-1 further. Although Ms1-1 had ceased to exist afterwards (Mg1-8), the existence of the 1870 stele continues to exercise its causal power until today and possibly into the future. Our knowledge of it can potentially lead to the revival of such a management system, the emergence of another version of Ms1-1 (Chen and Dai 2020).

Ms1 experienced significant disruption in 1948 when the temple became a school (Mg1-9). From the historical records, the last time when Ms1 was reinforced was in 1923, when the south courtyard was built. For Baiyu Temple, it is less likely that religious activities continued during the school period as statues were destroyed. It should also be noted that according to the same record, the statues were already damaged by 1948, possibly due to the lack of maintenance between 1923-1948 (Lingchuan Chronicle Editorial Board 2009). Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that Ms1 is at least dormant at this stage, if not obsolete completely. The faith of the community did not disappear, but its causal power was not as strong as that of the national ideological and political movement sweeping across the country at the time. This movement's causal power disrupted Ms1 and contributed to the emergence of another connection between the temple (its physical space) and its local community through the establishment of the school (Ms2). The broader social and political movement in the country (Mg2-1) and the adaptations of the temple buildings (Mg2-2) continued to sustain Ms2 until the 1970s. Ms2 was disrupted when the school moved away (Mg2-3). It is reasonable to suggest that the community members who went to school at the temple would still have the memory of this connection. Therefore, it is crucial to note that while Ms2 might have become much less prominent when viewed through the collective of the local community, connections between individual members and the temple space still live on through their memory (ms2). However, the demolition of all traces from the school period (mg2-1) during the 2015 restoration under the Southern Project has weakened the possibility for the survival of ms2 beyond this generation.

In the 1980s-1990s, Ms1 was revived (Ms1') (Mg1'-0) by the national religious policy and the sustained faith from the community. The extension and repairs of the buildings and the reinstallation of statues (Mg1'-1 – Mg1'-3) all contributed to strengthening Ms1'. By 1997, a new connection was formed when the temple was 'heritagised' as a municipal PCHS (Ms3). It was the first time when two prominent associations coexisted. Although their strength fluctuates over time, their coexistence continues until today. Ms3 was enhanced when the

temple's protection status was elevated to a provincial and then a national PCHS (Mg3-1, Mg3-2). It should be noted that the 'community' in Ms3 is not the same as Ms1'. While theoretically, the entire population in China can potentially form a connection with a national PCHS, there are several groups of people who have formed more direct connections with the temple through its status as 'heritage' rather than a religious space, including people from the administration who manage the PCHS, professionals and academics who study the temple's architectural history and have participated in its conservation and management, and enthusiasts of historic buildings. Ms3 is indeed not just one association but an assemblage, sustained by the causal powers of the administrative system, the knowledge community, and the general public's interests. However, due to the physical distance, the human actors who participate in sustaining Ms3 engage only periodically, except for the temple's caretaker. The Southern Project restoration (Mg3-3) is a significant process to reinforce Ms3, as is the conservation management plan, though this morphogenetic cycle has not been completed since the plan was not implemented.

The causal power directly contributing to Ms3's emergence came from the acknowledgement of the temple's historic buildings' significance in architectural history rather than the faith of the community. However, the worshipping community had been maintaining the temple for centuries since it was constructed through the connection that formed Ms1. Without such maintenance, Ms3 would not have emerged. The maintenance and repair of the temple buildings, which used to be mobilised through Ms1, are now exercised through Ms3. Ms1' becomes secondary or even irrelevant in contributing to the temple's maintenance. The local community does not actively participate in sustaining Ms3 as in Ms1' or Ms1 historically. As can be seen in the previous discussion in this chapter, the insufficient acknowledgement of Ms1' by the primary actors that sustain Ms3 (heritage professionals) leads to these actors unwittingly taking actions that exacerbated the obsolescing process of Ms1' (Ms1'-4). The lack of financial contribution from other villages within the temple's worshipping community affected by the wider social and economic forces in the area has also weakened Jiaodi Village's ability to sustain Ms1' (Ms1'-5).

As demonstrated by the temple's history and the observations of the temple fair, it is apparent that the temple exercises its causal power to forge and reinforce the social bond of its worshipping community. It is also reasonable to suggest that the temple, as a physical space of worship steeped in the worshipping community's everyday life, is significant for the worshippers' emotional and mental well-being. Both aspects are contributors to the social sustainability of the local community and are realised only if Ms1' is sustained, which, in this present case, requires both the maintenance and accessibility of the temple's physical space

and the faith and resources from the local community. Sustaining Ms3 has contributed to the former while weakening the latter.

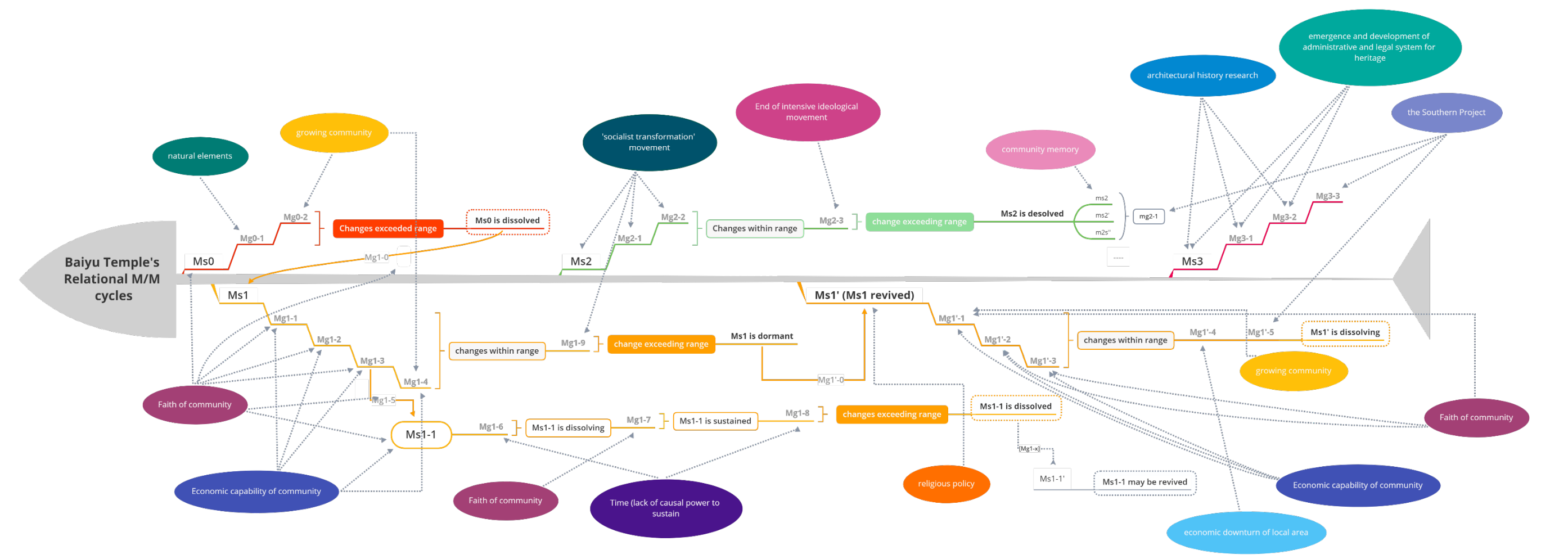


Figure 28 Baiyu Temple’s relational M/M cycles and the sources of causal power ⁸¹

⁸¹ Ms-X stands for the primary morphostases identified in Baiyu Temple’s timeline, as established in Section 7.5. They represent the morphostatic status of the associations between the temple and other actors, including its various communities and natural environment. Mg-x-y stands for the various morphogeneses that have brought changes to the morphostatic associations. The mechanisms that have exercised their causal powers on the emergence of these morphogenetic processes are identified in the colour circles. It is worth noting that the list of mechanisms is not an exhaustive one because it is always possible that there might be unknown factors that have not been discovered. This diagram is, therefore, to illustrate the primary sources of causal powers to the best of our knowledge. These mechanisms will be reassembled and go through a further process of abstraction in Chapter 10.

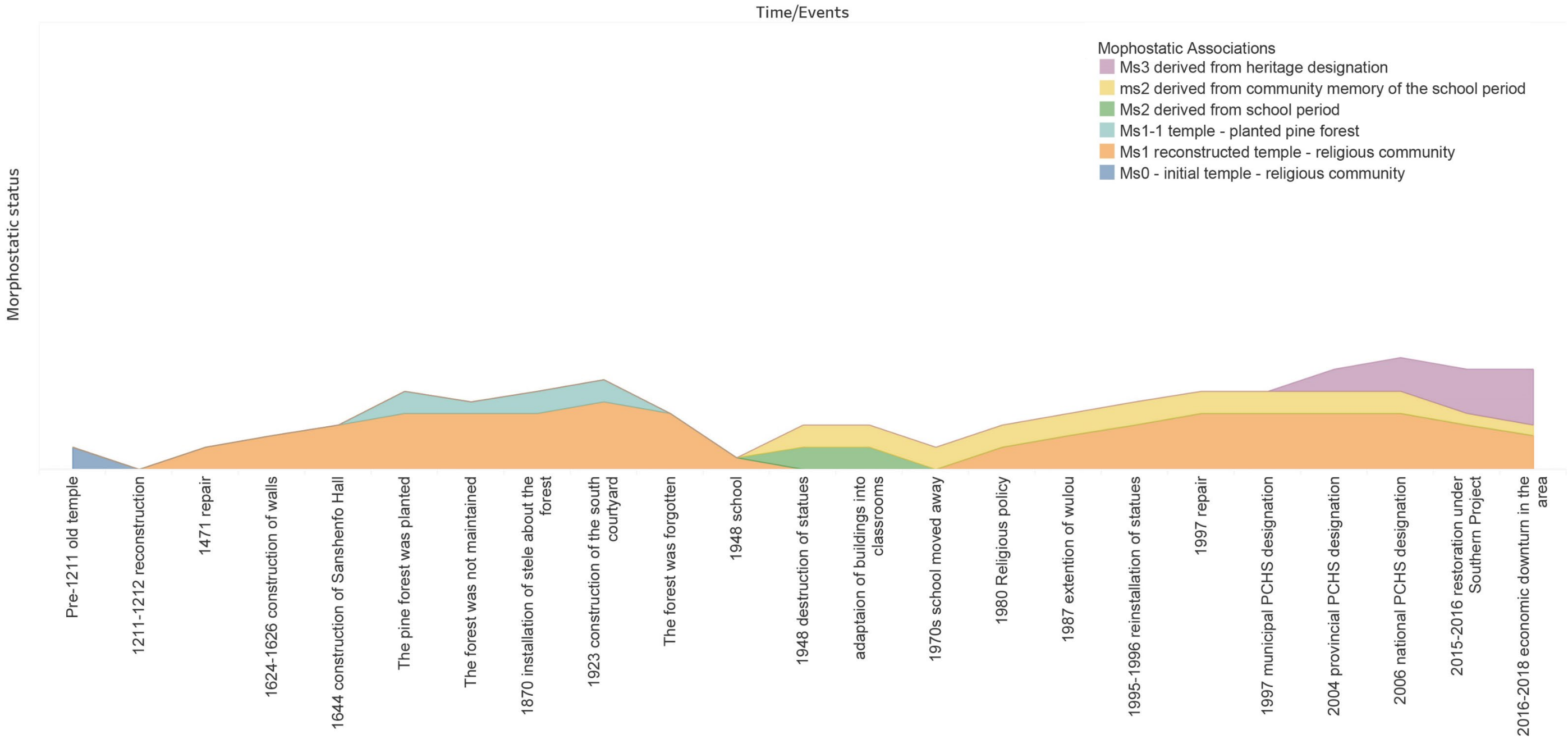


Figure 29 Baiyu Temple Morphostatic timeline

7.6 Conclusion

In juxtaposition with the next two chapters, the case of Baiyu Temple is complementary in revealing what the necessary conditions for the heritage site's associations to be sustained are. This chapter has examined the rich historical records and sheds light on how the assemblage of the temple emerged and evolved in history. It shows that the local community's faith plays a significant role in sustaining the association between the temple and its caretakers in historical times, which became secondary or even obsolete when this association was diverted or replaced in recent history. The chapter also reveals that before the 2015 restoration, its physical space, which was key to its 'heritagisation' process, needed repair while its religious association was thriving after its revival. It discusses the process to reinforce and sustain its heritage association, including the conservation management plan and the restoration, which can also have an impact on its religious association. It illustrates the post-restoration challenges in sustaining this religious association. The relationship between the two current associations, derived from its religious and heritage connotations, is both a reinforcing and competing one. It also reveals that beyond the aspects of heritage and religion, the broader economic and social condition in the local area can also play a significant role in sustaining the association between the temple and its local community. The chapter 're-describes' the case as a series of morphostasis and morphogenetic cycles that were triggered, sustained, transformed, or made obsolete by multiple causal powers exercised through the actors' actions and associations with each other. The combination of factors such as the community's faith, its PCHS status, the conservation philosophy, and the local area's economic vitality that gives rise to these cycles will be further synthesised and discussed in Ch.10, together with the findings of the other two cases and the broader case study region.

Chapter 8 A Closer Look II – Guangrenwang Temple

8.1 Overview

This chapter takes a closer look at Guangrenwang Temple's case where external forces have played a dominant role in the dramatic post-restoration 'make-over' of the site, sparking nationwide public debates since 2016. Before the 2016 'environment improvement' project⁸², the temple was relatively unknown to laypeople in China. Since the Project's completion, there has been much debate revolving around its 'cultural legitimacy', the appropriateness of the design, the new function and revitalisation of the heritage site, and the implications of the Project to its 'heritage value' and authenticity. This chapter is intended to provide a detailed account of the actors and associations related to the site, both historically and contemporarily. Data is collected with a variety of methods, including semi-structured interviews with the provincial and local officials from the cultural heritage departments, the caretaker of the temple, and heritage professionals and desktop research for relevant magazine and journal articles, newspaper articles and social media entries that represent a variety of public opinions. The chapter traces the opinions, actions, and effects and reveals the causal powers contributing to the emergence and transformation of associations between human and non-human actors. Five controversies are identified by mapping out the actors, their opinions, the impact, and the most debated issues revolving around the Project. It 'redescribes' these processes and analyses the morphostatic and morphogenetic cycles through time-series analysis, as introduced in Ch.4. The case study provides part of the basis for reassembling the generative mechanisms in Ch.10.

8.2 Background: the post-restoration make-over

Guangrenwang Temple, also known as the Wulong Temple (Five-Dragon Temple), is in Zhonglongquan (lit. 'middle dragon spring') Village in Ruicheng County, Yuncheng Municipality (Figure 30 & Figure 31). It is believed to be one of the few Tang Dynasty (618-907CE) timber structures surviving in the country. Despite contested opinions held by architectural historians who question whether the main hall can still be qualified as a 'Tang Dynasty structure' due to a 'heavy-handed' restoration in 1959, the 'belief' that this temple is of outstanding significance for containing one of the few surviving Tang structures in the country remains persistent. (See Appendix 9 for the introduction to the temple and its history) This make-believe mentality appears to play a vital role in its post-restoration make-over, as will be elaborated in the next section. If the building's title as a Tang structure is seriously questioned, it suggests that there are only two structures left from this time. It will also undermine the claim that Guangrenwang Temple is the oldest surviving Taoist Temple in the

⁸² It will be referred to as the Project hereafter.

country (Jia 2017). Such a hypothesis seems undesirable to many. It should be emphasised here that the Tang structure's materiality *is* essential to the representational 'heritagisation' process on a national level. It is what makes it stand out from the numerous other historic temples that may also have a history that goes back to the Tang Dynasty or even earlier but do not have any material remains from that time. However, the 'material authenticity' seems to have become less vital after it became PCHS. This make-believe mentality was strengthened during the 2016 'make-over' project that followed the 2015 restoration.

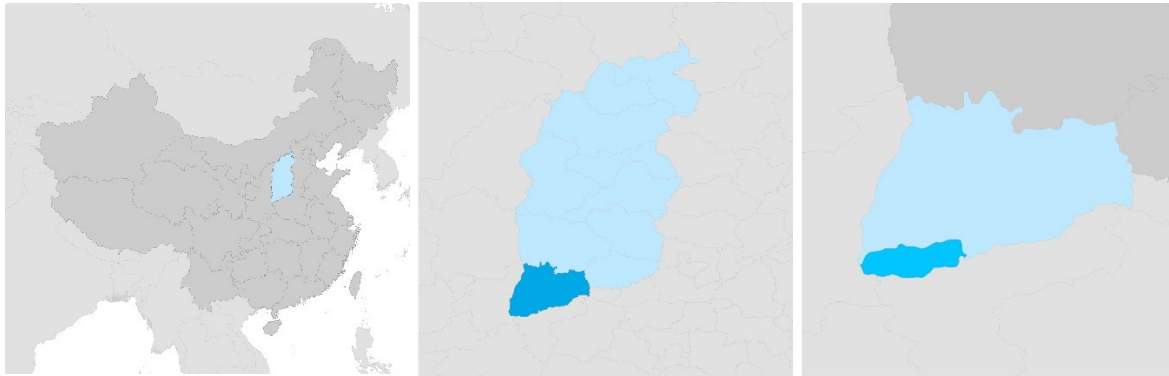


Figure 30 a) Shanxi Province in China; b) Yuncheng Municipality in Shanxi Province; c) Ruicheng County in Yuncheng Municipality, base map GIS data: (GADM 2021)

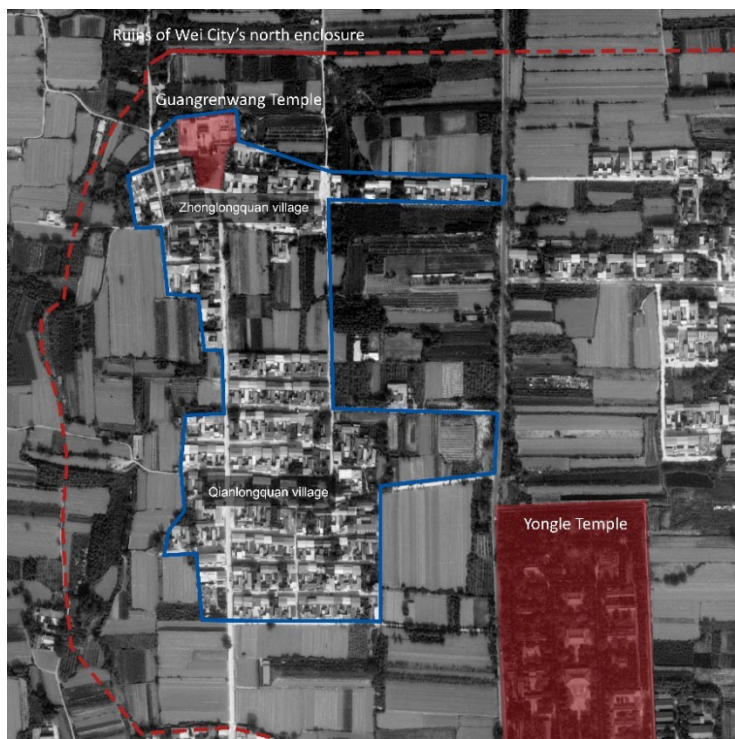


Figure 31 Location of Guangrenwang Temple in relation to Zhonglongquan village and Qianlongquan village, Yongle Temple and the ancient Wei City, base map: (Google Maps 2021)

The restoration of Guangrenwang Temple was carried out under the Southern Project from 2013 to 2015. As mentioned in Ch.6, like many of the other sites in the Southern Project, an 'environment improvement' project was expected to take place after the restoration. Such projects are usually small in scale and are affiliated projects to the restorations (Hu 2015). Therefore, it was unusual when *Vanke*, a real estate company, announced to the public in June 2015 that after approaching the Cultural Heritage Bureau in Shanxi Province twice, a crowd-sourcing heritage project called the '*Long* (Dragon) Plan' had been set up to facilitate the environmental improvement of the site, essentially creating a museum on site. The Long Plan included the fund-sourcing and implementation of the Project (Guo 2016a). (For *Vanke*'s previous initiative to participate in Guangrenwang Temple's restoration, see Appendix 9)

Vanke associated the 'Long Plan' with an international event to boost its publicity. It was presented as part of the exhibition in *Vanke*'s pavilion in the Expo 2015 in Milan, Italy. The *Vanke* Pavilion, designed by Daniel Libeskind, is shaped like a dragon with 4000 red tiles attached to its surface, symbolising dragon scales.⁸³ To fulfil the crowdfunding nature of the 'Long Plan', *Vanke* auctioned the 4000 tiles to raise a part of the fund from the public. The Project was eventually carried out with a combination of crowdfunding, private funding (from *Vanke*) and state funding (Liang 2015). The design was completed by URBANUS, an architectural studio based in Beijing, led by a star architect Wang Hui. According to Wang, there were two main objectives when they were conceiving the Project. An outward-looking one aims to create some open-air exhibition space in the courtyard of the temple for presenting information regarding Chinese architectural history and the interpretation of the site, and an inward-looking one aims to create a public space for the villagers (Wang 2016a). The Project was also supported by a team of heritage professionals from Tsinghua University, led by Lv Zhou. As a professor from Tsinghua University, the director of Tsinghua National Heritage Centre and the vice president of ICOMOS-China, Lv's voice carries much weight and radiates influence among the administrative branches, academics, and the public. According to the leading engineer of the Southern Project, who works extensively with SACH, the involvement and endorsement of Lv's team provide the provocative Project proposal with credit during the administrative approval process (Heritage professional 5 2018). (See Figure 32 – Figure 35 for comparisons of before and after the Project and Appendix 9 for a description of the Project's interventions on the site.)

⁸³ This interpretation, however, is not the original conception of Libeskind when he designed the building. Interestingly, the 'reinterpretation' of the building as a dragon by *Vanke* and its subsequent link with the crowd-funding scheme of the Guangrenwang (Five-Dragon) Temple adds another 'make-believe' aspect to the Project.



Figure 32 (left) Entrance to the temple via a slope before the Project, March 2011 (Tam 2011a).



Figure 33 (right) New entrance with flights of steps towards the ticket office at the southeast corner of the museum, March 2018 (Tam 2018s).

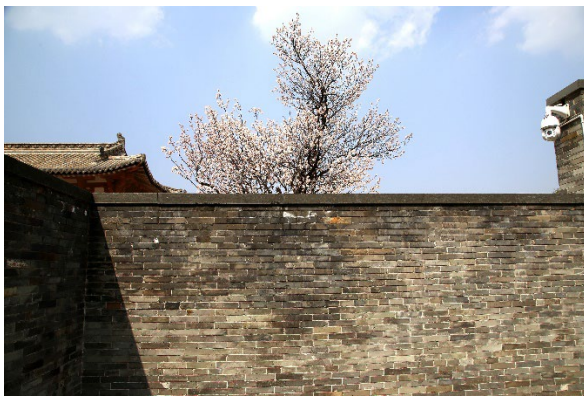


Figure 34 (left) Limited view of the main hall's roof from the entrance staircase (Tam 2018o)



Figure 35 (right) View of the main hall at the top of the entrance slope, as seen in March 2011 (Tam 2011d)

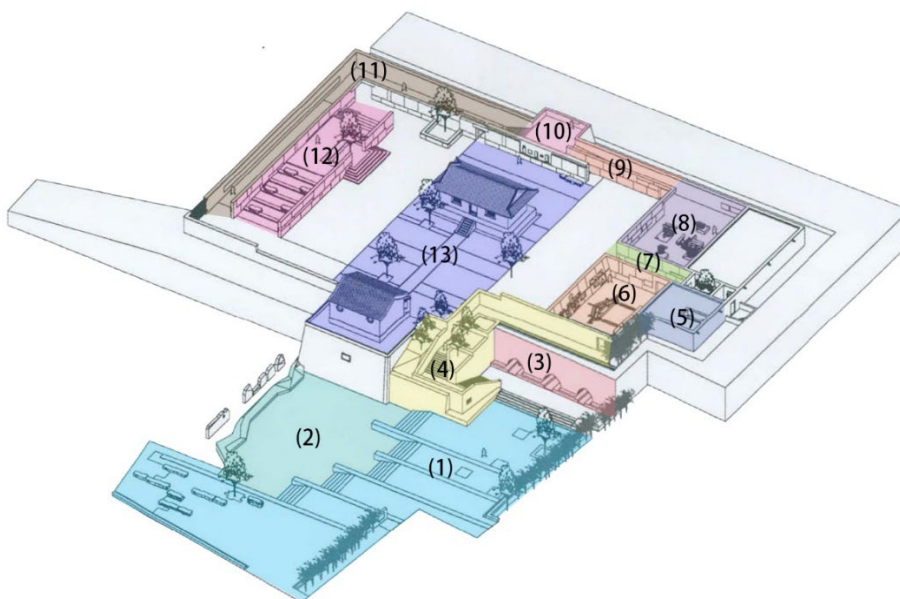
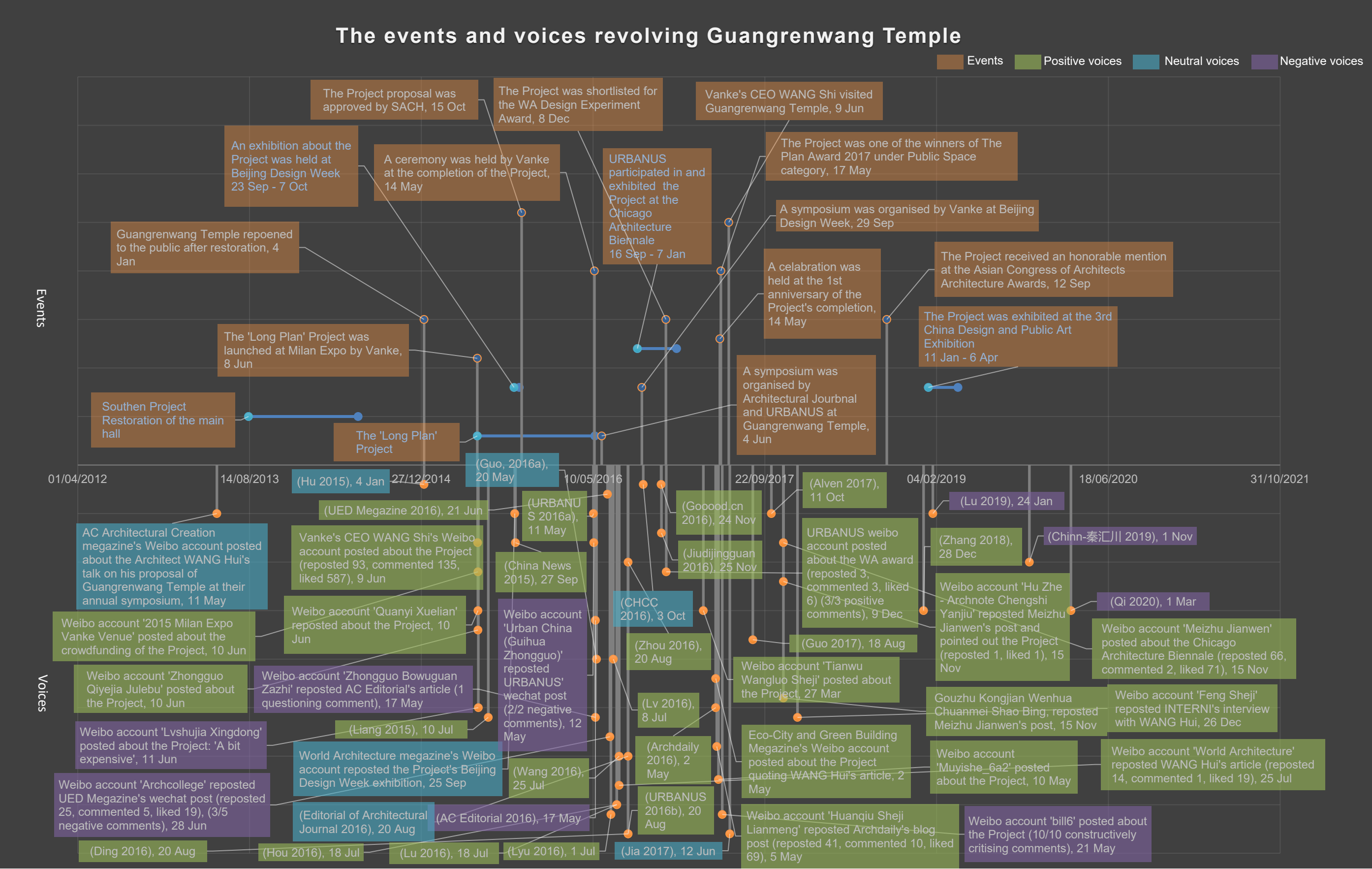


Figure 36
Axonometric view
of Guangrenwang
Temple after the
Project
(annotated by Lui
Tam). Base
image: (Wang
2016a, p. 114)

8.3 The voices and the silence – five controversies

The action of *Vanke* was characterised by most media reports as an act of philanthropy because there is a lack of funding for the 'environment improvement' project of Guangrenwang Temple. They praise *Vanke*'s voluntary initiative to fund the project without asking for a reward (China News 2015; Liang 2015; Archdaily 2016; UED Magazine 2016). They also tend to characterise the initiative as something that stems from the spontaneous enthusiasm of the individuals involved instead of a corporate action, by highlighting how Ding, a high-ranking executive of *Vanke*, came across the temple during his personal travel, his passion for Chinese historic architecture, as well as how the chief architect agreed to take on the design as a pro-bono project even before the project was approved (Liang 2015; AC Editorial 2016; Guo 2016a). However, while there is no doubt that the environment of the temple needs improvement and more funding sources are always welcome, the situation of Guangrenwang Temple was far from the most devastating among the sites under the Southern Project. According to one of the architectural historians interviewed during this PhD research, it is equally reasonable to believe that *Vanke* chose this specific site because of its title as a Tang Dynasty structure. It is important enough to create good publicity, but it is also sufficiently 'unknown' to the public that a case of 'rescuing' and 'revitalising' can be made (Heritage Professional 3 2018). A closer look at the debates and reality of the case suggests that behind the positive media coverage, there are many controversies worth unfolding to critically appraise the Project (See Table 3, Figure 37 and Appendix 10 - 11 for the process and data used to identify these controversies).

Table 3 The events and voices revolving around Guangrenwang Temple's environment improvement project



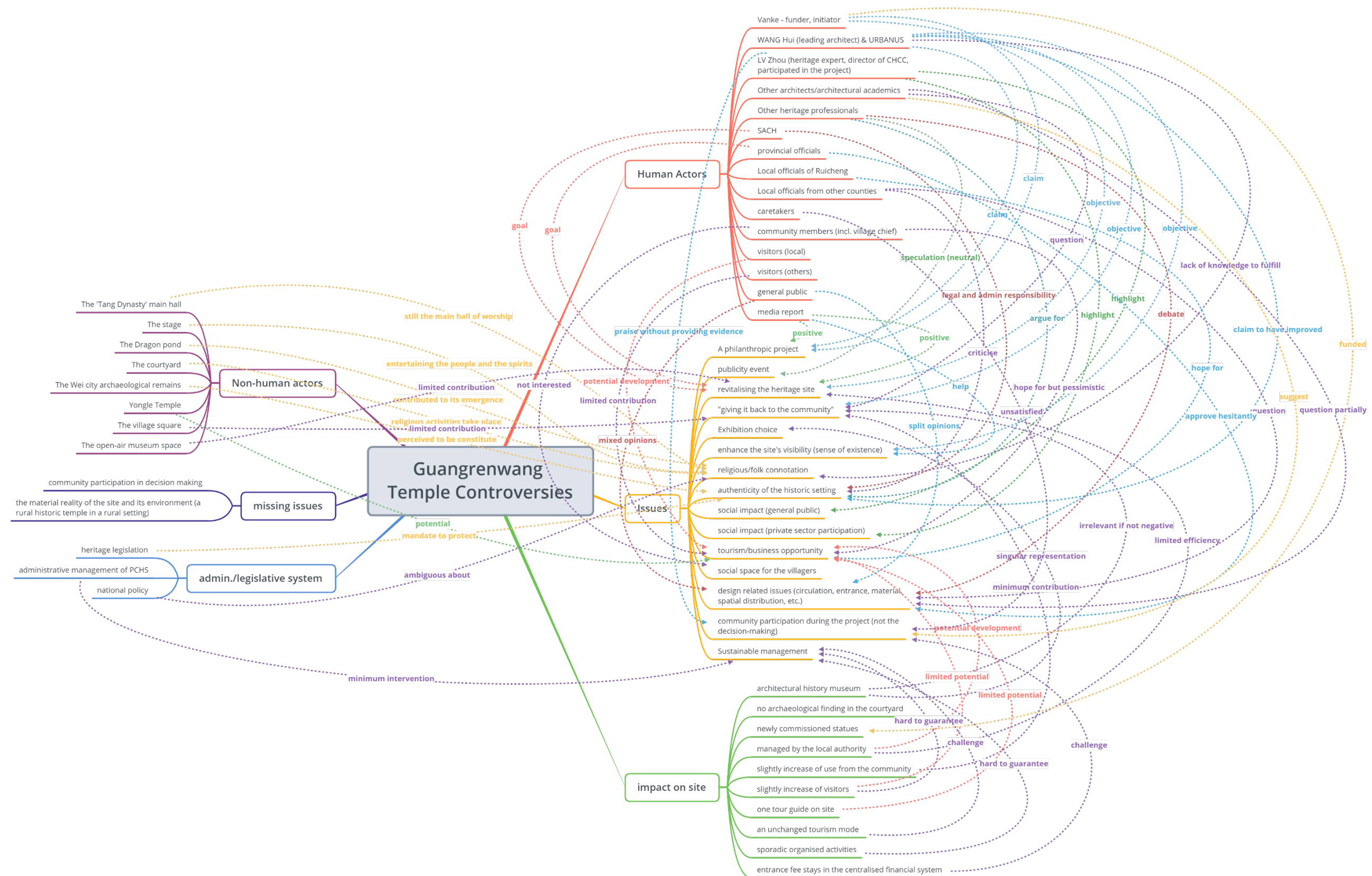


Figure 37 Mapping the controversies

If the announcement from *Vanke* in 2015 had only struck a sensitive nerve among a small group of historic building enthusiasts, the heated debate started when the Project was completed, and the result of the ‘make-over’ was revealed in May 2016. Many were surprised to see the images of the museum online. Posts about the museum on social media platforms such as Weibo (the Chinese equivalence of Twitter) and Wechat⁸⁴ receive various comments from the public. Besides the general public, heritage professionals, architects, academics in relevant disciplines as well as the media started publishing more detailed responses to the Project (Figure 38). In response to the critics, the chief architect and the heritage professionals involved in the Project answered to some of the most debated issues.

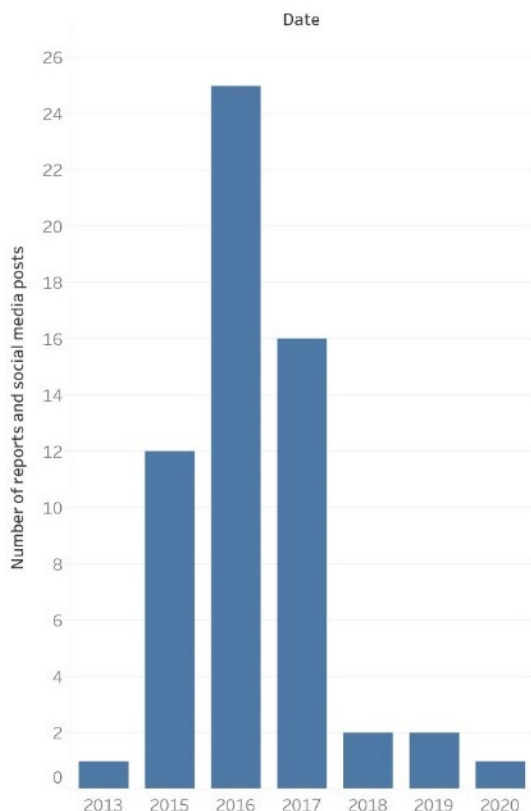


Figure 38 The number of academic articles, op-eds, media reports and social media posts about the Project before and after its completion, data collected by March 2020.

From the Project’s beginning in 2015 to its completion in 2016 and to the 2018 fieldwork, data collected during this research shows that the actors’ opinions have changed over time. For example, according to the local officials of Ruicheng and a media report, when the provincial officials first came to see the site right after its completion, they were hesitant in voicing their opinions (Local official 9 2018). Such hesitation is no longer evident during the interviews of

⁸⁴ Wechat had become a popular social media platform at the time of the debate. It is entirely possible that there are more opinions expressed on people’s personal accounts on Wechat than Weibo at this point. However, because Wechat is a semi-open platform (only comments and posts from one’s added contacts can be seen), it is much harder to extract public opinions from it.

this research. Changes are also present in the caretakers' opinions from different times. According to media reports, right after the completion of the Project, the caretakers were positive about the change (AC Editorial 2016; Jia 2017). However, in the 2018 interview, one of the caretakers voiced complaints about the implementation quality and design choices of the Project. They were also dissatisfied that the caretakers and community members were not consulted until the implementation stage (Caretaker of YC Temple 4 2018). This discrepancy between their opinions is possibly due to the different interviewers and how the questions were asked. It is, however, also possible that two years after its completion, the caretaker has slowly realised some of the negative aspects of the Project. This discovery demonstrates that opinions are changeable, and such changes should be taken into consideration when the long-term impact of the Project is assessed.

8.3.1 The authenticity of the historic setting

The Project's impact on the authenticity of the historic setting (*lishi huanjing*) was one of the most debated issues. Commentators hold starkly contrasting opinions from various perspectives. These stances not only demonstrate the actors' opinions towards the Project but also their understanding of authenticity of a historic temple. Those who refer explicitly to the term of authenticity include architects, heritage professionals, and architectural magazine commentators. Based on the debate on this issue, the authenticity of the site's historic setting involves not only the physical setting of the historic temple but also the anthropological and socio-cultural contexts.

(i) The tangible setting

The leading architect Wang Hui claims that the Project did not intervene with the historic setting of the site because there was no material evidence remaining. They argue that the physical environment of the site has been altered several times over the centuries according to historic texts and the memories of the villagers, especially during the last few decades, when the temple was used as a school before it was heritagised (Wang 2016a). Following the same reasoning, Huang suggests that the heritage museum is, therefore, only yet another layer of this ever-changing setting (Huang 2016). Lv (also appears as Lyu) and Guo comment from the perspective of heritage professionals. They argue that since there is a lack of tangible trace left of the 'historic setting', it is reasonable and 'respectful to history' to create something modern instead of a 'reconstruction out of imagination' (Lyu 2016a; Guo 2017). However, citing the Venice Charter and the Nairobi Recommendation, Guo admits that the new environment of the temple does not support the role of the historic temple as a 'testimony of history' (Guo 2017).

Several commentators, including the leading engineer of Guangrenwang Temple's latest restoration, suggest that the Project has not been sensitive towards the broader physical setting – the rural village and surroundings (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016; Heritage professional 5 2018). Qi and Li have noted that the Dragon Spring Pond, the surrounding fields, and mountains are essential elements of the temple's historic setting, which is supported by the historical records in the local chronography and the historic steles (Li 2015; Qi 2020). Qi and other media outlets report that the caretakers regret the design team's decision not to recover the Dragon Spring, which is confirmed by the interview with the caretaker during this PhD research (AC Editorial 2016; Jia 2017; Caretaker of YC Temple 4 2018). Qi also considers that the restrictive architectural language intended to 'frame' the main hall and the museum's maze-like exhibition space and walls have interrupted the association between the temple and its immediate rural environment (Qi 2020).

The engineer who oversaw Guangrenwang Temple's restoration expressed their frustration during the interview of this PhD research. One of their oppositions is related to the authenticity of the site. Their interpretation of the temple's authenticity follows the same philosophical position of the Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China (referred to as the China Principles hereafter), where minimal intervention is the overarching principle (ICOMOS China 2015). They consider that heritage professionals have the responsibility to be the interpreters and promoters of the China Principles. After trying to minimise the intervention of the latest restoration in the main hall, they are especially disappointed to see the drastic transformation of its environment (Heritage professional 5 2018).

In response to such criticism, the architect, Wang Hui, references the principle of minimum intervention from the Venice Charter and claims that the design has been revised multiple times to avoid unnecessary interventions with the purpose of "keeping the heritage in its setting with authenticity and integrity" (Wang 2016a, p. 113). However, Wang goes on to argue that keeping the authenticity of the setting is paradoxical in practice because the archaeological survey did not find any physical evidence of the historic setting. Therefore, there is no reliable source from which to draw a hypothesis. This argument shows that Wang's definition of authenticity has changed slightly from when he references the Venice Charter. In the latter instance, he understands 'retaining authenticity' as a requirement to reconstruct the historic setting of the temple. He also considers that the transformation of the "frame of the building" is nothing compared to the interventions done to the building's historic components in previous restorations.

The way visitors approach the main hall is one of the most debated decisions of the design. Chinese historic buildings are mostly approached from their front façades. Such an approach

is essential for highlighting the significance of the temple's main hall. Even though the rest of the physical historic setting is unknown based on the available information, one of the most significant and still surviving elements is the spatial relationship between the main hall and the north-facing stage. It is the connection between the deity worshipped in the main hall and the people who perform for the spirits on the stage. This association, symbolising the relationship between humans, spirits, and the place, has existed since the creation of this temple, even though the site has become more than just a temple.

The spatial organisation of the museum now takes visitors from the entrance, where the main hall is blocked from the visitors to a narrow opening towards the side façade of the main hall flanked by two walls. The architect is indeed very proud of this framed image as it appeared in his original design sketch, and it is most often photographed after the Project (Figure 39 & Figure 40, also see Appendix 9). By blocking the visitors' peripheral vision to achieve a framed side-elevation of the main hall, the design has weakened the visitors' opportunity to discover the connection between the stage and the main hall. As revealed from the architect's argument, the decision-making was primarily based on one attribute of the site's heritage value – its Tang structure status (Wang 2016a). The choice to highlight the single authorised discourse and view the main hall as a stand-alone actor and a "large museum object" appears to be deliberate (Zhou 2016). The de-contextualisation of the main hall is praised by some architects such as Zhou and Lu, who consider its museumification a post-modern way to present the building (Lu 2016a; Zhou 2016). Chen, on the other hand, is critical about the neglect of the association between the main hall and the stage. From a heritage professional's perspective, she perceives that this association should be the most significant testimony of its heritage value (being a local temple) and, therefore, should be respected by any project (Editorial of *Architectural Journal* 2016, p. 4).

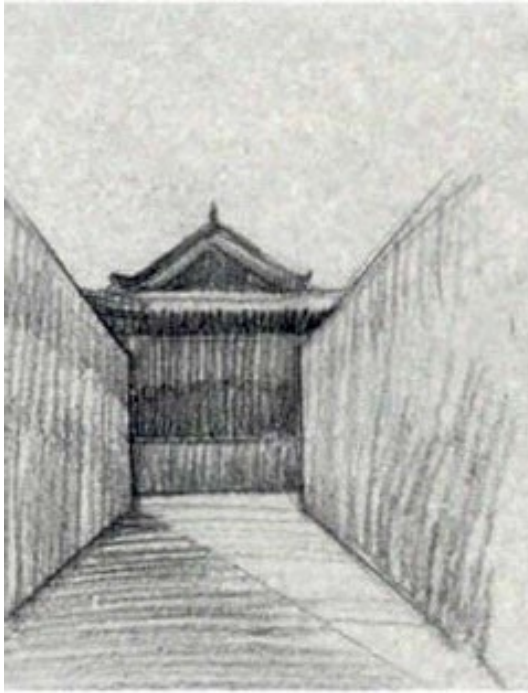


Figure 39 (left) Design sketch of the 'framed image' of the main hall's east elevation (Zhou 2016)

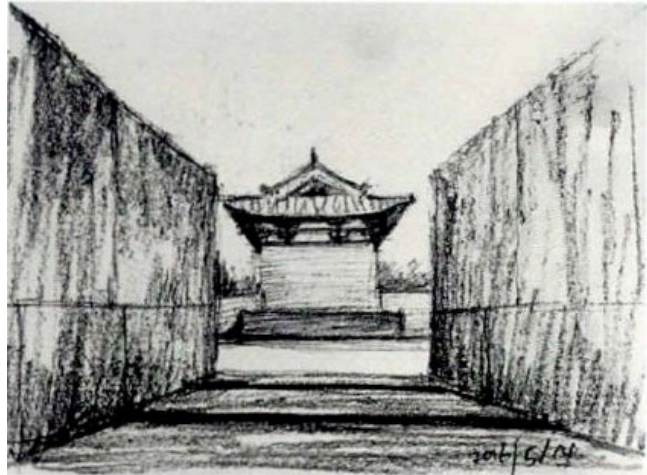


Figure 40 (right) A sketch from after the implementation of the Project (Zhou 2016)

Liu Kecheng notes that the relationships between the village, the pond, the temple, and the field are the most significant associations relevant to the Project, as they symbolise the associations between heaven, the earth, and the people. He suggests that the creation of the temple and the century-old worshipping activities have fostered a shared meaning among the local population. He considers that such a shared meaning should be preserved and enhanced by the Project, which, in his opinion, had not been achieved (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016, p. 6).

According to the architect Li Xinggang, one feature in the museum has brought the association between the temple and its physical historic setting to light. Behind the main hall, a platform was created with an outlook towards the mountainous backdrop of the temple. An explanation board about this natural environmental element and the Wei city ruins is installed. Li praises that this creation from the Project enhances the temple's connectedness with other historic remains in the surroundings and has a positive impact on expanding the radius of the temple's influence (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016, p. 3).

(ii) The intangible aspects

Besides the tangible setting, the comments on authenticity also engage with the intangible setting – the socio-cultural landscape of the community concerning the site. Guo considers the new heritage museum diversifies the connections between the historic temple and its audience so that the audience can experience the site on multiple levels – as a museum of ancient architecture, a heritage site, and a temple. He concludes that the Project has a positive impact on the ‘reconstruction’ of the intangible setting (Guo 2017). Conversely, the Southern Project’s leading engineer commented that the heritage site now no longer looks like a temple that was created to serve the village and the local region, and argues that the Project has an adverse impact on the temple’s historic function, which, according to them, constitutes part of its authentic historic setting (Heritage professional 5 2018).

Wang claims that the design’s consideration regarding the authenticity is demonstrated by transforming the site in a ‘subtle’ way, which has a positive impact on its authenticity through reinstating the connection between the site and the community and ‘return kinship and folklore culture to the everyday life of the villagers’ (Wang 2016a). However, the choice of the exhibition theme and the decision to ignore the relatable association between the main hall and the stage brings this claim into question.⁸⁵ Chen also includes other local customs related to the worship of dragons as part of the intangible socio-cultural setting of the temple, highlighting that these customs also deserve more attention (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016, p. 4).

8.3.2 Space of worship vs place of knowledge

Another central issue mentioned in most debates is that of the various ‘identities’ of the site. From the narration of the relevant literature, this issue refers to the associations of the site being a space of worship, built for a local population to worship a local deity, and a place of knowledge that came with its heritagisation, recognising its value as a testimony of Chinese architectural history. Wang and other commentators, including architectural and heritage professionals and journalists, build their arguments based on the premise of the ‘former’ temple’s spiritual obsolescence (Dou 2016; Lu 2016a; Lyu 2016a; Wang 2016a; Zhou 2016; Jia 2017).⁸⁶ These commentators define the site’s architectural significance as the

⁸⁵ These issues will be elaborated on below.

⁸⁶ Wang, Lu, Dou, and Zhou, all of whom are from an architectural background, consider the Project an excellent opportunity to transform and enhance the site’s status as a place for knowledge transfer, highlighting its significance in architectural history. Specifically, Zhou considers that instead of revitalising the temple as a religious space for worshipping deities, the project managed to recreate a

embodiment of knowledge and consider the folk culture and religions as part of the faith in the past. In this way, they are suggesting that the religious and folk connotations are not to be identified as 'knowledge'. Such a judgement can be biased against the grassroots meaning-making process around the temple, which still exists today.⁸⁷

Chen considers that one of the most significant identities of the site is a temple created for the worship of a local deity. They suggest that this layer of the heritage value has not been sufficiently explored by the project team (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016, p. 4). Qi notes that the presumption of the historic temple not being a sacred space anymore is a false one. Before the Project, the temple, although without an official religious venue registration, was still a space of worship for at least two occasions of each month and during the festival related to Guanyu, a historic-figure-turned-deity popular among the local population. They emphasise that even though it might not seem popular daily, the pattern of worship fits into the rhythm of the everyday in rural villages. Qi criticises that the architects assume it is their responsibility to 'revive' the heritage site and were, therefore, "caught in their imagination". In Qi's opinion, the Project tried to reinvent a connection between the heritage site and the community⁸⁸ instead of respecting and enhancing what has already existed and is still existing on-site. (Qi 2020, p. 108)

secular sacred space by presenting knowledge as the subject of worship in a museum setting (Zhou 2016). This perspective is resonated by Lu, who considers that knowledge has replaced religion as a driving factor for the meaning-making process on-site (Lu 2016a). Lv (Lyu), coming from the same premise, takes a more cautious stance as a heritage professional. He admits that since there is not enough research on the temple's religious history, folk customs and rituals, emphasising its significance in architectural history is a reasonable choice (Lyu 2016a).

⁸⁷ This concern is raised by Liu Diyu, who acknowledges the subjectivity of value assessment. He warns that overly emphasising the authorised value assessment that is commonly known to the general public may exclude the possibility to discover lesser-known and hidden meanings (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016, pp. 4-5). A similar comment was made by Zhang Lufeng, who considers that the existence of a heritage site is a composition of various meanings which should allow multiple interpretations and the new intervention should be more open-ended. He questions the decision to transform the historic temple to a museum, which highlights the site's "contemporary values" but might have excluded others (CHCC 2016).

⁸⁸ As will be elaborated further in Sub-section 8.3.4, it is even doubtful that this reinvention was successfully facilitated.

In Wang's article, the architect recalls that their team had considered two possibilities of the exhibition theme based on the value assessment published by SACH⁸⁹, which, he relates, were its architectural significance and the folk custom of rain-praying demonstrated by the historic worship of the Dragon King. He admits that the final decision to exclude the latter was mainly based on the limited capacity of the team, which consists mostly of architects who do not possess sufficient knowledge of folk cultures and religions (Wang 2016a). This admission is telling. It reveals that the determining factor for this significant decision of the Project is the limited specialism of the design team. It is then unsurprising that not only did the design team not include the rain-praying custom, but they also overlooked the contemporary meaning-making process in the temple demonstrated by the local community's faith and worshipping activities.⁹⁰

It should be noted that when all the interventions are considered, the spiritual connection is not entirely ignored. While it was not included in the architect's proposal, new statues of the deities were commissioned by *Vanke* to install in the main hall. It has also been reported by several sources that the local population has not stopped considering the site to be a space of worship (AC Editorial 2016; Jia 2017; Caretaker of YC Temple 4 2018; Qi 2020). It is, however, peculiar that this action is rarely mentioned in the initiators' responses to criticism of the Project. Similar silence can be found among the local authorities. As discussed in Ch.6, religion is still a politically sensitive topic for local officials, even though they all acknowledge the existence and significance of faith among the local population. A candid comment from the village chief of Longquan village reveals the complexity behind this silence. While recalling his experience of being invited to Milan as the representative of the villagers to speak at *Vanke's* exhibition at the Expo, he admitted that he was a little nervous because it involved discussion of issues relating to religion and faith. He exemplified that a local official was deposed simply because he gave a speech at a temple fair (Jia 2017). The village chief's

⁸⁹ While this value assessment should be publicly available, upon consulting the inventory of the national PCHS, it is not obvious where the said value assessment is.

⁹⁰ Interestingly, there are a few commentators who acknowledge the significance of the temple's religious connotation among the current local population but consider that the Project has indeed managed to elevate this discourse. By referencing Article 7 and Article 33 of the Nairobi Declaration, Guo, as a heritage professional, acknowledges that Guangrenwang Temple is both a space of worship and a place for knowledge. He comments that the Project, while revitalising the heritage site, also revived the faith for local religions and culture among the local population. He also suggests that the local community is not bothered by the new layers added to the identities of the temple. However, the article has not provided any evidence in support of these statements (Guo 2017).

comment is evidence in support of the deliberate ambiguity of the implementation of religious policy.

8.3.3 The design language and exhibition curation

Another primary issue addressed by the interviewees of this research, other commentators, and the general public on social media relates to the specific design and curation of the museum space. As with any architectural design project, opinions regarding its architectural language or technical choices are very much subject to personal preferences. Nevertheless, collating similar opinions from each actor group enables us to compare the effect of the design and its appeal to specific groups of people with the initial objectives of the project. It should be noted that the Project's contribution to the improvement of Guangrenwang Temple's physical environment is undeniable, considering the historic temple was previously surrounded by an informal landfill. The controversy presented here focuses more on the effects of the design and museum curation on the site as a heritage space and as a historic temple.

According to media coverage, the public sector's opinion towards the Project is mostly positive (Liang 2015; Guo 2016a; UED Magazine 2016; Jia 2017). The administrations' reservations regarding the appropriateness of the design can only be seen in written form in the advisory and approval documents published by SACH (SACH 2015b,c). However, interviews with officials from various administrative levels during this research reveal a less homogeneous set of opinions. Several local-level officials, including those who are not from Ruicheng county, express that they consider the design of the open-air museum is "too much", by which they mean it is too provocative and not compatible with the surrounding environment of a rural village. Some also question the quality and appropriateness of the exhibition facilities (Local official 10 2018; Local officials 1&2 2018).⁹¹

Li and Liu comment that the spatial organisation and volume of the added construction are disrespectful to the historic buildings and the associations between them (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016). They criticise that the museum structures have made the main hall, which is not a large building, seem even smaller in the complex. Additionally, the

⁹¹ These opinions resemble those of some community and public members, as well as some heritage professionals. The leading engineer of the Southern Project quoted her colleague's exclaims upon seeing the sites during the interview of this PhD research - "(It is) so twee! So full of petty-bourgeois sentiments! (in Chinese)" - while commenting that it is telling that these adjectives which are usually used for describing urban lifestyles were inspired by this little village temple (Heritage professional 5 2018). This opinion is echoed by Liu Diyu, who comments that the architectural language of the museum, including the scale, the volume, and the materials of the floor tiles on the temple ground, resembles the design of an urban square or a park (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016, p. 4).

effectiveness of the design's ability to highlight the main hall has come into question when one considers the comments on the on-site visiting experience. Liu recalls feeling guided away from the main hall during his visit (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016, p. 7). His experience demonstrates that the museum's circulation may have the unintended impact of taking away the visitors' attention to the temple ground. However, he is approved of this way of organising the visiting route, which, to him, makes it distinctive from the historical approach to visiting the temple. Relevant to this aspect, Guo and Zhou commented on the presentation of the main hall. They criticise that the design has abstracted the main hall into large scale architectural drawings, purposefully framed the historic building into static elevations, and created a strict circulation route to access the main hall. In doing so, the design has taken away the visitors' freedom to explore and experience the historic temple in a human manner (Zhou 2016; Guo 2017).

Nevertheless, some architects and heritage professionals with an architectural background are supportive of the choice of architectural language. Lv comments that using modern architectural language is effective in distinguishing the new design from the historic remains of the temple (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016, p. 2). Liu praises that the unconventional entrance and the maze-like circulation are both modern architectural languages but also resemble classical Chinese gardens (ibid. p.6-7).

In his criticism of Liebeskind's Jewish Museum's cultivation to "reductive approaches to built space", Koepnick considers places as articulations, whose "identities exceed the work of abstract and unified interpretations". He emphasises the multiplicity of space and its association with history, memory, narratives and uses (Koepnick 2001, p. 346). The Project's interventions appear to have introduced a similar reductive approach. Behind the orchestrated architectural language, the aesthetic and cultural (in)sensitivity subject to individual preferences and effectiveness of the curation, is the explicit intention to create a museum as a top-down educational space. This intention is also related to one of the claimed achievements of the Project - the social impact, which will be discussed in the next sub-section.

8.3.4 Social impact of public engagement and 'giving it back to the community'

According to one of the Project's initiators from *Vanke*, the Project was set out with three main objectives, the first of which is 'returning the temple to the village'. He explains that this objective derives from the hope to rehabilitate the temple's status as a public space in the village, to introduce the temple back into the everyday life of the villagers and to encourage the villagers to care for the temple (Hou 2016, p. 115). Wang, on the other hand, considers that in today's villages, virtues and faith are at a loss, and Longquan village is 'fortunate' to have this ancient temple. By "returning the temple to the everyday life of the village", Wang

appraises that the Project is a “redemption to the problematic village life” (Wang 2016a, p. 113).

Besides *Vanke* and Wang, many commentators address the issue of public engagement and the project’s benefit to the village. One of the most notable voices comes Lv Zhou, who leads the supporting team of heritage professionals during the Project. According to Lv (also appears as Lyu), one of the most crucial contributions of the Project is the participation of various sectors of society (Lyu 2016a). This argument addresses the long-lasting condition of the heritage industry in China, which has been limited to the participation of the public sector and government-appointed professional institutions. It was also why *Vanke*’s first initiative to participate in the restoration of the temple was rejected by the administration (Liang 2015). However, heritage professionals and some of the high-ranking government officials in the cultural heritage departments have been arguing for the participation of a broader range of actors from society in heritage projects, especially regarding the adaptive reuse of heritage sites (Li 2006; Wang 2010; Qi 2013; Ning 2014; Sun 2014; Yang 2014; Feng 2017; Liu 2017; Shen 2017; Zhang 2017; Liu and Yu 2018; Yu 2018; Li 2019). The ‘Safeguarding Civilisation Scheme’ from Shanxi Province, as discussed in Ch.6, demonstrates that the public sector has also been more open to the involvement of the private sector.⁹²

Lv praises that after completion of the project, it is touching to see villagers, elderlies and children enjoying the site (Lyu 2016a). However, based on the observation in 2018 and interviews with Ruicheng’s local officials and the temple’s caretaker, the increase of frequency of the villagers’ visits to the site is limited, even though they do make use of the public square.⁹³ The increase of non-local visitors is also insignificant after the initial excitement.

⁹² Lv points out that getting private funding and participation is beneficial to tackling the shortage of state funding for the caretaking of heritage sites, especially on projects that do not involve the historic buildings. More importantly, he considers that getting more actors from society to participate is itself a process which enriches the social value of the heritage site (Heritage Professional 2 2018). In the same way, the fact that the Project has attracted the attention of the general public has a similar effect (Lyu 2016a). This perspective has its root in a significant shift in China’s heritage discourse, as discussed in Chapter 5. The addition of the categories of social and cultural values in the China Principles is an attempt to incorporate intangible associations of these tangible sites into their value assessment process.

⁹³ An observation by a Weibo user’s visit to the temple in 2019 provides a vivid account and insights into the reasons behind. According to his report, when asked why they do not go to the museum even though they approve of the positive impact on the temple’s environment, the villagers replied, “*Sure, it is beautiful. But it is not so interesting for us.*”

According to the local official, the annual income from the ticket fees was about 20,000 CNY (approx. 2200 GBP) in 2017. It was better than before the Project when there was no income at all, yet it was hardly enough for the maintenance of the site, let alone to bring any extra benefit to the village (Local official 9 2018). The impact (or the lack of it) of the Project on the local development opportunities, which is one of the claims from the Project's initiators, will be further discussed in Sec.8.3.5.

The lack of community participation during the Project was pointed out by Zhuang (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016, pp. 3-4).⁹⁴ The decisions of the Project, either regarding the museum's spatial organisation or the exhibition theme, have received no input from the community during the decision-making stage. According to the caretaker of the temple, there was no consultation with the community during the Project. He was only able to voice his opinion when the construction started, and the architects altered part of the plan accordingly (Caretaker of YC Temple 4 2018). Wang Shuzhan questions whether profound and comprehensive consideration of the Project's impact on its rural society and culture had been considered by the project team. They urged that subsequent debate on the Project should make the local community's voices heard (CHCC 2016). Unfortunately, at least until the forming of this thesis, the attention given to the voice of the local community is still scarce. The lack of community participation is not only a reflection of a lack of awareness from the project team but also an institutional flaw embedded in the current administrative procedures of heritage projects in China. As a project of a national PCHS, the proposal only needs to be appraised by heritage professionals and approved by the various levels of administrations, who are more concerned about abiding by the heritage regulations and legislation than whether the project meets the local population's needs (SACH 2015c,b).

In conclusion, although the initiators and the architect claim that the Project has harnessed significant benefits for the local community by inserting a museum in a rural setting, evidence indicates a lack of impact on the villagers' willingness to visit the museum and the economy of the local community. While the management of the museum is handed to the local administrative department, the villagers' participation in the Project or the museum's

"We do not understand it anyway."

"It is hard to find people who are under 60 years old in the village. We cannot climb those stairs."

"It is hardly as lively as here (around 60 metres from the temple)."

(Chinn-秦汇川 2019)

⁹⁴ However, they suggested that the villagers could have been invited to participate in the construction of the walls, which still did not address the most fundamental aspect of the issue, the lack of community involvement in the decision-making of the Project.

management is almost non-existent. On the other hand, heritage professionals have suggested that the Project has enhanced the 'social values' of the site by allowing private sector participation and attracting public attention. However, the short-term nature of the Project also means that the private sector investment is probably a one-off incident and the public attention, as seen in Figure 38, quickly died out after 2016. How long does it take for this rural temple/museum to be forgotten again? The issue of sustainability will be further discussed in Sec.8.3.5.

8.3.5 An overarching issue - Revitalisation and sustainable management

All the above controversies point to a crucial issue regarding the sustainability of the Project and the heritage assemblage of Guangrenwang Temple. The initiator of the Project, Ding Changfeng, and architect Zhou Rong both praise the project's objective for revitalising the site, describing it as transforming "dead heritage" into "living heritage" (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016, p. 1; Zhou 2016).⁹⁵ Ding believes that the Project can potentially provide a model for the revitalisation of other local heritage sites (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016, p. 1). Such a belief is shared by local and provincial officials, who are hoping to promote this model in Shanxi Province (Local official 9 2018; Provincial official 3 2018).

Compared to restoration projects, cultural heritage administrations are much more relaxed regarding environmental improvement projects because they do not directly involve the historic structures of the PCHS. It is also more desirable for the provincial and local authorities if they could be privately funded because there has been a decrease in state funding for environmental improvement projects since 2015.⁹⁶ In 2015, one of the local officials in the Culture and Tourism Department of Ruicheng County expressed that they were glad and impressed that "the county did not have to pay anything towards the architects' survey trip" (Liang 2015).

The fact that the Project was approved by SACH and praised by many from the public sector shows that there has been a desire to 'think outside the box' within the administration. A project on a national PCHS and led by a private real-estate company would have been almost unthinkable just a few years ago. Nine interviewees, including heritage professionals, provincial and local officials, who have commented on the Project, all agree that the Project

⁹⁵ The term "dead heritage" is referring to a common situation in many sites' post-restoration status in the Southern Project, where they are closed and are referred to as 'museum objects' locked away from the public (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016, p. 1; Zhou 2016)

⁹⁶ This decrease of funding is a nation-wide policy which is meant to encourage the provincial and local governments to take up more responsibilities in the management of national PCHS. It is part of the 'decentralisation process' outlined in Chapter 5.

was positive in terms of attracting attention from a broader public and getting more actors in society involved in heritage conservation through private sector participation (Heritage Professional 1 2018; Heritage Professional 2 2018; Heritage Professional 3 2018; Heritage professional 5 2018; Local official 9 2018; Local official 10 2018; Local officials 1&2 2018; Provincial official 2 2018; Provincial official 3 2018).⁹⁷ However, as discussed in Ch.5, even profitable use such as a tourist attraction can be challenging to maintain. While finding a suitable new function for a heritage site might be a good start, sustainable management afterwards often proves to be very challenging.⁹⁸ This concern is coherent with the current situation of the museum at Guangrenwang Temple. Two years after the completion of the project, the impact of the revitalisation has become questionable. The lack of planning for the sustainable management of the museum might eventually make the effort to revitalise the site futile.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Meanwhile, there is much debate on whether the effort of revitalisation could be shared by different sectors of society besides the public sector. As mentioned in Section 8.3.4, some heritage professionals believe the participation of the private sector in the case of Guangrenwang Temple has increased the social impact of the heritage site. They believe that the broader involvement of society in heritage projects is beneficial for their long-term survival. During the interviews of this PhD research, most of the local officials tend to think that there should be a certain degree of control over these projects by the administrations since these sites are “very important” (Local official 3 2018; Local official 9 2018; Local official 10 2018; Local officials 1&2 2018). This opinion also represents a general attitude towards private sector participation in heritage projects among heritage professionals, caretakers, and community members. What differs between individual interviewees is the extent to which the government should be in control. Some consider it only suitable for the private sector to get involved financially, while others consider it essential for the private sector to come up with viable management and operational plans and that they should oversee the implementation and sustaining the management of the site in the long term.

⁹⁸ As suggested in national legislation and the China Principles, non-profit functions such as research institutes, museums, and community centres are preferred as ‘appropriate use’ of heritage sites (ICOMOS China 2015; NPC of PRC 2017). It is reasonable to question the viability and sustainability of funding and human resources for these entities.

⁹⁹ The agreement between *Vanke* and the public sector is that while *Vanke* was responsible for financing and implementing the Project, it is not taking on the responsibility of running the museum, which would be given back to the local authority instead. From what can be seen on-site, such a model does not guarantee the continuous innovation and maintenance of the museum. As soon as the Project was completed, the management model went back to being almost the same as it was previously. According to the local official and the caretaker, events and activities only happen sporadically on-site (Caretaker of YC Temple 4 2018; Local official 9 2018).

According to architect Wang, the maintenance of a national PCHS like this cannot be supported only by a remote village but needs a particular way of presentation to attract tourism. It indicates that one of the objectives of designing the heritage museum is to attract an external audience. The initiator from *Vanke* also states that the Project has attracted more visitors and increased the income of the village, which follows a trend of economic transformation towards service-oriented industry instead of traditional agricultural production. He considers that such a change will create new opportunities for a traditional village like Longquan village (Hou 2016). However, based on the information gathered during the fieldwork of this PhD research, such a claim appears questionable.

Moreover, whether developing tourism with a heritage museum is suitable for a village like this is debatable. Literature in tourism studies has addressed contested issues regarding global tourism development in less developed countries. These issues include conflicts between local distinctiveness and accommodation to global tourism standards and ownership of local heritage as global attractions. There are also debates on the role of community members in the decision-making processes, their share of benefits from tourism development, gentrification and displacement of local settlements (for examples, see Hampton 2005; Salazar 2010). The 'gaze' of affluent global and urban tourists on the disadvantaged and low-income communities, which highlights the inequalities between the consumers and producers in tourism development, has also been fiercely problematised (McGuigan 2004; Cole and Morgan 2010; Urry and Larsen 2011). Although Longquan village is unlikely to attract many international visitors, these issues and tension can exist between urban domestic tourists and disadvantaged rural communities, too.

According to the village chief of Longquan village, the entrance fee income from the museum is first submitted to the centralised county financial system, and the same amount is deployed back to the heritage site for its maintenance and management (Jia 2017). Therefore, the income of the heritage museum does not directly benefit the villagers. Furthermore, according to the village chief and a local community member who took part in the Project as a project supervisor, since there is no other supporting infrastructure nor other attractions in the area, the mode of visiting is unlikely to change despite the possible increase of visitor number. Currently, tourist visits usually involve a two-hour to a half-day tour of Yongle Temple and Guangrenwang Temple in Ruicheng (Jia 2017). By the 2018 fieldwork, according to local officials in Ruicheng County, there was a plan to sign off a contract for a private company to develop rural tourism in the village. Based on the limited details given away, it is not possible to determine how such a plan may or may not foster any significant change in the community. According to the local officials, the company will not be allowed to do anything more with the temple, and there is no further plan regarding how the open-air museum will be managed

differently (Local official 9 2018). However provocative it was, the Project did not fundamentally transform the nature of the site's management. It is then admittedly predictable that enthusiasm and motivation to keep the site alive may not last long.¹⁰⁰

As suggested by the quote from the local official above, the Long Plan has created a museum space that requires more than grassroots efforts to maintain, let alone to update and renew the exhibition. The large bracket-sets models, the full-scale engraved architectural drawings, as well as other permanent exhibition facilities make it difficult to add different exhibition themes to the museum. Therefore, the suggestion from some of the heritage professionals that the exhibition theme of the museum can become more inclusive of local folk culture may only be a distant possibility. Indeed, during the interview of this PhD research, Lv admitted that while the project shows great potential for fostering opportunities locally, continuous observation is needed to determine how sustainable its management will be (Heritage Professional 2 2018).

All the above demonstrates that the Project's decision-making process predetermined its short-term effect. As with most heritage projects in China, the Long Plan was set out to be a one-off construction project. There was never a plan for grounded and long-term research to support the design or putting in place a sustainable management mechanism that indeed returns the sense of ownership to the community. The decision of the exhibition theme strengthens the authorised discourse of the temple as a national PCHS. However, it ignores the other associations, such as the religious function and the folklore culture, which are also present in the temple's history and are more relatable with the local community. Even if the community members are proud of the temple holding one of the surviving Tang structures, a one-sided story purely about its architectural history does not excite long-lasting interest in their everyday life. The lack of long-term engagement fails to sustain the associations between the temple and its local community.

¹⁰⁰ According to one unnamed local official, such a project is like "gifting a low-income family a big refrigerator. Even though it might seem like a nice gesture, the low-income family now has to carry the burden of buying more food to put in it and paying for the electricity bill." (AC Editorial 2016) Although the local official allegedly said so because he was "not understanding what the project was actually about", such an analogy rings true considering the reality seen on the ground during this PhD research (Jia 2017).

8.4 Analysis with the relational M/M approach

The description and discussion of the case study so far have elucidated the evolution of the various associations of the temple and the causal powers that have contributed to their emergence, transformation, and obsolescence. This section is the abduction of the case study using the M/M approach as elaborated in Chs.3 and 4 (See Figure 41 for a diagram of the relational M/M cycles of Guangrenwang Temple's case and Figure 42 for its morphostatic timeline). It provides an analytical basis for further discussion of the mechanisms that give rise to the (un)sustainable outcome of the case studies in Ch.10.

Based on the historical records from the steles, the initial construction of the temple in 808CE marked the emergence of several associations between the temple and other actors, including the Dragon Spring and water system (Ms0-1), the mountains (Ms0-2), and the village community (Ms0-3). The 832CE stele suggests the location of the temple had some connection with the ancient Wei City's site (Ms0-4), which would have already been an ancient monument for the people in the 9th century. Their morphostases were in decline between 808-832CE due to the lack of maintenance and natural decay (Mg 0-1). These associations were renewed (Ms1-1, Ms1-2, Ms1-3, Ms1-4) when the temple was reconstructed in 832CE (Mg1-0). Another association between the main hall and the stage emerged (Ms1-5) when the stage was constructed (Mg1-1), which is presumably sometime between 832 and 1745. While there is a lack of historical records to suggest what happened during more than 900 years in between, it is reasonable to believe that the temple was maintained by its local community during this time. The restorations during the Qing Dynasty (1745 Mg1-2, 1758 Mg 1-3, 1806-1812 Mg1-4, and 1906 Mg1-5) all contributed to maintaining the temple's various associations with other actors and that between the main hall and the stage within the temple (Ms1-x). According to the 1758 stele, the historic entrance of the temple is both relevant to the connection between the temple and the Dragon Spring and the connection between the main hall and the stage, as it defines the approach from the Dragon Spring to the temple and how people first perceive the main hall and the stage when they get to the temple platform. This relevance is worth noting as it explains why the later alterations of the entrance and approach have causal powers on Ms1-1 and Ms1-5.

Ms1-3, the association between the temple and the local community derived from their religious belief, gradually declined between 1906 and the 1950s. Based on academic literature, Ms1-3 was significantly impacted and became dormant when the temple's statues were destroyed (Mg1-6) during this time. Ms1-1, 1-2, 1-4 and 1-5 were also in decline due to the natural decay of the temple buildings (Mg1-7), though not as severely impacted as Ms1-3. In 1958, when the temple was 're-discovered', Ms1-1 was still very much sustained as the Dragon Spring was still present (Jiu 1959). Its re-discovery (Mg2-0) gave rise to the

emergence of two other associations, one between the temple and architectural historians derived from the main hall's architectural significance (Ms2) and one between the temple and the broader public as a tourist attraction (Ms3). The 1958 restoration (Mg1-8/ Mg2-1/ Mg3-0) was a result of Ms2's emergence and gave rise to Ms3. It also sustained Ms1-x further, with Ms1-3 still dormant. Based on the architectural historians' opinions on the 1958 restoration, despite Mg2-1 being intended to sustain Ms2, it potentially weakened it by the excessive intervention on its Tang Dynasty structure. Nevertheless, its rediscovery also gave rise to the emergence of its heritage association (Ms4), when the temple was officially 'heritagised' in 1965 (Mg4-0), which, in this case, should be differentiated from Ms2. Ms4 was re-enforced in 2001 when the temple was designated a national PCHS (Mg4-1), and again when the temple was restored under the Southern Project in 2013 (Mg4-2/ Mg2-2), which also sustained Ms2. Another association (Ms5) emerged in the 1950s when the temple was used as a school (Mg5-0). Ms5 was dissolved in 1981 when the school moved away (Mg5-1) but remained in the community members' memories (ms5, ms5', ms5''...), such as that of the caretaker.

Although the temple was not registered as an official religious venue by SARA after the school left, it is reasonable to believe that sometime after 1981, new statues were installed (Mg1-9), as can be seen in 2011. It revived Ms1-3 to some extent, which, albeit subdued, was somewhat sustained until before the Project. Vanke's commissioning new statues (Mg1-10) indeed contributed to sustaining Ms1-3. However, the rest of the Project, such as the decision of the exhibition theme and architectural language (Mg1-11), was a deliberate choice to subdue Ms1-3 further due to limited interdisciplinary involvement and the false assumption that Ms1-3 no longer existed. Based on some of the criticism, the new approach and entrance to the temple also further weakened Ms1-1 and Ms1-5. Meanwhile, installing an interpretation board at the back platform highlighting the mountain and the ancient Wei City, slightly re-enforcing Ms1-2 and Ms1-4. Indeed, according to the caretaker, Ms1-1 was nearly completely dissolved were it not for the caretaker's suggestion to keep the Dragon Spring, at least the site of it. Based on the discussion above, it is apparent that Ms1-3 was never seriously considered during the Project and that Ms1-1 was merely considered at face value.

The Project (Mg6-0) gave rise to a new association between the temple and the general public as a museum (Ms6). Ms6 is an enhanced version of Ms3. The choice of its exhibition theme (Mg2-3 / Mg4-3 / Mg1-12) re-enforced Ms2 and Ms4 while diminishing Ms1-3 and Ms1-1. However, Ms1-3 and Ms1-1 are how the temple connected with the local community historically, manifested as the origin of the temple, the names of the villages, and the temple's historic function. The deliberate neglect of these two associations during the Project puts serious doubt on the object of 'returning the temple to the community'. Moreover, based on the visitors' experience and criticism from architectural historians, the museum's spatial

organisation (Mg2-4 / Mg1-13) diminished both Ms2 and Ms1-5 by dictating the visitors' approach to the main hall and distracting visitors' appreciation of the relationship between the main hall and the stage. Vanke's involvement in the heritage project (Mg7-0) gave rise to another association between the PCHS and the private sector (Ms7). However, the short-term nature of the Project strongly suggests that the causal powers to sustain Ms7 will be either short-lived or sporadic.

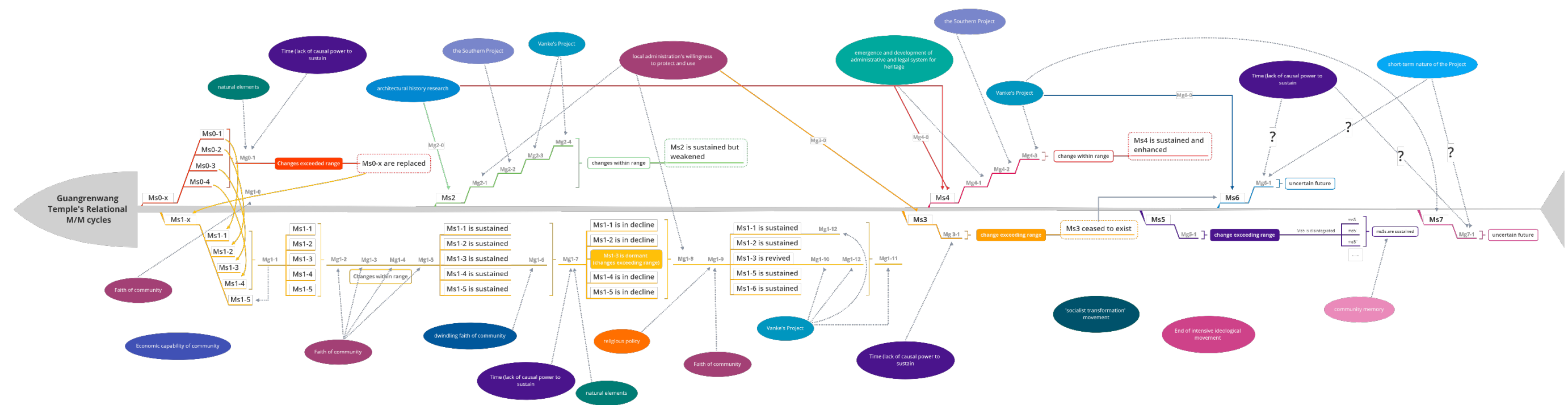


Figure 41 Guangrenwang Temple's Relational M/M cycles

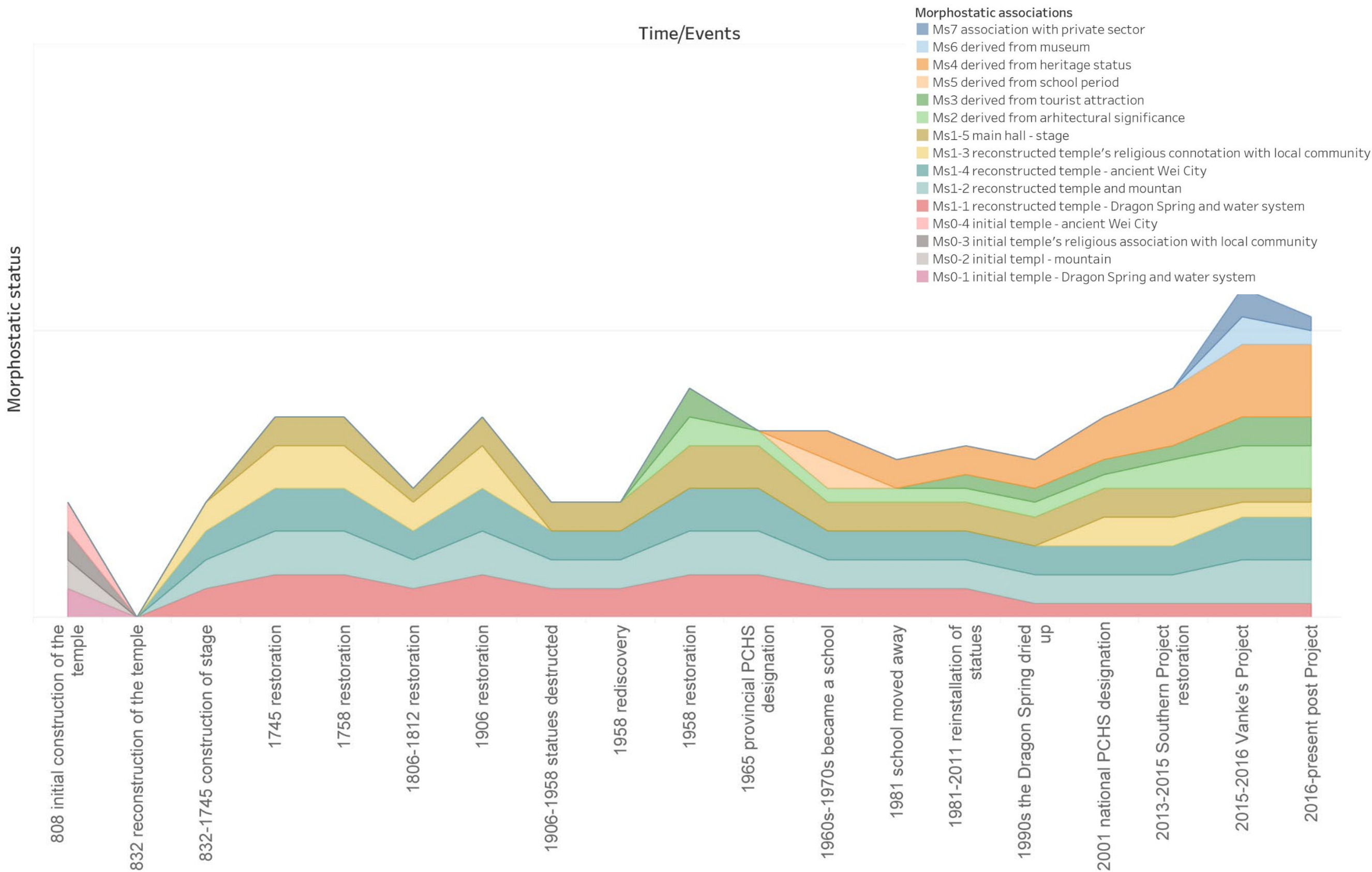


Figure 42 Guangrenwang Temple Morphostatic Timeline

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter has questioned claims of the project team and its supporters regarding the Project's effects on the historic setting's authenticity and its social impact on the relationship between the temple and its community. It reveals the controversies regarding the choice of its curation theme, architectural language, decision-making, and management models. The complexities manifested in the actor's actions and effects demonstrate the ambiguous boundaries between the two sets of dichotomous concepts discussed in Ch.2. Mechanisms such as individual preferences, disciplinary backgrounds, personal understanding of philosophical approaches to heritage, administrative structures, and religious faith exercise their causal powers on various associations of the site.

This chapter has provided a vivid picture of how the perceived 'Western' and 'non-Western' approaches can be interwoven in individuals' actions, intentionally or unintentionally. It has also illustrated that tangible and intangible aspects of heritage are indeed inseparable, both in their interdependence and synchronicity. During the interview with a provincial official, it was mentioned that Guangrenwang Temple's project might well provide a precedent for the implementation of the provincial scheme, the 'Safeguarding the Civilisation' Scheme (Provincial official 3 2018). As discussed in Ch.6, this scheme will have an influence on how similar heritage sites might be used or reused in the case study region. As the Project is still perceived to be a positive one by the administration, the issues regarding sustainability can become more widespread if not given critical consideration.

Chapter 9 A Closer Look III – Dongyi Longwang Temple

9.1 Overview

This chapter takes a closer look at the case of Longwang Temple in Dongyi Village. It is the only case among those visited during the fieldwork of this PhD research where local initiative and effort were seen as proactively engaging with the site's future. Therefore, this case is chosen for its rarity in the case region rather than its representativeness. The aim of this chapter is not to provide a scope for generalisation but to 'excavate' the strata of reality to let this abnormality unfold, to fully understand how elements in all forms, human, non-human, spatial, temporal, tangible, and intangible, may influence, assemble, and disassemble to give rise to this exception. The data of this study are collected through desktop research on the historical records and archival materials related to the Southern Project, semi-structured interviews with the relevant actors on-site, ethnographical observation of a three-day festival, and spatial mapping generated from the on-site survey. The analysis of the case study with the relational M/M approach as established in Ch.3 elucidates the dynamic cycles of the various associations identified through the data analysis and the causal powers that contribute to sustaining or changing them. Together with the first two cases, it provides a basis for the cross-case synthesis in Ch.10. The following sections trace the associations between actors and the causal chain of events based on the data collected, identify what are the causal powers contributing to this exceptional case, and analyse the condition of the heritage assemblage of Longwang Temple through the relational M/M approach.

9.2 Tracing the associations

Longwang Temple is situated in the northeast corner of Dongyi village, in Lucheng City, Changzhi Municipality (Figure 43 & Figure 44). Dongyi Village is located about three kilometres to the southeast of Lucheng town, in the southeast part of Changzhi Municipality. Dongyi Longwang Temple is a rare example in the case study region where community members can be seen to proactively seek various ways to use the temple. Reviewing the temple's history and analysing the data obtained during the fieldwork and desk research have highlighted a few aspects where existing associations are actively maintained or revived, and new associations are formed (See Appendix 12 for the introduction of Longwang Temple, Dongyi Village, and a description of the three-day temple fair observed during the fieldwork of this PhD research). This section traces these associations and highlights some of the distinctive characteristics of the causal powers exercised on these associations.

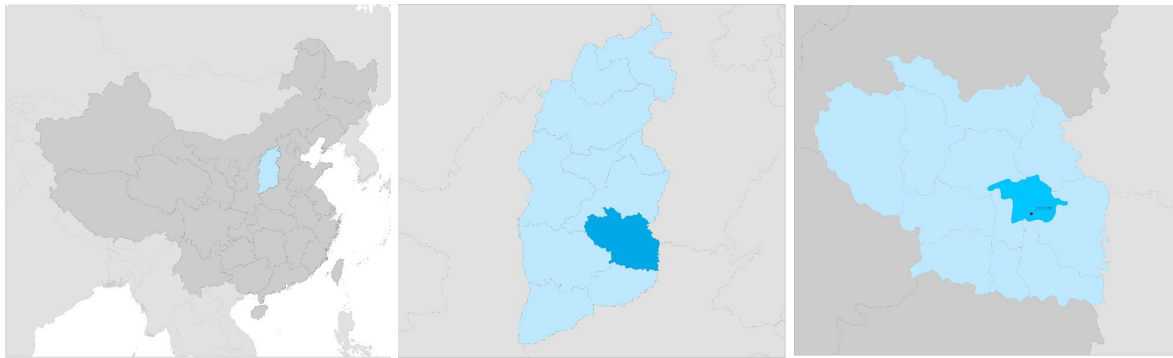


Figure 43 a) Location of Shanxi Province in China; b) Location of Changzhi Municipality in Shanxi Province; c) Lucheng and Dongyi Village in Changzhi Municipality. Base map: (GADM 2021)



Figure 44. Map of Dongyi Village and Longwang Temple, base map: (Google Maps 2021)

9.2.1 Heritage space as a community museum

According to the interviews with one of the two caretakers of the temple (N) and an officer from the Chengjiachuan community management unit (L), a community museum in the temple was initiated by the Chengjiachuan community management unit and supported by several local officials in Lucheng city. The preparation started in 2013 after the restoration under the Southern Project had been completed. According to the community officer responsible for the cultural and tourism affairs in the Chengjiachuan commune, the initiative was partly inspired by the outcome of the restoration, and the exhibition's overall theme was suggested by a Party secretary in Lucheng. The community officer stressed that it was not an easy task to get it started, as the preparation went through three terms of party secretaries to set it up eventually. The main challenges were related to funding and human resources. The Chengjiachuan community management unit is the leading financial contributor, and the cultural department of the Lucheng government also partly sponsored the project (Caretaker and community management unit officer in Dongyi Village 2018).

By the time of the 2018 fieldwork, there were two sections of the exhibition assembled. The themes included the Four Seasons (*chun xia qiu dong*), which related to agricultural history and culture, and Everyday Life (*yi shi zhu xing*), which focused on clothing, cuisine, and cuisine, abode, and transportation. The third section about Life and Death (*sheng lao bing si*) was planned but had not been realised due to the limited funding and other resources. During the conception of the exhibition themes, a former director of the Religious Department of Lucheng (S) played a significant role. S is not only enthusiastic about local culture and history but was also born and raised in Dongyi Village. They claimed to have gone to school in Longwang Temple and that they were familiar with the temple's ups and downs in the 1960s-1970s. The exhibition was curated by the Agricultural Association (*Nonggeng Wenhua Xiehui*) of Lucheng, but reportedly, the community members of Dongyi Village also participated (Exhibition initiator of Longwang Temple 2018). According to L and N, the villagers donated old household items that they no longer used, either for agricultural or domestic work, as their way of supporting the museum (Figure 45 & Figure 46). In return, the community management unit planned to acknowledge their contribution by providing the donors with certificates as appreciation and as a souvenir for remembering their old objects (Caretaker and community management unit officer in Dongyi Village 2018). The name tags of these objects also leave space for the donors' names to be put on, although it was still a work in progress by the 2018 fieldwork for this PhD research.

According to N and L, as of 2018, about 2000-3000 visitors come to the temple every year. Those who visit the exhibition come for the temple fairs or to learn some experience from the exhibition. Visitors are primarily from the surrounding area, and occasionally, from the

neighbouring provinces or even abroad. N recalled that most visitors who did not come for the temple fair were here for the Jin Dynasty (1115-1234CE) main hall or its national PCHS status (Caretaker and community management unit officer in Dongyi Village 2018). The interviews revealed that the exhibition organisers felt that the national PCHS status and the Jin Dynasty main hall are the drivers that attract visitors to the temple, and with this small exhibition, they also aim to promote their local culture (Exhibition initiator of Longwang Temple 2018). When asked whether the community was planning to hire tour guides or develop tourism to attract more visitors, L commented that the temple and the village are small and cannot accommodate many people. N added that he often acts as a tour guide, indicating his pride in the scheme (Caretaker and community management unit officer in Dongyi Village 2018).

During the interview, N, also a former carpenter, frequently expressed that this exhibition is essentially a way to pass the fading local knowledge to the next generation. Such an expression echoed N's lament over how traditional carpentry skills are also fading out of sight because of the dwindling market demand as society transforms. Despite their dedication to passing on the craft by teaching their children and accepting many apprentices over the years, he regretted that only three apprentices continue with the craft now in this village (Caretaker and community management unit officer in Dongyi Village 2018). N's comments are supported by other interviewees' comments on traditional crafts collected during this PhD research. They testify to the extent to which traditional building crafts can be understood as under threat (Local craftsman of CZ Temple 15 2018; Local craftsman of JC Temple 6 2018; Local official 9 2018).



Figure 45 The community museum in Longwang Temple, March 2018 (Tam 2018b)



Figure 46 Items donated by the villagers, March 2018 (Tam 2018l)

9.2.2 Weaving the tangible and the intangible

Besides being a significant religious event in the year, the *Longtaitou* festival is clearly also an occasion to showcase the intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of the village and the region. Two such expressions were observed during the three-day festival in 2018, *Kangzhuang* (lit. 'carrying costumes') and *Yuehu* (lit. 'music house'). Both traditions are part of the *Saishe* culture practised across the Shangdang region in Shanxi Province (Xiang 1996; Shen 2008). These two ICH traditions demonstrate how the various associations between the community, the temple, and the physical environment of the village are maintained and strengthened through their practice in both inter-generational and intra-generational ways.

Yuehu used to be a somewhat exclusive tradition, only practised by a limited number of communities (Shen 2008,2008a). It is short for *Shangdang Yuehu Banshe*, an ICH item among the first list of provincial protected ICH items in Shanxi Province, published in 2006 (Cultural Heritage Bureau of Shanxi Province 2006). *Hu*, meaning 'family' or 'clan', refers to the consanguineous communities that practice this tradition. Therefore, *Yuehu* is not only referring to the form of music but also the communities who perform it. Historically, the *Yuehu* communities were considered among the lowest class in society. These families were often unable to marry outside of their communities, which is the main reason why the practice is exclusive to the communities and is usually organised within these families. The practice remained relatively exclusive even when the *Hu* system was abolished in the Qing Dynasty when musicians were not well respected in society. It was only recently when its designation as a protected ICH item was asserted, that these musicians' social status was again elevated (Xiang 1996; Li and Yang 2002; Shen 2008,2008a).

In the provincial list, the Wang family of Xiliu Village, Lucheng, was designated as the 'inheritor community' (Cultural Heritage Bureau of Shanxi Province 2006). *Shangdang Yuehu Banhshe* was also designated a national ICH item in 2008. However, the inheritor family registered on the national list is another family in Huguan County, even though the description of the ICH tradition mentions the regional practice of this tradition in the Shangdang region (Ministry of Culture 2008). The Wang family of Xiliu Village was present on the second day of the *Longtaitou* festival in Longwang Temple in 2018 (Figure 47 & Figure 48). The musicians were led by the 6th generation inheritor (referred to as W from hereafter), who is the official registered ICH Inheritor on the provincial list. The rest of the crew included his son and other members from both inside and outside the family.

According to W, *Yuehu* music is one of the three essential elements of the *Saishe* culture during the rituals, the two other elements including the presence of the 'chef' (*chushi*) and the priest (*yinyang xiansheng*). Even though *Yuehu* is a distinctive tradition in the Shangdang

region, W's music group now gets invited to perform at temple fairs all around Shanxi Province. As the demand rises and the exclusivity defined by consanguinity becomes less prominent in contemporary society, the musical tradition is now also passed onto people from outside of the initial community. W plays a wind instrument called *Guanzi*, a short flute made of bamboo and brass.¹⁰¹ According to W, the one he has was passed down from his father, who could not even tell its origin, implying that it is at least over a century old (Inheritor of the *Yuehu* tradition 2018).



Figure 47 The *Yuehu* music crew performing at the praying ritual during the *Longtaitou* festival, March 2018 (Tam 2018an)



Figure 48 The inheritor's century-old *Guanzi* instrument, March 2018 (Tam 2018am)

During the *Longtaitou* festival in Longwang Temple in 2018, the *Yuehu* musicians replaced the local music band to play the music for the rituals of the second day, an essential component of the festival. They only played for the rituals and the parade of the Dragon King, which are the religious components of the festival. On the other hand, the local music band plays for both the rituals (on the first and third day) and the folk performance, such as the *Kangzhuang* parade, which embodies a sense of secular community celebration compared to the rituals.

Kangzhuang is a tradition that inspires both inter-generational and intragenerational interactions. It is not a registered protected ICH expression but nevertheless a distinctive tradition of Dongyi Village. The exhibition in Longwang Temple about *Kangzhuang* explains the preparation procedures and shows that a photography exhibition about the tradition took place in 2011, indicating its significance in the villagers' life. The tradition involves the participation of an older and a younger generation. Young children of the village are dressed

¹⁰¹ It is worth noting that *Shangdang Yuehu Banshe* is under the category of *Suona Music* in the national ICH designation (Ministry of Culture 2008). However, while *Suona* and another variant called *Jina* are among the instruments in the band, W, as the inheritor, and their child do not play them.

in various costumes, strapped, and seated on top of stilt-like instruments during the parade. A long pole is connected to a base that rests on the carrier's shoulders and a sitting area for the child on the top (Figure 49).¹⁰²

The adults carrying the *Zhuang* (the pole and the child) not only walk during the parade but would also include some dance moves with the music. One adult would not be able to carry the pole through the entire parade. Most of the *Zhuang* will need about three shifts during the entire parade. Therefore, it is a concerted effort among family members and the community.¹⁰³ Whenever the carrier needs a shift change, several villagers would go up to hold on to the pole and keep the child safe during the transition (Figure 50). According to N, the purpose of doing Kangzhuang is to pray for the children's good health. Families in the village participate voluntarily every year. He also commented that the weather does influence the enthusiasm to participate. When it is cold and wet, the children on top of the poles do suffer. Nevertheless, it is undoubtedly an unforgettable experience for the younger generation (Caretaker of CZ Temple 13 2018).



Figure 49 The Kangzhuang parade, March 2018
(Tam 2018m)



Figure 50 Changing shift during the parade, March 2018 (Tam 2018a)

Mapping the routes of these parades during the three-day festival reveals that the intangible practices such as the praying rituals, Dragon King's parade (including *Yuehu*), and the *Kangzhuang* parade, shows an apparent correlation between the tangible space of the temple

¹⁰² According to the information shown in the exhibition, the children, who are usually six to seven years old, would have their make-up done by the traditional opera crew. After being made up, they would be strapped onto the pole securely. The exhibition's explanation panel also mentions that it is essential to make sure that they are comfortable. Several costume components are then put onto the children.

¹⁰³ According to the caretaker of Longwang Temple, the adults are usually the family members of the child.

and the village (Figure 51). These routes mark the demarcation of spirituality and secularity in the tangible space. The Dragon King's parade is more closely related to the religious connotation of the festival and therefore, always starts and ends at Longwang Temple. The parade did go around the village but only reached the area near the village square. On the other hand, the *Kangzhuang* activities and the opera performance for the villagers, albeit related to the temple fair, embody a sense of community celebration. The *Kangzhuang* parade started at the village square and went deeper into the village, and stopped at the symbolic public spaces in the village, such as a small square within the neighbourhood and the social service centre. The village square, on the other hand, acted as an intersection of both worlds. It is worth noting that the village square is close to the now-defunct Ancestral Temple, which historically could have acted as a similar in-between space connecting the world of deities and humans, the alive and the dead.

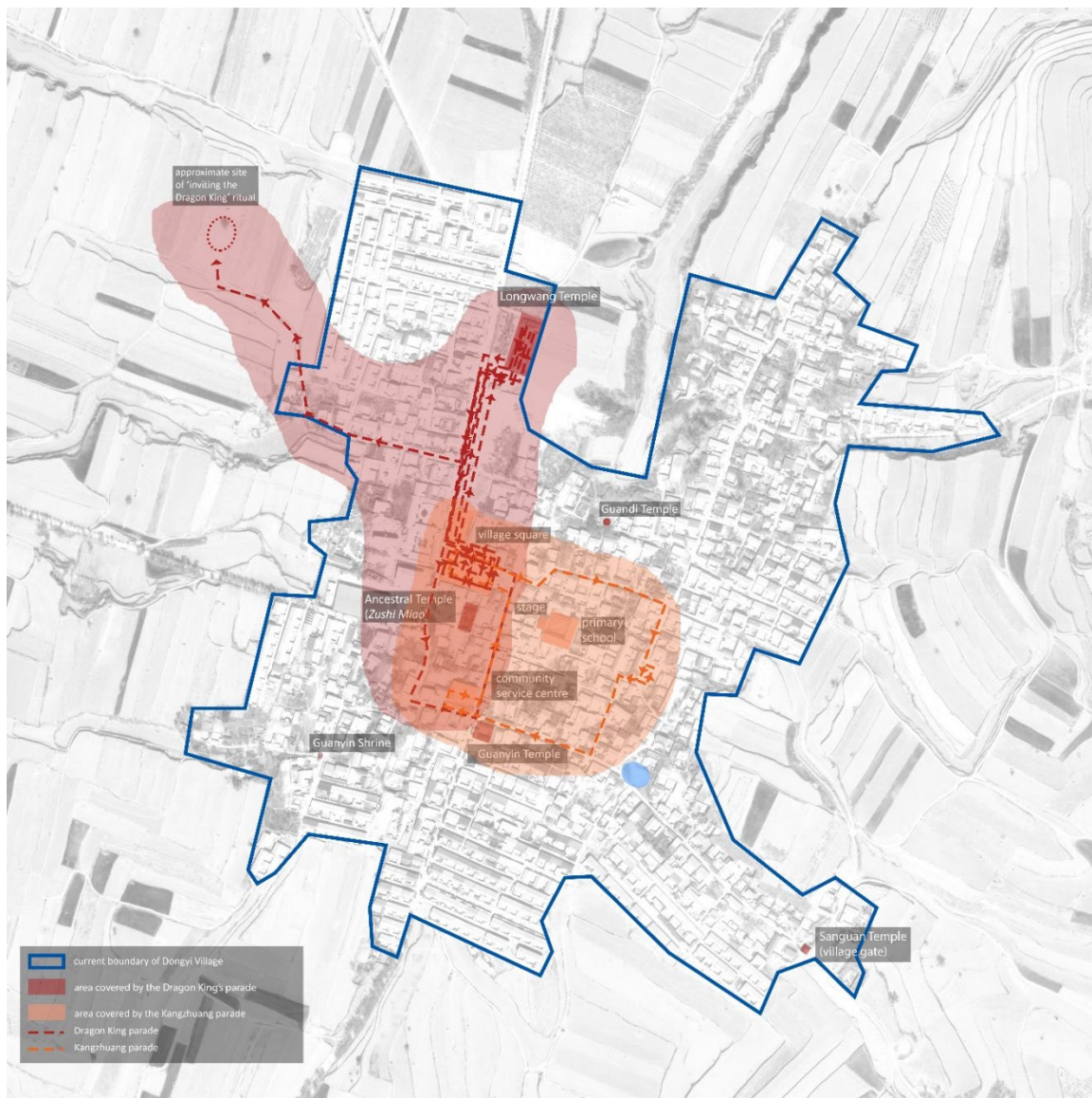


Figure 51 Spatial connotation during the Longtaitou festival, March 2018, base map: (Google Maps 2021)

9.2.3 A space to gather

Besides the religious activities and folk celebrations, Longwang Temple and Dongyi Village became a space where various social interactions took place during the 2018 *Longtaitou* festival. The social interactions observed during the 2018 fieldwork can be categorised broadly into two types: The first type is between the residents of the village and those who live elsewhere; The second type is within the community of Dongyi Village. Villagers who live in other towns or cities come back to the village to join the festival and visit their friends and families. Visitors from the nearby region who do not have personal connections with the villagers also flocked to Dongyi. Commercial activities can be seen at the pop-up market space next to the village square, where vendors from the village and nearby areas sell street food and other sundries. Volunteers from Dongyi Village came to the temple to help with fire-watching and other logistics. According to one of the volunteers (L1), it is part of their passion for coming and helping with the temple fair. They diligently deposited the excessive incense offered in front of the main hall during the festival, eliminating the fire hazard to the historic buildings. Other volunteers can also be seen helping with the decorations, housekeeping, and even acting as informal priests. Besides volunteering at the temple, villagers gather around the village school's playground to watch traditional opera plays. The audience includes all age groups. Some families in the village chose to schedule wedding celebrations during the festival, as the date was considered auspicious. The inter-generational interactions and participation can also be seen beyond the *Kangzhuang* parade. Young children are immersed in the experience of the festival through joining the parade, marvelling at the firecrackers, or playing and listening among the audience of the traditional opera.

Besides the connection with the site as a temple, many villagers remember the temple as their school where they spent a few years of their childhood. This experience and memory were mentioned by several interviewees from Dongyi Village, including the caretaker N, the exhibition initiator S, and the volunteer L1. Even though L1 only went to school for two years in the temple, they were excitedly indicating where they used to sleep and had class in the temple during the interview. During the 2018 *Longtaitou* festival, a former teacher of the school, who is not from Dongyi Village and was then over 80 years old, came back to the temple and reunited with some of the students. When asked what could be improved regarding the temple, L1 considered it regrettable that all traces of the school were wiped out during the 2013 restoration. They mentioned that the side halls next to the stage used to be the teacher's office, and they regretted that they were demolished (Volunteer at Dongyi Longwang Temple 2018).

As mentioned in the last chapter, the transition of function during the 1960s-70s is not exclusive to Longwang Temple but a typical case in many sites in the case study region. This layer of history is very prominent among the generation which still has a close relationship with the sites. It was mentioned explicitly or implicitly during the interviews for this PhD research that if these buildings were not used as schools or grain storage, they would not have survived the Cultural Revolution (Caretaker of JC Temple 7 2018; Caretaker of JC Temple 12 2018). However, this layer of history is often considered to be subordinate to the 'original history' of the historic temples and their heritage status as early timber buildings in heritage conservation or management processes. Many restorations under the Southern Project had wiped out all the traces of this layer of history to 'restore' the sites to their 'original state'.¹⁰⁴ Among the sites visited during the 2018 fieldwork, only in one of them, Zhengjue Temple in Changzhi Municipality, the grain storage buildings built during the 'Socialist Transformation' movement were deliberately preserved as part of the historic environment of the temple.

It is worth entertaining the argument that this layer of history is equally crucial in sustaining one of the connections between the people and the heritage and deserves more attention. Furthermore, the findings regarding the community's reaction to the interruption or destruction during the 1950s-1970s highlight further the nuance of the experience of the Cultural Revolution. On the one hand, the sense of 'threat' brought by such an interruption had provoked the community to express their desire to continue with the religious practice both during and after the Cultural Revolution. On the other hand, it could be argued that for the generation who experienced these sites in their 'socialist' functions, this particular instance in history is of even greater significance on a personal level than the previous era of uninterrupted re-iteration of its religious connotation.

9.3 Analysis with the relational M/M approach

As was elaborated in Ch.3, the sustainability of a heritage assemblage can be interpreted and abstracted through the relational M/M approach by identifying the morphostases of relations between actors within the assemblage, tracing the morphogenetic processes that they have gone through and the causal powers that have sustained the morphostases or triggered the morphogenetic processes, which could eventually result in the obsolescence of these relations' morphostasis. The case study of Dongyi Longwang Temple can be abducted and redescribed

¹⁰⁴ These recommendations and measures can be seen in the restoration plan of this case and the case elaborated in Chapter 9. They can also be seen in other restoration plans within the Southern Project (National Heritage Centre of Tsinghua University 2015).

as the following based on the findings described in the sections above (See Figure 52 & Figure 53 for the diagrams of this case study's relational M/M cycles and morphostatic timeline).

Due to the lack of historical records related to the temple's history, the emergence of the first identifiable association between the temple and its community (Ms1) in Dongyi Village is based on the hypothesis that the main hall was constructed during the Jin Dynasty (1115-1234) (Mg1-0). It implies that the temple already existed at this point. It is also unknown whether the Dragon King was the subject of worship at the time. Therefore, it is entirely possible that there was already a temple before the existing main hall was constructed and that the subject of worship had changed before or after the construction of the main hall. The hypothetical association before Ms1 is represented as Ms0*. The hypothetical changes of the subject of worship or the temple's physical environment will be represented as MgX-Y* in the diagram. In any case, Ms1 broadly represents the morphostatic status of the association between the temple and its community based on religious faith. Some other known changes of the temple's physical environment included the construction or reconstruction of the temple gate (Mg1-1), the construction of the stage tower and its two dressing towers (Mg1-2), the construction or reconstruction of the historic side halls (Mg1-3), and the construction or reconstruction of the ear halls (Mg1-4). The opening of the well (Mg1-5), if indeed it was partly for the purpose of praying for rain, can also be included in these processes. All the above changes before the temple became a school were the results of the community's faith and the available resources within the community. Although there is no direct historical record of this Longwang Temple in Dongyi Village, the chronography records of the *Longtaitou* ritual and another Longwang Temple in Lucheng suggest that the ritual would have been performed at Dongyi's Longwang Temple, which would have contributed to sustaining Ms1.

According to the recount of S, one of the initiators of the community museum exhibition, a new association (Ms2) between the temple and the Chengjiachuan commune was formed when the temple was briefly used as the commune administration (*xiangzhengfu*) before 1949 (Mg2-0). It was soon replaced by another association (Ms3) between the temple and the village community when it became a school in the 1950s (Mg3-0). Other physical changes of the temple's environment that have re-enforced Ms3 included the reconstruction of the side halls (Mg3-1) and the possible destruction of the dressing towers (Mg3-2) during this time. It is not entirely clear whether the emergence of Ms2 or Ms3 had a major impact on subduing Ms1, although it would have happened around this time (Mg1-7). It is reasonable to suggest that the destruction of the dressing towers also further subdued Ms1 (Mg1-8). According to S, the temple was briefly used as a station for a tank regiment in the 1970s (Mg4-0*), although there is no other known record confirming it. It is also unclear which particular community might

have formed an association with the temple during this period (Ms4*)¹⁰⁵. According to the memory of the villagers, religious activities were still taking place during the school period, albeit more subdued. Therefore, Ms1 was not entirely diminished during this period and was coexisting with Ms3. It was sustained by individual religious practices by community members. As mentioned in Ch.6, many religious sites in the country resumed their religious function following the 1980s Religious Policy, replacing the 'socialist function' that occupied these sites during the 1950s-1970s. However, this transition did not happen in Dongyi Longwang Temple. Mg3-3 refers to when the primary school became a middle school, but Ms3 was not interrupted until 2004 when the school moved away (Mg3-4). At this point, Ms3 is disintegrated into individuals' memories (ms3, ms3', ms3".....).

Another new association came into play as Ms1 and Ms3 were coexisting. The temple was 'heritagised' in 1986 (Mg5-0) when it was designated a provincial PCHS (Ms5). Another brief association (Ms6) emerged during 2004-2006 when part of the temple was used as the villagers' dwellings (Mg6-0). Ms5 was strengthened during the minor repairs in 1992 (Mg5-1) and 2004 (Mg5-2), and substantially so in 2006 when the temple was designated national PCHS (Mg5-3). The restoration under the Southern Project in 2013 (Mg5-4) both strengthened Ms5 and made Ms6 obsolete. The individual connections ms3s (ms3, ms3', ms3",) were also further weakened (mg3-1) as the 2013 restoration wiped out the traces from the school period. On the other hand, according to the caretaker N, villager L, and the exhibition initiator S, the 2013 restoration and the infrastructure improvement project that followed it exponentially improved the physical environment of the temple, which prompted the revitalisation of the *Longtaitou* festival, which in turn strengthened Ms1. More importantly, the recognition of the main hall as a Jin Dynasty structure and the improvement brought by the 2013 restoration encouraged the establishment of the community museum, where yet another association between the community and the temple emerged (Ms7). While both Ms5 and Ms7 are related to the temple and the community's history and culture, they should be distinguished because Ms5 is mainly attributed to the architectural significance of the main hall, whereas Ms7 connects these actors through another type of heritage narrative that highlights the agriculture way of life and the everyday life of the community. The involvement of the local community members in the museum, such as donating their household items (Mg7-1), contributes to sustaining Ms7. These processes demonstrate how a sustained morphostasis can exercise its causal power on other morphostases, sustaining them or contributing to their emergence. By sustaining Ms5, together with other conditions including the community

¹⁰⁵ While a number is given to this period for the sake of thoroughness, it will not be elaborated in the diagram to avoid distraction.

initiative, the human, financial, and political resources available to the local community, the continued faith of the community, and the surviving intangible traditions related to the temple fair, Ms1 was strengthened, and Ms7 emerged.

Through the observation during the *Longtaitou* festival, it is revealed that besides the association between the temple and the community, the temple fairs and ICH practices such as *Kangzhuang* highlight the spatial association between the temple and the village (Ms1-1), threading through several significant public spaces such as the village square, the school stage, and the social service centre. The rituals of the *Longtaitou* ceremony, such as inviting the Dragon King, contribute to sustaining the associations between the temple, the natural environment, and the village (Ms1-2). Furthermore, the social interactions during the festival and the community involvement in the museum demonstrate that Ms1, Ms5, and Ms7 all contribute to strengthening the connections among people, either within the village or between the villagers and the outside world, which have a broader impact on the social sustainability of the regional community. It also reveals that the Southern Project both directly weakened ms3 by wiping out the school-related traces and indirectly re-enforce ms3 by providing an encouraging environment for the reunion of the former students and teacher.

It is evident that compared to the other cases in the case study region, Dongyi Longwang Temple is part of an assemblage where many associations coexist and reinforce each other. These coexisting morphostases exercise their causal powers to sustain each other, which contributes to a more resilient cohesion among the actors. This finding indicates a more sustainable condition within the heritage assemblage, as seen in Longwang Temple, can be partly attributed to the multiple coexisting connections between actors. These characteristics of the associations' relationship with each other within an assemblage relating to the sustainability of the assemblage will be further elaborated in Ch.10.

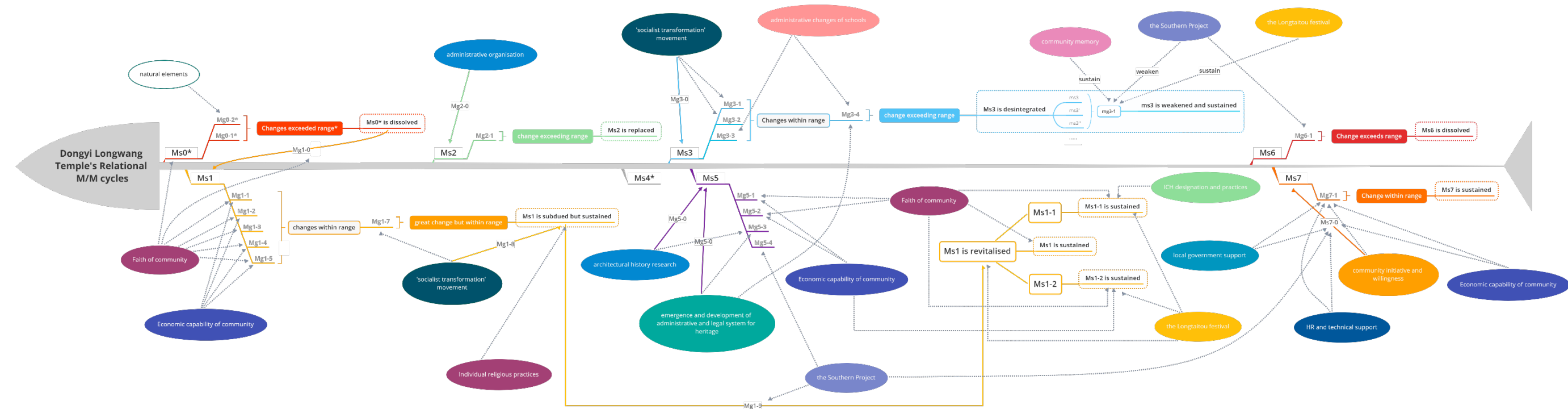


Figure 52 Dongyi Longwang Temple M/M cycles

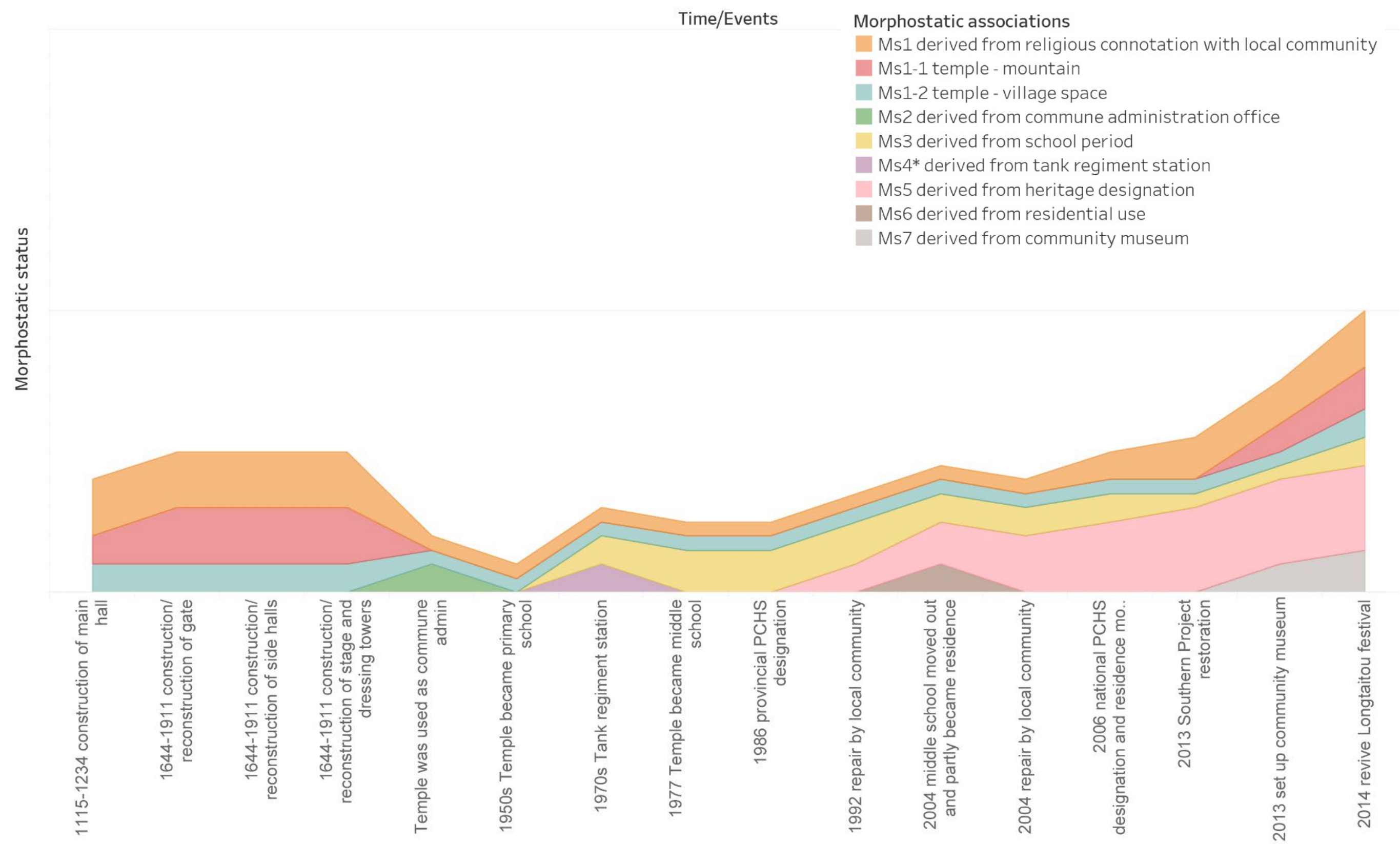


Figure 53 Dongyi Longwang Temple Morphostatic Timeline

9.4 Conclusion

This chapter has examined an exceptional case in the case study region, where associations between the temple, the community, and other actors can be recognised to have been actively sustained, created, and revived. The investigation into how these associations emerged and reinforced each other provides valuable insights into some of the potential elements that can give rise to a sustainable condition for other similar sites in the case study region and beyond. In this case, various narratives related to the PCHS coexist and contribute to each other rather than competing. On the one hand, the authorised heritage narrative was still dominant in the conservation decision-making during the Southern Project, which resulted in wiping out all the physical traces of the school period despite the community memory of it, which is still very much alive. On the other hand, the improved physical condition of the temple and its surroundings after the Southern Project restoration prompted the revival and emergence of other associations, which in turn encouraged social interactions that replenished that particular piece of memory. More importantly, these continuous associations can be seen to have the opportunity to exercise their causal powers that can give rise to new associations, such as those with the younger generation or external actors. However, its rarity reveals a stark contrast with most of the other cases in the region, which are scrutinised in the other two case studies and reviewed in Ch.6. The juxtaposition of these cases and the causalities that lie behind them will provide the basis for further analysis and abstraction in Ch.10.

Part 4 Analysis: Reassembling the Scenes

Chapter 10 Reassembling the Scenes – Answering the Research Questions

10.1 Overview

Part 1 identified and established five research questions regarding heritage and sustainability on the conceptual and practical levels:

- 1) What kind of theoretical framework can capture the complex, multi-deterministic, and interdisciplinary nature of heritage and the interconnectedness and dynamic nature of sustainability?
- 2) What is the connection between sustainable heritage management and heritage's relevance in facilitating the sustainable development of its communities as well as the broader society?
- 3) What are the fundamental mechanisms and conditions that give rise to the (un)sustainable outcome in heritage management of early timber architectural heritage in contemporary China?
- 4) What do the case studies demonstrate that can help overcome the Western/ Eastern and tangible/ intangible dichotomies?
- 5) How can critical reflections on heritage approaches impact practices and decision-making on the ground in contemporary China?

They were born out of the research opportunities identified through reviewing critically existing literature in Ch.2. Part 2 has set out a theoretical framework for the conceptualisation of heritage and sustainability and through which research methods are selected and developed. The relational Morphostasis /Morphogenesis (M/M) approach aims to capture the complex, dynamic, and relational nature of heritage and sustainability and provides a foundation for the epistemic position of this PhD research. The research design and methods based on this approach are applied in specific case studies in China. Part 3 reviewed the core themes in the Chinese context and presented the findings from the case study region. Chs.7-9 present three cases selected for scrutiny and further analysis. Part 4 includes the concluding chapters of this thesis.

Ch.10 highlights the applicability of this framework's philosophical foundation for heritage and sustainability studies (Sec.10.2) and the critical and potentially versatile nature of this approach and set of methods in research and practice (Sec.10.6). It synthesises the case studies' findings, identifies the generative mechanisms for the (un)sustainable heritage practices in the case study region, and clarify the connection between sustainable heritage

and sustainable development of broader society (Secs.10.3 and 10.4). It argues against the two perceived dichotomies highlighted in Ch.2 through the findings of the case studies and discusses how the proposed approach in this thesis can help overcome them (Sec.10.5). This chapter summarises the answers to the five research questions by discussing and synthesising the findings in Part 2 and 3 and highlighting this thesis' original contribution to knowledge. The contribution is three-fold. It establishes an innovative theoretical framework for conceptualising heritage and sustainability, presents empirical evidence and interpretations in the case studies that have never been systemically examined under such a framework, and through these two steps, argues that the versatile approach and methodology developed in this research points to a new direction in heritage and sustainability research and practices.

10.2 From static entities to dynamic connectivity – reconceptualising heritage and sustainability

In Ch.2, the systematic and critical review of the recent development in the Studies of Heritage and sustainability studies revealed a trend towards relational thinking in both subject fields. In the Studies of Heritage, this trend is most notable in the 'post-discursive' turn in Critical Heritage Studies, and the various landscape approaches in heritage practices. In sustainability studies, it is built upon the criticism on the fragmented characteristics in the current Sustainable Development (SD) policies and inspired by systems thinking. Upon this trend in both subject fields, an opportunity appears imminent for a coherent re-conceptualisation to unite both concepts. As discussed in Ch.3, incorporating Critical Realism (CR), Assemblage Theory, and Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) aims to provide a sound theoretical basis for understanding the interdisciplinary, multi-deterministic, and dynamic nature of both heritage and sustainability.

A Critical Realist perspective explains that a heritage assemblage, as part of reality, is 'laminated', determined by causal powers from various 'strata' over multiple scales (Bhaskar et al. 2017). It defines that heritage is influenced but not exhausted by human conceptions. This characteristic is prominently present in the case study of Guangrenwang Temple. After the Project, the opinions and claims from multiple actors regarding its social impact dominated the public discourse. However, examining various associations' change after the Project has contested the claims that the museum has 'returned the temple to the community' or the heritage site's 'social value' has been enhanced. All three case studies demonstrate that the heritage sites' evolution and their relationship with the local communities was a culmination of causal powers on various scales, from individuals, local community, and administrative level,

through state-level policies and administration, and even to international treaties and professional standards on a global scale. The entities that exercise these causal powers can be research subjects of various disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, archaeology, architecture, political science, ecology, and physical science. The identification and analysis of these causal powers and the 'strata' and scales where they reside will be examined by the synthesis and abstraction of the case studies further in this chapter.

As established in Ch.3, the anti-anthropocentric stance of CR makes it compatible with some of the philosophical positions in Assemblage Theory as interpreted by DeLanda (DeLanda [2006]2019). Particularly, incorporating Assemblage Theory brings non-human actors and their causal powers and agencies into consideration and highlights the relational characteristic of heritage and sustainability. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, relational thinking has influenced the recent development in both heritage and sustainability studies. Based on the ontological position of CR and Assemblage Theory, this thesis argues that instead of focusing on the singular entities or actors within the assemblage or system, shifting the emphasis to the associations between actors can capture the connective and dynamic nature of heritage and sustainability. It also allows them to be about both 'things' and 'processes', as in the theoretical framework presented in this thesis. To sustain a particular association, one must ensure that the 'dots' (entities) and 'lines' (relations) are both maintained. The dynamic characteristic, which is based on this emphasis on associations, will be further discussed below.

Within this relational framework, decision-making in both heritage activities and SD must consider not only mitigating damage or enhancing the strength of singular entities, such as a historic building, the interests and well-being of local communities, the condition of social or cultural capital, or natural and economic resources but also identifying and understanding the evolution of associations between these entities to sustain the assemblage or system as a whole. The anti-anthropocentric position in this framework advocates that the actors on both ends of the association, either human or non-human, should be given no *a priori* hierarchical consideration while still acknowledging their agencies' differences. The cases examined in Chs.7-9, as well as others in the case study region, demonstrate that the previous heritage conservation and management activities, which were based on a conventional value-based approach, very often isolated the historic elements from other actors, human or non-human, such as the community members and the natural environment. For example, the conventional value assessment of a heritage site, however comprehensive it is, inherently prioritises the heritage 'things' over other actors or their connections with them, even though they only constitute part of the assemblage. Under the value-based approach, the 'setting' and 'community' are elements affiliated to historic sites. Even when these elements were

considered, the lack of emphasis on the associations between them led to interventions that drove them further from each other, such as demolishing the stage extension in Baiyu Temple.

The case studies have demonstrated that the causal powers that give emergence to, change, or sustain the associations within the heritage assemblage cannot be thoroughly recognised or understood before studying from the ground up. In the case study region, it might be tempting to assume that the heritagisation on a national level would alienate the local communities from the sites or that such heritagisation is an obstacle against these sites becoming religious venues again. A close examination of the cases reveals that although these assumptions might be accurate for some, there are also cases and evidence that defy these assumptions. The post-restoration revival of Longwang Temple's temple fair and the establishment of the community museum was one of such abnormalities. The case of Baiyu Temple indicates that the state's heritage intervention was only one of the reasons for the local community's decreased ability to host the temple fair. Other cases in the case study region, such as CZ Temple 5 and CZ Temple 9, suggest that some local communities no longer have the willingness or need to reinstate or maintain these historic places as religious venues (Caretaker of CZ Temple 5 2018; Caretaker of CZ Temple 9 2018). The examination of the recent history of the cases reveals that the 'socialist transformation movement', while causing drastic interruption to the sites' historic functions and associations, also gave rise to new associations, some of which still play a role in the current relationship between the sites and the local communities.

The findings above endorse the advantages of incorporating ANT methodologically. Even though the philosophical tradition, same as CR and Assemblage Theory, was primarily developed by Western philosophers, ANT's advocacy for 'listening to the actors' without presumptions of what and how certain pre-existing 'social structures' might manifest in reality proves to be beneficial in capturing and understanding the complexities in a non-Western context such as China. On the other hand, the empirical studies confirm the ontological shortcomings of ANT identified in Ch.3. The ambiguity of what counts as actors and what counts as associations can be confusing when it comes to heritage assemblages. This thesis argues that, for ANT to be applicable in empirical studies, it is paramount to be very clear when identifying actors and their associations. The case studies also illustrate that associations between actors can be dormant but still existent even when no actions were taken, such as the religious associations between the community members and the temples. The next subsection will further demonstrate that despite what has been argued by actor-network-theorist, abstraction is possible after tracing the associations without assigning causality to some 'invisible power'. The application of CR, ANT, and assemblage in establishing the theoretical framework and the empirical studies demonstrates that it is

possible, if not necessary, to combine critically these philosophical traditions when one is confronted with complex contexts such as contemporary China.

Building upon the relational approach emerging from recent heritage and sustainability literature and the theorisation of agencies and emergence within the CR tradition, the thesis has established the relational M/M approach using the *Morphogenesis* and *Morphostasis* concepts to understand, assess, and facilitate sustainable heritage management. Beyond the ontological definition of heritage, the conceptual framework behind the relational M/M approach captures the resilience and dynamic changes of the assemblages, which are crucial elements for discussing their sustainability.

In this framework, the heritage assemblages are composed of a series of associations between actors. Sustained associations can be described as '*morphostatic* associations' or being in a '*morphostatic* state'. These *morphostatic* associations emerge throughout the life cycle of heritage, as seen in the case studies. Some of them are sustained for a long time, while others become obsolete at some point. The changes of these *morphostatic* associations, including their weakening, strengthening, obsolescence or transformation, are described as *morphogenetic* cycles. The case studies demonstrate that a sustained *morphostatic* association can go through many *morphogenetic* cycles without becoming obsolete or entirely transformed into another *morphostatic* association. For example, the religious association between Longwang Temple and its community was significantly subdued during the Cultural Revolution and the school period but was revived after the Southern Project restoration. The religious association between Baiyu Temple and its community also went through many *morphogenetic* cycles when the worshipping subjects changed, or the physical environment of the temple was altered.

A *morphogenetic* cycle can emerge through the changes of the associations or the actors, which means this approach captures the changes of the heritage elements and others associated with them. Examples of association morphogenesis and actor morphogenesis can be seen in the case studies. For instance, during the heritagisation of the PCHS in the case study region, their PCHS level can be elevated from provincial to national. In this case, the association derived from the sites' heritage status has changed, but the actors themselves, the sites, and the heritage administration do not have to change. On the other hand, a morphogenetic cycle of the association between the sites and the local community can happen when the community's size, demography, or religious faith changes. Such can be seen in sites that no longer cater to the community's worshipping need. The relational framework is particularly beneficial for understanding how changes within a heritage assemblage might influence other societal elements or how changes related to one aspect of sustainability will

influence other aspects. For example, the Baiyu Temple case demonstrates that the cultural and social aspects of the local community's sustainability, partially maintained and strengthened by the community's annual temple fair, was weakened by the lack of economic vitality and sustainability in the area. In turn, the local agricultural economy could be impacted by the degradation of the natural environment and climate change. Such a framework is not limited to the type of heritage sites in the case study region. Its versatility will be further discussed in Sec.10.6.

As established in Ch.3, both the emergence of *morphogenesis* and *morphostatic* association and the maintenance of *morphostasis* require causal powers. Identifying these causal powers is the key to making this theoretical framework applicable to informing decision-making. The incorporation of ANT in the methodology of this PhD research is particularly suitable for following the causal chains through the actors. On the other hand, as discussed in Ch.3, abstraction methods such as abduction and retroduction can help reassemble the generative mechanisms that give rise to sustainable or unsustainable tendencies, providing strategic advice applicable beyond the case studies. Essentially, in this framework, sustainability is understood as **the ability to sustain the morphostatic associations, give emergence to more morphostatic associations, and for these sustained morphostases to exercise causal powers on actors beyond the heritage assemblage**. Sec.10.4 will further discuss the connection between sustainable heritage management and sustainable development.

Through establishing this theoretical framework, this thesis has answered the research question: **What kind of theoretical framework can capture the complex, multi-dimensional, and interdisciplinary nature of heritage and the interconnectedness and dynamic nature of sustainability?** Starting from the most fundamental ontological position is necessary and beneficial for revealing the shared characteristics between the two key concepts of heritage and sustainability. Connecting and incorporating them under a coherent framework provides the backbone for developing research methods for the case studies and presents the potential for this framework to be developed into a versatile approach for research beyond the scope of this PhD thesis. This framework transcends the limit of a value-based approach to heritage, which focuses on singular or groups of heritage elements as attributes to specific values. It also brings forward the connections between the heritage elements and other actors beyond the scope of certain heritage activities, which are often neglected in a problem-solving decision-making model.

A simple metaphor can be drawn on here to explain the matter. A juggler can only juggle a limited number of objects, but if the nets connecting the objects are in place and well maintained, one can pick up the entire network without dropping the singular objects. Paying

attention to the net does not mean neglecting the objects. Indeed, the net does not exist if there is no object. Therefore, the actors and their associations are equally crucial in understanding heritage and facilitating sustainability. This 'net and objects' metaphor fits well with the idea of an assemblage or an actor-network. Meanwhile, incorporating CR's concept of deep ontology and laminated reality presents an opportunity to go further than the perceivable 'net' to discover the generative mechanisms in the realm of the *real*. These generative mechanisms are not some 'invisible powers' but discovered and abstracted through a close investigation of the 'net', which is crucial to avoid the pitfall against which Actor-Network-Theorists warn so adamantly. The following section will bring together the case studies to reassemble the generative mechanisms that give rise to the (un)sustainable outcomes in heritage management.

10.3 Reassembling the generative mechanisms

The initial analyses in the case study chapters (Chs.7-9) with the relational M/M approach have identified the most relevant *morphostatic* associations that form the heritage assemblage in each case. These associations' emergence, maintenance, transformation, and obsolescence are traced following the data collected through desk research and field investigation. Tracing the evolution of these associations makes it possible to identify the most relevant actors and causal powers. In most cases, these causal powers do not come from singular groups of actors but combined conditions. These combinations, when abstracted, are the generative mechanisms that give rise to the *tendencies* of specific outcomes. Therefore, this section will correlate the findings and analyses in the case studies and identify such generative mechanisms, to answer the research question: **What are the fundamental mechanisms and conditions that give rise to the (un)sustainable outcome in heritage management of early timber architecture in contemporary China?**

Based on the multi-scalar lamination of reality conceptualised in CR, associations within a heritage assemblage can be explained on various scales. In the case studies, most associations were explained on the local community level, between the site as a whole and the local community as a collective actor. They can also be explained on lower scales, such as the association between individual buildings, between individual community members and the temple, or those among the community members; or on upper scales, such as the broader population who worship the same deity as the local community and the entire heritage administrative system. These explanations of various scales can be related and influenced by the same causal powers, but they cannot be conflated. Therefore, the religious connection between the temple and individual community members does not equate that between the

temple and the entire community. As demonstrated in all three case studies, individual connections still existed when the religious association between the temple and the community was significantly subdued. However, only the community connection can provide the condition, such as financial and human resources, for community worship, such as the temple fairs, to take place.

In all three cases, the historic temples' assemblages started upon the emergence of the religious association between the temples and their local communities. In Guangrenwang Temple's case, the surviving historic documentation reveals that the temple's religious connotation is also related to specific associations between other actors in the local area, such as those between the temple and the Dragon Spring, between the Dragon Spring and the villages, and between the temple and the ancient Wei city. These associations, actors, the initiative of the local officials, and the specific condition, such as the drought seasons, form part of the generative mechanisms for Guangrenwang Temple's initial construction. In Longwang Temple and Baiyu Temple, the religious association has a broader connection with the regional beliefs. In all cases, most of the morphogenetic cycles until the early 20th century, as evidenced by historical records, were related to these religious associations. The changes in worshipping subjects, expanding worship needs within the community (in Baiyu Temple), and even natural disasters, such as the drought seasons that prompted the construction and reconstruction of Guangrenwang Temple, were explicitly recorded as causes for these morphogenetic cycles. Also present, albeit less explicitly expressed, is the economic capacity of the local communities, which made it possible to obtain needed financial, material, and human resources to maintain the religious associations and facilitate the *morphogeneses*. The necessity of such economic capacity is demonstrated by the economic downturn of Baiyu Temple's local community that led to its reduced capability to organise the temple fairs. Baiyu Temple's history also demonstrates that the religious association was both the cause of and maintained by the social contract and part of the human-nature relationship of the local commune. The historic pine forest was planted and cultivated to maintain the temple's physical environment. It was also an actor in regulating the community members' social behaviours.

The state-wide ideological movement significantly impacted the associations related to the temples' religious function in the mid-20th century. The 'Socialist Transformation Movement' in the 1950s-1960s was the most apparent cause for such changes. However, the fact that Guangrenwang Temple no longer had worshippers by the 1950s and that Longwang Temple might have had another function before the 1950s suggest that broader social changes and the communities' dwindling religious faith at the time also played a role. The composition of actors who facilitated and participated in the 'Socialist Transformation Movement' is complex. The movement was not facilitated by invisible hands but actual people and organisations from

the state to the local levels, driven by state policies and ideologies. Nonetheless, to answer the research questions, the analysis in this thesis has focused on the manifestation of these *morphogeneses* within the case studies' scope. In all three cases, the *morphogeneses* from this period disrupted the historic religious associations but also created new associations between the temples' physical space and their local communities. These new associations were formed between the temple's physical space and the community members who studied or worked there when the temples became local schools in all three cases.

The causal powers that started and sustained these 'Socialist' associations were sweeping but dictated by actors outside of the local communities. During this period, these associations were also the only prevailing ones at the sites as all other associations related to their religious function were subdued. Guangrenwang Temple, Baiyu Temple, and other sites in the case study region demonstrate that these associations were short-lived and became obsolete as soon as the primary causal power, one that came from the state's ideological movement, ceased to exist. By the end of the school period, the community-level associations were broken down to associations on a lower level, between individual community members and the site, sustained mainly by their memories and the physical traces from this period. Longwang Temple stayed a school for much longer after the Cultural Revolution, which might have contributed to the stronger connection among community members and between individuals and the site related to the school period.

The data collected during this PhD research demonstrates that the school association caused the emergence of another association among school students and teachers, which is external to the heritage assemblage as it does not rely on the physical existence of the temple to be sustained. This association is likely to have existed in other cases but might not be as pronounced or sustained since their school periods were shorter. The exception of Longwang Temple indicates that the longer the morphostatic association exists, the more potential there is for it to exercise causal powers on other associations.

Another prominent association came into play as the heritagisation process of these sites started. For Longwang Temple and Baiyu Temple, the emergence of the association derived from their heritage status is marked by their designation as PCHS, which is a common situation in the case study region. As a state-led initiative, the actors involved in the emergence of this association also distribute across all levels. For the sites studied in this PhD research, the causal powers for their heritagisation almost exclusively came from the recognition of their architectural significance by architectural historians and building archaeologists and the establishment of the administrative and legal system for heritage conservation in the country as outlined in Ch.5. The crucial role of this recognition in their heritagisation is even more

apparent in Guangrenwang Temple's case, as it was considered as 'heritage' by architectural historians even before its early designation in 1965. Both the administrative process and academic recognition came from external actors to the local communities. While the administrative process bears overtly top-down characteristics, the power relation between academics as 'experts' and other actors is less straightforward. As can be seen in some of the sites in the case study region, such as JC Temple 17 and JC Temple 9, where the temple buildings were in a severely dilapidated state when they were designated, the rediscoveries of these sites and their heritagisation, especially their designation as national PCHS, prevented them from complete physical obsolescence (Caretaker of JC Temple 9 2018; Site manager of JC Temple 17 2018). In this sense, these sites in the case study region were 'marginalised' actors in society, where their historic religious associations with the local communities were dwindling or already obsolete. The heritagisation process created a new association between the historic temples and broader society.

In Longwang Temple's case, the Southern Project restoration derived from its heritage association played a part in providing a chance for other associations, such as the religious association and those among the school alumni and teachers, to be revived or strengthened. Despite all the controversies surrounding the 'Environment Improvement' Project at Guangrenwang Temple, its improved physical state contributes to maintaining the site's associations with other actors. However, as demonstrated in all three cases, the actors and morphogeneses that came with heritagisation can also weaken or significantly diminish other associations. The causal powers can work against each other and offset their impact. The case of Guangrenwang Temple is the most dramatic and deliberate. While the improved physical state of the site and its surrounding contributed to maintaining the associations between the temple and other actors, the deliberate choice to exclude the religious and folk connotations in the museum significantly weakened the religious association, which is the primary connection between the temple and its local community. The museum's targeted external audience and lack of community involvement in its future planning present little chance for new associations to emerge between the temple and its local community.

The juxtaposition of the three cases, especially their current states and potential futures, provides the basis for retroduction to identify the generative mechanisms for the sustainable tendencies of the case study region. In all three cases, their heritage associations derived from their national PCHS status have been strengthened during the Southern Project and are likely to be sustained in the foreseeable future. However, in Baiyu Temple's case, the recent morphogenetic cycles caused by the interventions during the restoration project, the poor economic vitality of the area, and the subsequent lack of willingness from the other villages within the commune make it more challenging to organise temple fairs. It indicates a tendency

for its religious association to be weakened over time. Without any further intervention, Baiyu Temple is likely to retain the same function as both a national PCHS and a local temple, without any new association emerging in the foreseeable future. It is worth noting that, historically, Baiyu Temple and its local community's association is not only sustained through religious activities but also a management system within the local commune, such as planting and maintaining the pine forest and crowdsourcing for the temple's repairs and extensions. This system's replacement by the PCHS system has made the connection between the temple and its local community even more tenuous. Moreover, as can be seen during the temple fair, the temple's connection with the local commune creates more opportunities for social interactions and maintaining the social bonds among the community members. These social bonds are among the associations that sustain the community. At present, the heritage and religious associations remain the primary associations on-site, with the religious association facing the risk of weakening in the future.

The Long Plan Project at Guangrenwang Temple triggered morphogenetic cycles in multiple associations. Most notably, it strengthened its heritage association based upon its architectural significance even further after the Southern Project restoration, bringing more general public members to forge connections with the temple museum through public debates and publicity campaigns from the Project's initiators. However, these connections, emerging through the heat of the topic, are weakened quickly as the public attention dies down. The limited increase in visitor numbers, unchanged local management mechanisms, and sporadic activities organised by *Vanke* indicate that the association derived from its museum function will be challenging to sustain. Despite the significant improvement in the temple's environment, the single focus on its architectural significance in the museum and lack of input from the local community have significantly reduced the community's chance to forge any new association. The Project team's perception of the temple's religious obsolescence further weakened the existing association with the local community derived from its religious function. Despite the good intention to create a public square for the villagers to socialise and 'return the temple to the community', the rest of the design has missed the opportunity to create an inviting environment for the villagers. At present, the heritage and museum associations are dominant among all other associations. While the heritage association was strengthened through the museum project and will likely be sustained, the museum association faces serious challenges to gather enough causal powers for it to be sustained.

On the other hand, the Longwang Temple case presents evidence and potential for the heritage association to reach the local level, trigger, and sustain other local-level associations, despite the top-down mechanisms that initiated and sustain it. Based on the comparison between the temple's condition before and after the latest restoration and the data collected

during this PhD research, the Southern Project was crucial for the community's initiative to establish the community museum and revive the temple fair. In comparison, the religious associations in Baiyu Temple and Longwang Temple went through morphogenetic cycles in opposite directions after the restoration. A prominent difference between the two cases lies in the local initiative and capacity. Dongyi Village has considerable advantages in its economic, political, and human resources compared to Jiaodi Village. The local actors in Dongyi Village could afford to sustain the existing religious association, strengthen it, and initiate a new one through the community museum. If retroduced to the local commune of Baiyu Temple, these advantages have the potential to strengthen its religious association.

Compared to the Guangrenwang Temple case, the community initiative and engagement are front and centre in the museum association's emergence in Longwang Temple. Despite the much smaller scale of investment and public attention, the local community of Dongyi Village is free and willing to pace the process according to their capacity and resources. The themes of the two museums represent two diabolically different approaches, with the one in Dongyi Village actively engaging the local culture and community and the one in Guangrenwang Temple deliberately excluding those. Despite the high-profile actors involved in Guangrenwang Temple's project, the community-based exhibition in Longwang Temple features more multidisciplinary involvement. The local engagement and multidisciplinary involvement, if retroduced to Guangrenwang Temple's case, have the potential to initiate a more sustainable management mechanism for the museum. On the other hand, if the Dongyi village community could access the resources in Guangrenwang Temple's case, it would potentially benefit the quality, scale, and long-term support of their museum exhibitions and the temple fair.

Other factors related to Longwang Temple also contribute to strengthening the inter-generational and intra-generational bonds among the community. The *Kangzhuang* tradition performed during the annual temple fair is exemplary in fostering and maintaining these bonds. Even though the tradition is not directly linked to the worshipping subject of Longwang Temple, it is closely related to the temple's religious association through the temple fair. The performance of *Kangzhuang* and the Dragon King parades during the temple fair also connects the temple and the physical space of the village. The participation of the *Yuehu* musical crew connects the local temple with the Shangdang region, which can potentially bring more regional resources to the temple. Even though these intangible expressions are particular to Dongyi Village, other traditions that bear similar characteristics of connecting the temple and the local community and strengthening the bonds within the local community would have the potential to exercise similar causal powers if retroduced to other cases. Compared to the other two cases, the present condition of Longwang Temple's morphostatic associations

demonstrates no dominance of any particular association. There are more coexisting associations involving more actors than Baiyu Temple. More importantly, the associations in Longwang Temple's case reinforce each other rather than compete against each other, as seen in Guangrenwang Temple's case.

In conclusion, for the case studies examined in this PhD research, three types of associations appear to be the most prominent in forming and sustaining these heritage assemblages throughout their history, the religious, 'Socialist', and heritage associations. Table 4 shows the main actors and causal powers involved in the emergence and sustaining of these associations. It also shows other secondary associations related to these three main types. They do not appear in all three cases but share some similar characteristics. For the case study region, the state or provincial level policies, the religious faith of local communities, the local initiative and capacity exercise crucial causal powers for sustaining the religious and heritage associations. The 'Socialist' association is still sustained between individual community members and the sites but faces the risk of obsolescence as memories fade and the physical traces from this period get wiped out by recent restorations. There remains potential for new associations to emerge through programmes such as the Safeguarding Civilisation scheme and more private sector involvement. However, the Guangrenwang Temple case needs to be considered a lesson learnt rather than a desirable outcome when the sustainable future of the sites is concerned. The table also demonstrates the causal powers that initiate or sustain each association are related to various disciplines and exercised on various levels, conforming to CR's characterisation of a multi-deterministic and 'laminated' reality.

The diachronic examination of these associations demonstrates that their sustainability relies on the continuous contribution of causal powers and that the morphogenetic cycles do not exceed their range of resilience. It also shows that the longer these associations are sustained, the more potential they hold to exercise causal powers on other associations. These findings were hypothesised by establishing the relational M/M approach for sustainability in Part 2 and demonstrated by the cases studies in Part 3. The synchronic examination of the existing associations helps predict the tendencies of sustainable futures for these cases. The analysis of the three cases suggests that when an assemblage is dominated by one association, the change of causal powers for that association can cause an abrupt impact on the entire assemblage. It also indicates that a heritage assemblage with more sustained and coexisting associations that reinforce each other presents more resilience to change. Therefore, it is more sustainable than one with fewer associations or when dominant associations are competing against others. Such an indication is valuable as it is not limited to the case study

region but can have broader relevance beyond the scale and typology of the case studies examined in this PhD research.

Table 4 Generative mechanisms of the case study region and China

| Abstraction level | Associations | | Generative mechanisms | | | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|---|---|
| | primary association | secondary associations | Actors | Causal powers | disciplinary strata | scales | Condition | |
| case study region | Religious associations | association between the sites and the local communities; associations between the site and the natural and historic environment; human-nature association; association among community members, association between the sites and broader religious communities; association between individual buildings | physical existence of the sites | materialisation of faith | psychology, anthropology, sociology, architecture | local | Emergence: the religious faith, economic capacity, crafts skills and initiative. Sustaining: the religious faith, economic capacity, and the materialisation of the faith need to be in place and sustained. | Multiple associations that co-exist and re-enforce each other |
| | | | | inspiring the historic community management system | sociology, anthropology | local | | |
| | | | local communities | religious faith | psychology, sociology, anthropology | individual, local, regional | | |
| | | | | economic capacity | sociology, economics | local, regional | | |
| | | | | material and human resources | sociology, economics, physical science | individual, local, regional | | |
| | | | | initiating and sustaining the historic community management system | sociology, anthropology, archaeology | local | | |
| | | | | organising and participating in religious activities | psychology, sociology, anthropology, archaeology | local | | |
| | | | local authorities | initiation | political science, sociology, | local | | |
| | | | | material and human resources | sociology, economics | local, regional | | |
| | | | | supporting, regulating, or discouraging the organisation of religious activities | political science, sociology, anthropology | local, national | | |
| | | | craftsmen and artisans | crafts skills | physical science, archaeology, sociology, anthropology | local, regional | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------|---|
| | | | broader religious communities | religious faith | psychology, sociology, anthropology | regional, national | |
| | | | environmental elements | source of faith | ecology, psychology, sociology, anthropology | local | |
| | | | | historical connection | anthropology, archaeology | local | |
| | | | | inspiring social contracts within the communities | sociology, anthropology | local | |
| | | | | climate condition | ecology, physical science, sociology | local, regional, global | |
| | | | | locational enchantment | psychology, ecology | local | |
| | 'Socialist' associations | associations between community members and the sites; associations among community members | state authorities | state ideological movement | political science, sociology | national, local | Emergence: state-wide movement; local implementation. Sustaining: physical reminders and individual memories |
| | | | physical space of the sites | accommodating the function | architecture, anthropology, archaeology | local | |
| | | | local authorities | implementation of state policy | political science, sociology | local | |
| | | | local communities | transformation of space | psychology, political science, architecture | local | |
| | | | | remembering and celebrating | psychological, sociology | local | |
| | | | | participation and maintenance | sociology | local | |
| | | | physical trace of the era | accommodating the function | architecture | local | |
| | | | | physical reminders of the era | psychology, architecture | local, regional, national | |
| | Heritage associations | association between the sites and heritage professionals (and architectural historians); association between the sites and heritage | historic remains of the sites | providing evidence for scientific and historical research | physical science, archaeology, sociology, anthropology, | national, global | Emergence: knowledge production, administrative and legal system, local implementation. |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| | | administrations; association between the sites and the general public; association derived from museum functions; association between the sites and visitors | | | architecture, history | | Sustaining: continuous management system, sustained economic support and expertise, continuous involvement of actors; existence of the heritage space |
| | | | inspiring and providing space for new associations | | psychology, sociology, architecture | local, regional, national | |
| | | | historical connection | | psychology, sociology, archaeology, architecture | local, regional, national | |
| | | heritage professionals (including those on higher levels, such as international actors who promote professional standards) | providing expertise | | physical science, architecture, archaeology, anthropology | local, regional, national, global | |
| | | | initiating new association | | sociology, architecture | local, regional, national | |
| | | | influencing the principles for the practice and management of the sites | | architecture, archaeology, sociology, political science | local, regional, national, global | |
| | | local communities | using and managing the sites | | sociology, anthropology, psychology, architecture, archaeology | local | |
| | | | organising and practising intangible traditions and performances | | anthropology, psychology, archaeology, sociology | local, regional, national | |
| | | | initiating new associations | | anthropology, sociology | local | |
| | | | maintenance and daily management of the sites (as caretakers) | | anthropology, sociology | local, regional, national | |
| | | state and provincial administrations | policy and strategy making | | political science, sociology | regional, national | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------|--|--|---|--|--|---------------------------|--|
| | | | | initiating and funding state-led projects (such as the Southern Project) | political science, sociology, architecture, economics | local, regional, national | |
| | | | local administrations | funding and implementation of the maintenance and management of the sites | political science, sociology, economics, architecture, archaeology | local, regional, national | |
| | | | private sector | initiating and funding projects | sociology, economics | local, regional, national | |
| | | | | management and operating the sites | sociology, economics | local, regional, national | |
| | | | general public | participating in public debates | sociology, anthropology | national, regional | |
| | | | | visiting the sites | sociology, psychology, architecture | local, regional, national | |
| China's PCHS | associations derived from initial functions | associations between the singular elements; association between the sites and the initial users or owners; associations between the sites and the environmental elements | physical existence of the sites | initiating, sustaining, transforming, or disrupting the associations (determined case by case) | determined case by case | determined case by case | Emergence: initiative, economic capacity, craft skills and technology; Sustaining: continuous use, continuous management system, continuous economic and technology capacity, continuous physical existence of the sites |
| | | | users/ owners | | | | |
| | | | environmental elements | | | | |
| | | | other species on sites (i.e. plants, animals) | | | | |
| | | | initial human creators of the sites (e.g. planners, architects, craftsmen, artisans, planters, farmers) | | | | |
| | | | administrative or management bodies (might overlap with users/owners) | | | | |
| | associations derived from new functions or new users/owners (They can emerge) either before or after heritagisation) | associations between the singular elements; association between the sites and the new users or owners; associations between the sites and the environmental elements | physical existence of the sites | | | | Emergence: actors that initiated and implemented the transformation, physical existence of the sites, economic capacity, professional expertise (if applicable); Sustaining: continuous involvement of actors, |
| | | | new users/owners | | | | |
| | | | environmental elements | | | | |
| | | | other species on sites | | | | |
| | | | administrative or management bodies (might | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| | | | overlap with new users/owners) | | | | economic support, expertise, management system, sustained physical existence of the sites, | |
| | | | other actors that initiated the transformation | | | | | |
| | associations derived from heritagisation | association between the sites and heritage professionals; association between the sites and heritage administrations; association between the sites and the general public; association derived from other related functions (e.g. museums, tourism) | physical existence of the sites | | | | Emergence: knowledge production, administrative and legal system, local implementation; Sustaining: continuous management system, sustained economic support and expertise, continuous involvement of actors; physical existence of the heritage space, continuous recognition of heritage values | |
| | | | users/owners/visitors | | | | | |
| | | | environmental elements | | | | | |
| | | | other species on sites | | | | | |
| | | | administrative or management bodies (might overlap with users/owners) | | | | | |
| | | | heritage professionals | | | | | |
| | general public | | | | | | | |

10.4 Sustainable heritage for sustainable development

Besides identifying the generative mechanisms, understanding sustainability and heritage with the relational M/M approach is also helpful for answering the research question: **What is the connection between sustainable heritage management and heritage's relevance in facilitating the sustainable development of its communities as well as the broader society?** In Ch.2, the literature review has revealed that while sustainability and SD have become common foci in heritage research and practice, their connection and correlation are not always clearly theorised or identified. Whether heritage conservation automatically translates to benefiting SD remains insufficiently debated. While some heritage activities' contribution to the environmental and economic aspects of SD is more straightforward to quantify, such as retrofitting for more energy efficiency, or the idea of repair in relation to the circular economy, their positive impact on the social and cultural aspects is either taken for granted or deemed hard to measure. As established in Ch.3, understanding heritage and sustainability as ontologically interdisciplinary and multi-deterministic means that a fragmented approach would fail to account for the connections that constitute the assemblages as much as the singular elements. Relational thinking is constructive in transcending the boundaries between subject fields and disciplines. It is also crucial for discussing how the actors in the heritage assemblages connect with broader society.

As discussed in the last section, the number of coexisting associations and their relationship are significant factors in determining the resilience of the heritage assemblages. This conception can be abducted to understand sustainability as well. An ideal sustainable world can be understood as an assemblage of sustained and coexisting associations that reinforce each other. Under this framework, for example, actors conventionally categorised as related to the environmental aspect of SD are necessarily related to actors of other aspects, and vice versa. These cross-disciplinary associations are just as crucial, if not more. Sustaining and strengthening the morphostatic associations within the assemblage presents the tendency of strengthening the morphostasis of the whole. The word tendency is crucial here as it has been demonstrated in the case studies that over-emphasis on one association and the exclusion of others can also jeopardise the resilience of the assemblage. It is already demonstrated in the cases of Longwang Temple and Baiyu Temple that the actors and associations within the heritage assemblage can exercise causal powers on associations between the local community members, which contribute to the social bonds of the local communities. The sustainability of Longwang Temple's morphostasis leads to the continuation of such causal powers, whereas the weakening of Baiyu Temple's morphostasis risks the weakening and even obsolescence of such powers over time.

The missed opportunities in Guangrewang Temple's case to create or strengthen the associations between the local community and the site, and those among community members, demonstrate that the connection between the heritage assemblage and actors in broader society is not given. The weakening museum association will afford less and less causal powers to initiate change in the local area, such as tourism development and other economic opportunities. Without sustained connections that bond the local community together, there is less opportunity for the community-level initiative, crowdsourcing, and actions to initiate change or sustain the museum in the future. The sustainable management of the temple, either as a religious venue, a heritage site, or a museum, is relevant to the local community's potential to facilitate sustainable development. However, continued interactions between the sites and the local communities, either through religious worshipping or community engagement in the museum or heritage site, are crucial for this relevance to be translated into change. Meanwhile, the recent economic downturn of Jiaodi Village's commune is related to the dissatisfactory agricultural production, conditioned by the local area's environmental and economic sustainability. Despite only focusing on the manifestation surrounding the temple and the local community, the case study demonstrates that the associations and actors that constitute the broader eco- and economic systems can also exercise causal powers on the heritage assemblage.

The three cases' history is inspiring in understanding how these temple's assemblages can have effects rippling beyond culture and religion. The cultivation of the pine forest in Baiyu Temple and the relationship between Guangrenwang Temple and the Dragon Spring were part of the local community's human-nature relations. The historic community management system of the temples and the social contracts that came with it were other types of social bonds between community members beyond their shared religious beliefs. The local communities' economic capacity to maintain the physical space of the temples was also supported by such a system. If these elements and associations had been sustained, these local communities would have had more connections with the natural environment and within the communities, potentially contributing to the overall sustainability of local areas. However, it is worth noting that learning from history does not equate to a simple transplant of the historic management mechanism to the present. The associations between the temple and broader society have changed significantly with the knowledge produced by architectural history research and heritagisation. The local communities' composition and religious profile have also shifted over time. It is nevertheless worth pondering how the temples' morphostasis supported by these sustained associations can be fostered again in the present context, both on the local level and integrated with the associations on a broader scale, such as those derived from their national PCHS status.

The Longwang Temple case demonstrates that the associations between the site and the local community need not be limited to the historic religious one. Other types of associations can be initiated and cultivated at the sites where they no longer serve as religious venues or only host religious activities a few times a year. The national heritage status of the sites in the case study region provides an opportunity where not all new associations have to be formed between the site and the local community as the community composition of the sites has been expanded. However, the Guangrenwang Temple case suggests that these associations would not automatically emerge with new functions without sustained and continuous involvement of actors, local or not. Therefore, the relational M/M approach established in this thesis suggests that future projects intended to initiate new associations must identify the actors that would form these associations and what kind of causal powers are needed to sustain these associations, including sustaining the actors and the connections between them. For heritage to contribute to the sustainable development of broader society, initiating and sustaining coexisting associations between the heritage elements and other actors in society are critical conditions.

In conclusion, this thesis has critically reflected on the relevance between heritage activities and sustainability on the conceptual and empirical levels. This reflection is built upon the critical scrutiny against the assumptions that heritage and sustainable development activities are inherently benign, and that heritage conservation would automatically contribute to sustainability. As discussed in the literature review, activities in the name of heritage and sustainability can contradict each other and have problematic consequences such as exacerbating social inequalities or strengthening economic sustainability at the cost of environmental protection or social justice. The case studies demonstrate that heritage activities do not necessarily improve the sustainability of the local areas, especially if these activities do not lead to a sustainable outcome within the heritage assemblages. Tracing the chain of actions and causality for the morphostatic and morphogenetic processes within and beyond the heritage assemblage is essential to understanding the impacts between heritage activities and sustainable society and identifying the conditions needed for heritage activities to contribute to sustainability. This approach is not limited to the case study region but is adaptable to other typologies, scales, and contexts. The versatility of this approach will be further discussed in Sec.10.6.

10.5 Transcending the dichotomies

Ch.2 has highlighted two prevalent and related dichotomies in current heritage literature. The ever-increasing attention to the intangible aspects of heritage and 'non-Western' value systems has expanded the definition and approaches to heritage. However, stereotypically associating the tangible and intangible aspects with the simplified notions of any particular cultural context has been misleading and counterproductive in understanding the complexity of heritage and these approaches. Ch.2's review of the emergence of architectural history as a subject field in China and Ch.5's review of the modern set-up of China's heritage administrative and legislative system support the recent literature that reveals a complex process of the heritage notion's integration with the nation's trajectory to a Western presumption of 'modernity'. The over-emphasis on these two dichotomies leads to several pitfalls when discussing heritage in non-Western contexts. It characterises a simple imposition of Western ideas on non-Western cultures and overlooks the complex internalisation and negotiation processes as ideas, knowledge, and cultures meet. It risks exoticising, romanticising, and essentialising the non-Western experience and practices of heritage.

Part of the reason for choosing Shanxi's early timber buildings as case studies is to demonstrate that even for this type of heritage that was initially heritagised for its architectural significance and is generally viewed as typical historic monuments, their historic and present associations illustrate the co-existence and integration of the tangible and intangible aspects. Such integration is present in both professional and grass-root practices. While stemming from a conventional and positivist view of heritage, their national heritage status is evidently part of their present reality and an impactful association for their sustainability. The improved physical condition of these sites after the state-led restoration projects provides an opportunity for other intangible practices to thrive. The acknowledgement of their architectural significance, along with other early timber buildings in the country, was a product of the knowledge system established through modernisation as much as a response or resistance to it. As elaborated in Ch.3, an inclusive and non-reductionist view of heritage should acknowledge and allow various associations to coexist. Understanding these early timber buildings' architectural significance does not necessarily exclude the possibility to acknowledge and engage other actors and associations related to other connotations of the sites. Vice versa, elevating the previously neglected associations and actors related to intangible connotations does not eliminate the value of preserving the historic materials.

As established in Ch.3, a Critical Realist's view argues that materiality or conception alone cannot substantiate the explanation of reality. A multi-deterministic conception of heritage means that as an assemblage, heritage is always determined by tangible actors and intangible elements, such as practices, discourses, ideologies, or values. Heritage is not *just* 'things';

neither does discourse account for all that constitutes heritage. The Guangrenwang Temple case is an example where heritage discourse, while impactful, does not exhaust reality. The widely accepted belief that the main hall is a Tang Dynasty building does not change the fact that many building components are indeed not from Tang Dynasty, which, as described in the case study, has measurable consequences for scientific research. On the other hand, based on this belief, a high-profile project was initiated and implemented, bringing dramatic change to the material environment, showing that discourse can also have 'material' effects. In Longwang Temple's case, while the physical traces from the school period have been wiped out in the latest restoration, the association between the school alumni and the temple still survives through the intangible memories of individual community members, even though without the physical reminder, these memories face obsolescence over time.

The present associations seen in the case studies are the results of dialogues between the local and the global, the traditional and the modern. The recognition of these early timber buildings' architectural significance was only possible as the subject field of architectural history and archaeology progressed, resulting from interactions between Western disciplinary structure and methods and domestic empirical experiences and research. The national professional standards and legislation that guide the state-led conservation and management of these PCHS are already an amalgam of international influence and domestic contexts. The conservation principles guiding China's built heritage activities were developed through integrating a Western notion of modernity situated in local realities even before the birth of the Venice Charter and its popularisation through the World Heritage programme. Furthermore, even within the Southern Project restorations, the various practices on the ground do not always conform to these written standards and guidelines. Some of them are also local solutions based on local conditions. Therefore, it would be inaccurate to characterise the state-led heritage activities as results of the imposition of purely 'Western' values'. It would be equally misleading to assume that the local solutions at odds with national or international standards came out of a purely 'Eastern' tradition, which, as demonstrated in various chapters in this thesis, does not really exist.

The fact that these early timber buildings have survived for almost a thousand years is a counterargument to the assumption that in an East Asian country such as China, timber buildings are constantly reconstructed or demolished during dynastic change. This common misconception reflects the perceived 'Eastern' approach, exemplified by the popular and romanticised misunderstanding of the reconstruction of the Ise Shrine as a representation of Japanese attitudes towards other built heritage.

The case studies clearly demonstrate that with the historic local management system and the religious faith gradually leaving the central stage for some local communities, the heritagisation and even the 'Socialist' functions given to these sites were part of the morphogenetic cycles that kept the assemblages of these sites moving forward. It would be unreasonable to assume that the management and maintenance of these sites could simply return to their historic version in contemporary society. The perceived 'Eastern' approach essentialises the historic maintenance system of these buildings and assumes that such a system does not evolve. The contemporary conservation and maintenance of the religious and folk traditions and the surviving historic material remains of the sites by state and local actors are processes of preserving the past and fostering the future in a unique and situated manner.

The significance of incorporating ANT in this thesis lies in its ability to avoid presumptions as to the priority of any actor or association before scrutinising each case. Therefore, it is beneficial for transcending these dichotomies. Emphasis on the associations brings forward the significance of multiple actors' participation and suggests that any actor's change can impact others. In this light, any 'Western' idea would have been changed once practised in other contexts. Any 'non-Western' approach would also be in constant interactions with practices. Indeed, there is no pure form of 'Western' or 'non-Western' approach, and more importantly, there is no pure form of 'Western' or 'non-Western' problem. The maintenance of historic material remains can be prominent in non-Western contexts, just as the transmission of traditional practices can also be a serious concern in Western contexts.

In conclusion, as exemplified by the case studies of early timber buildings, heritage practices in contemporary China illustrate various complex and coexisting attitudes and approaches to heritage and modernity. As evidenced by textual documentation and material remains, their historic management system illustrates a more practical, grounded, and realistic maintenance approach distinctive from the 'grand narrative' of dynastic change and the incomplete and misinterpreted 'Eastern' approach. The heritagisation of these sites, based upon the recognition of their architectural significance, is an integral part of their present reality and future. Because of this heritagisation, the recent history and current situation illustrate the complex relationships between these sites and other societal actors, including, but not exclusively, the local communities. As revealed by the analysis using the relational M/M approach, a holistic understanding of these sites transcending the tangible and intangible divide is necessary to account for these complex relationships and facilitate a sustainable future for the sites, the local communities, and broader society.

10.6 From critical approaches to a versatile methodology for practice

The theoretical framework developed in this PhD thesis owes much to philosophical traditions developed in various disciplines, including archaeology and sociology, and the critical reflections on heritage and sustainability that have emerged in recent decades. Sec.10.2 has highlighted the advantages of a theoretical framework that incorporates these traditions critically for understanding heritage and sustainability. Ch.2 has reviewed some criticism on the disconnections between the recent critical turn of Heritage Studies and practice. The manifestation of these disconnections is two-fold. First, some of the previous research outcome has not been sufficiently based on grounded data. The above discussions in this chapter have highlighted the significance of 'studying up' and constant check and balance between abstraction and empirical investigation. The other disconnection lies in the challenges of translating these academic critiques and critical approaches into operable methods to inform heritage practices, policies, strategies, and decision-making. Through developing the relational M/M approach from a theoretical framework into analytical research methods and applying them in the case studies, this thesis addresses the research question: **How can critical reflections on heritage approaches impact practices and decision-making on the ground in contemporary China?**

Despite the specific characteristics of the case studies and contemporary Chinese contexts, the versatility of this theoretical framework and methodology makes it possible to apply them beyond the typology of early timber buildings and geographical boundaries. The indiscriminating consideration of human and non-human actors sets up a flexible starting point in various contexts and encourages case-by-case critical reflections on which actors are involved in heritage assemblages without being restricted by existing assumptions. Characterising heritage as multi-deterministic and relational brings forward the need to account for interactions between various activities, actors, and associations and their impact on each other during the decision-making process, which introduces critical reflections into practice. It highlights that an action or change on one actor or connection will necessarily have an impact across the assemblage in an open system. The synchronic and diachronic dimensions in the relational M/M approach are beneficial both in capturing change (morphogenesis) and sustaining processes (morphostasis) in historical studies and discussing future tendencies, making it a potentially valuable tool for formulating anticipatory policies and strategies.

The approach and methods proposed in this thesis are also versatile regarding the scales and degrees of specificity in their application. There is potential for significant restructuring of the heritage system on the regional, state, or international levels through adopting this theoretical framework. However, such fundamental changes require more prolonged and complex

processes and can sometimes be beyond particular individuals' or organisations' capability. Therefore, the applicability of this approach and methods on the project level is potentially equally significant. The application of these methods for the case studies has demonstrated this possibility. To further illustrate how they can be applied to other types of heritage within the current system, the following demonstrates using these methods in two hypothetical cases: a historic urban landscape and an intangible heritage practice or expression.

For a historic urban landscape, it is inherently necessary to understand it through a relational framework. The associations identified can be between human or non-human actors, such as places, street networks, the natural terrain, and groups of urban actors, either collectives or individuals. The scales in which these associations will be identified or highlighted depend on the issue and project. On an urban strategic level, the associations might be between neighbourhoods or districts and various demographic groups. On a smaller intervention level, the associations can be between singular buildings, the environment surrounding them, and the specific users or owners associated with the buildings. Regardless of the scale of focus, a 'laminated' understanding of reality provides the capacity to be aware of associations on the other scales, particularly when the issue or association of one scale is connected or transformed into those of upper or lower scales.

To assess the sustainability of this landscape, one would have to investigate how these associations are related to one another, whether they are reinforcing or competing against each other. One would also consider whether the current situation allows and encourages more associations to emerge and coexist. For example, if a large percentage of the landscape's associations are sustained by causal powers generated in the tourism sector, there is a high risk for the assemblage to be significantly impacted if the tourism industry gets a heavy blow, making the urban landscape less resilient. This assessment under the relational M/M framework also requires decision-makers in the heritage sector to consider how the changes of heritage assets might influence other associations and actors in the urban landscape. For example, by maintaining the width of a historic street in a busy urban centre, one must consider how such a decision might impact the actors and their associations, whose maintenance might depend on the volume of transportation on this street. These actors and connections may not necessarily be 'historic' at all, but they are still forming part of the assemblage of the urban landscape and have agencies in the city's future.

On the other hand, an intangible expression or practice is inherently relational and morphogenetic. The existence of an ICH depends on a series of morphogenetic cycles and morphostatic associations between the human actors who practice it and other non-human actors. These morphogenetic cycles and morphostatic associations can manifest as the acts

of practising a particular craft, where the craftsperson and the materials involved are maintaining their associations through practice. It is demonstrated in the Longwang Temple case that performative ICH, such as the *Yuehu* music and *Kangzhuang* parades, is not only a stand-alone performance but always in connection with the physical environment and materials. Associations between the human actors who participate, observe, and enjoy such performance also emerge and are maintained through practice. Understanding ICH as a series of morphogenetic cycles rejects the possibility of any 'pure form' of these practices since their existence depends on morphogenesis, which is bound to bring change, however subtle it might be.

One can imagine an intangible practice that only exists in documents or is commemorated in a museum exhibition because no one can practice it anymore. The number of actors and associations derived from this practice would dwindle over time as memory, documents, or the exhibition becomes obsolete. Without practice, there is no chance for new associations to emerge either. Understanding sustainability of an intangible practice through the relationships between associations and emergence also brings a new perspective into the scenario where ICH is commodified. Not assuming a 'pure form' of heritage does not necessarily mean commodification is without consequence. For example, if a traditional performance becomes a mere tourist activity, it can lead to the association(s) derived from tourism development becoming dominant in the assemblage, weakening other associations, or stifling other new associations to emerge. In this sense, the change or 'unauthentic' form that commodification brings to the heritage is not as problematic as the decreasing resilience of the heritage assemblage due to the monopolisation of actors, associations, and causal powers. There can be broader ramifications beyond heritage assemblage, such as that on the local economy's resilience.

The two scenarios above demonstrate, albeit in an abstract way, how such an approach can be applied to heritage of various typologies and scales. The versatility of the relational M/M approach is rooted in the possibility and necessity to generate specific solutions based on the grounded investigation of each specific case. It is not meant to provide a pre-set prescription for all. Such versatility also implies critical reflections, as the associations are not moralised *a priori*, and any judgement towards a particular association is relative to how they interact with others and always subject to change. Moreover, scrutinising the associations reveals how heritage activities might have an impact on social equity and power. First, as alluded to in Ch.3, associations are not necessarily benign. Heritage assets can exercise causal powers on problematic associations such as those related to racism and colonialism. These associations must be included in the decision-making process, together with those associations derived from the heritage assets' valued attributes, which means the actors related to these

problematic associations, in many cases marginalised or underserved groups, must have a place at the table. Their understanding of their association with the heritage assets is part of the assemblage.

10.7 Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter has highlighted this thesis' original contribution in answering the five research questions set out in Part 1. The arguments of this thesis are situated on three levels. First, the case studies are a critical examination of the complexity surrounding Shanxi's early timber buildings as heritage, which is manifested in the actors involved, the activities happening around the sites and the various associations from their history and present situations. Some of the voices represented in this PhD research, such as those of the caretakers, are seldom given a stage in the decision-making process of heritage projects or academic research on these sites. The thesis argues that it is necessary to discuss the impact of heritage activities on the ground and their connection with the sustainable development of the local areas and broader society to imagine a sustainable future for them. As highlighted in Ch.5, the complex interactions between heritage approaches and practices have been insufficiently discussed in the existing heritage literature in China. Therefore, the contribution on the second level lies in presenting such complexity with the most typical typology of heritage to propose a more nuanced understanding of heritage practices in contemporary China. On the one hand, it argues against a romanticised and essentialised notion of an 'Eastern' approach referenced in the literature. On the other hand, it proposes critical reflections on the current conservation approach and practices in China. On the third level, this thesis establishes an innovative framework where such critical reflections can be integrated with heritage and sustainability practice and research on an ontological level. The relational M/M approach suggests an alternative way of understanding the connection between heritage and other actors in society, the relationship between heritage, change, and sustainability. Sec.10.6 has highlighted the versatility of such an approach and how it may be applied more broadly in heritage research and practice. The prospects and future research opportunities in the development of this approach will be outlined in the conclusion chapter.

Chapter 11 Conclusion and the Way Forward

As the term sustainability becomes increasingly ubiquitous in the everyday discourse, one may find it equally perplexing to understand what sustainability really means. Likewise, as the definition of heritage is expanded, the question of what may or may not constitute heritage also becomes increasingly uncertain and debatable. Ch.2 has systematically and critically reviewed the latest developments in the forefront of heritage and sustainability research and practices, where debates and critical reflections have emerged regarding the ontology of heritage and sustainability and the impact of actions in their names on broader society. These critical reflections have presented some similarities between heritage and sustainability. Besides being increasingly challenging to define, they are also not inherently benign but rather full of contradiction and contention. The literature review has revealed that actions in the name of sustainable development can contradict each other, and heritage activities can exacerbate social inequalities and injustice, be non-environmentally friendly, and even undermine the transmission of other cultures and traditions. Understandably, the ambiguity and contradictions are multiplied when one is confronted with a combination of these two concepts, such as 'sustainable heritage' and 'heritage for sustainable development'. Therefore, it has appeared necessary for this thesis to confront these conceptual complexities before discussing what may or may not constitute sustainable heritage management, how it can be facilitated, and how heritage can indeed contribute to the world's sustainability, and vice versa.

11.1 The original contribution to knowledge

The scrutiny of policy documents, professional standards, and practice-oriented literature in Chs.2 and 5 reveals that the lack of holistic and conceptual understanding of these terms can lead to fragmented efforts and outcomes in practice. The latest influence from relational and systems thinking in both subject fields has set down an inspiring path for this thesis to establish a coherent theoretical framework for the cross-over of these two subject fields, which captures both their relational and dynamic characteristics on the conceptual and practical levels. As evidenced by practice-oriented literature, the conflicts and contentions that surface in situ demonstrate that general terms like heritage and sustainability in strategic documents can manifest in various ways on the ground. The specific focus on the drawbacks of the two dichotomies in recent heritage literature, 'the tangible and the intangible' and 'Western and Eastern (non-Western) approaches', reveals the need for more nuanced characterisation and grounded investigation in complex contexts. While there has been an increasing amount of literature contributing to the diversified conversations on heritage practices in various geographical contexts, it most notably focuses on categories and types of heritage entities

that gain more recent attention. The 'typical' heritage, such as the early timber architecture in China discussed in this thesis, which has shaped the most fundamental approach to heritage in the country, has rarely been the subject of such discussions.

Upon the research opportunities identified by the literature review in Ch.2 and supported by a more specific review in the Chinese context in Ch.5, the thesis demonstrates its original contribution to knowledge in three aspects. First, a theoretical framework is established to conceptualise heritage and sustainability's relational, multi-deterministic, and dynamic nature. Second, a more holistic understanding of the case studies is obtained by implementing such a framework and the relevant methodology and methods. Third, the theoretical framework is developed into a versatile methodology and set of methods that can be applied in practice to understand, assess, and facilitate sustainable heritage management. One of the objectives of this thesis is to bridge the gap between the theoretical and critical reflections in academic research and the genuine concerns that heritage practitioners and other actors have on the ground. Such a gap, which was criticised by the literature reviewed in Ch.2, partially lies in the lack of deep theoretical exploration from practitioners and the lack of consideration to translate the critical reflections into practical solutions from academics. Therefore, dissecting and unpacking the philosophical positions underpinning the understanding and practices of heritage is a necessary starting point for this PhD research. At the same time, the grounded data plays an equally significant role in informing and adjusting the theoretical findings of the thesis.

As elaborated in Ch.3, the theoretical framework established in this thesis incorporates the philosophical traditions of Critical Realism (CR), Assemblage Theory, and Actor-Network-Theory (ANT). CR's position on the ontology and epistemology of reality constitutes the foundation of this thesis' position in understanding what heritage is and how we can learn about it. The multi-deterministic and interdisciplinary nature of reality as advocated by CR suggests that heritage, as part of reality, results from causal powers from material agents, such as the tangible objects and places, and intangible human conceptions and actions, such as discourse, values, and practices. They influence reality but do not exhaust the explanation of it on their own. Understanding heritage from a critical realist perspective allows heritage to have many properties at the same time. In response to statements like 'there is, really, no such thing as heritage' (Smith 2006, p. 1), or that 'all heritage is intangible' (ibid. p.3), this thesis is built upon the dialogical approach (Harrison 2013) from the 'post-discursive' turn of heritage studies and insists that things, processes, associations, and conceptions are all part of what we know as heritage. As conceptualised through a Critical Realist's perspective, within this heritage assemblage, there are tangible 'things' independent of human conceptions and values and discourse that can have a 'material' effect on these tangible things. The

associations and interactions within the heritage assemblage cannot independently exist without the tangible actors, both humans and non-humans.

Incorporating Assemblage Theory, which has influenced the relational thinking emerging from recent heritage and sustainability studies, connects CR's understanding of reality with resilience and sustainability. Introducing the morphostasis and morphogenesis concepts into this relational framework provides a model to discuss emergence, transformation, obsolescence, and sustainability in heritage. Besides being the philosophical backbone of this thesis, CR's emphasis on causality and emergence makes it possible for this theoretical framework to be developed into an operable methodology. The 'deep' ontology advocated by CR suggests that it is crucial and possible to identify the generative mechanisms in the realm of the 'real' that exercise causal powers on the observable phenomena. It means this methodology can be used for understanding the cause behind the (un)sustainable outcome of heritage practices and informing anticipatory strategic and policy planning.

Besides acknowledging the connection between ANT and relational thinking, this thesis has argued that it is essential to 'listen to the actors' and 'study up', a position advocated by ANT. Such an attitude is particularly suitable for tackling the drawbacks of the 'Western-Eastern (non-Western)' dichotomy as problematised in Ch.2. It emphasises the significance of giving the stage to the actors and being aware of the presumptions one may carry as a researcher. For this thesis, 'tracing the connection' as advocated by ANT is incorporated through tracing the causal chains in explaining findings. It stresses accounting for abnormalities and unexcepted outcomes in practice that defy predictions and assumptions. Insisting on listening to the actors is one of the factors for the versatility of the methodology and theoretical framework developed in this thesis. It is also one of the reasons for using detailed description as an analytic method before further abstraction.

The research design and implementation are not linear processes but upward spiral ones. Besides being informed by the initial literature review, the initial research design was partially based on previous practice experience and intellectual reflections. As the research progresses, particularly during this PhD research's field investigations, the research design and methods are adapted and navigated by the ongoing discoveries. The data collected during the field investigation provided a crucial basis for this thesis's philosophical traditions and position. In the meantime, these traditions, which inspire the theoretical framework established in this thesis, are critically incorporated to shed new light on the case studies and reach a deeper understanding of the data and the core issues that lie behind it. Lastly, the new knowledge and findings from the case studies inform how the theoretical framework can be further applied in practice.

The relational M/M approach established in this thesis results from incorporating causality and emergence within relational thinking. Morphogenesis and morphostasis have been developed in conceptual thinking within CR literature to understand transformational cycles of social structures, individual agency, and culture (Archer 2020). However, they have rarely been applied or developed into analytical methods in empirical heritage research, let alone in heritage practices. Moreover, using these two concepts to discuss the sustaining and transformation of relations brings relational thinking beyond the theoretical discussion of heritage. It creates a coherent explanation for heritage's relevance in sustainability and SD. As discussed in Ch.10, this approach requires researchers and practitioners to consider beyond the singular elements and pay attention to the connections between them. For example, decisions made for a historic building site will have to consider the buildings, relevant human actors, other environmental elements, and, more importantly, how these elements are related to each other. Any intervention or management measure's impact will need to account for the change on each actor and the associations between them. The position that reality is multi-deterministic is inherent in this approach, which encourages interdisciplinary collaboration. Lastly, heritage activities are necessarily connected with broader society and should be considered as such during research and practices.

Following the relational theoretical framework and the insistence on 'studying up', the case studies in this thesis contributed to understanding the complexities of heritage practices in contemporary China in two folds. On the one hand, the thesis characterises these heritage sites as part of the multi-deterministic heritage assemblages composed of various associations and actors. It demonstrates the need for heritage practitioners and policymakers in China to reflect critically on the conventional approach to the conservation and management of these heritage sites, especially in consideration of their sustainable future. On the other hand, the research on China's heritage management illustrates that the approaches and values held by various actors are continuously interacting and amalgamating. As reviewed and discussed in Ch.5, despite the late introduction of CHS into the country, heritage research in China has presented some similar critical reflections based on domestic experience. The review of the administrative and legislative system and policies in Ch.5 reveals that a trend of decentralisation and the top-down characteristics co-exist in China's current heritage management mechanisms. There are constant negotiations between the willingness to adopt new thinking and initiate change and a tendency to follow the conventional approach to heritage. The Guangrenwang Temple case is the manifestation of such negotiations in a self-contradictive way. These complexities demonstrate that the perceived 'Western' and 'non-Western' approaches do not exist in their idealised pure forms. Therefore, it is misleading and

unproductive to suggest that one particular approach is imposed on the other and that one is somehow more applicable to another in a specific context.

Part 2 argues that there is always a certain degree of fluidity and unpredictability in the opinions and actions of any given group of actors, which further emphasises the significance of listening to the actors. The complex community composition of the case study region discussed in Ch.6 demonstrates that as a researcher, one must always be aware of the limit in representing the diverse opinions and actions of an entire community. Similarly, actors in the public sector and heritage professionals can each play various roles and possess multiple views. Therefore, this thesis' intention is not to present the research data as an all-encompassing representation of all the actors involved in the case studies but instead as evidence of the diversity, fluidity, and unpredictability that deserves due attention.

Applying the relational M/M approach and the research methods developed in the case studies demonstrates that identifying the morphostatic associations has proven helpful in understanding these heritage assemblages' life cycles and the generative mechanisms behind them. Identifying the morphostatic associations, tracing their morphogenetic cycles, establishing and comparing their morphostatic timelines have revealed the most prominent causal powers contributing to sustaining and transforming the overall morphostases of these assemblages. The case studies' findings have shown that external expertise was essential for these sites to be recognised as heritage. The state-led effort of conserving and managing these sites is part of the generative mechanism sustaining their assemblages today. On the other hand, the willingness and involvement of the local communities have proven crucial in maintaining their associations with the sites in the long term. At the same time, their capacity to do so is impacted by the broader area's overall economic and environmental sustainability.

Besides the latter finding, the case studies also illustrate that the sustaining or transformation of heritage associations can exercise causal powers on associations beyond the heritage assemblages. This conclusion is obtained by following the actors. For example, the Longwang Temple case has shown how the former teachers and students of the school in Longwang Temple have sustained their social bonds through reunions in the temple fair, sharing and celebrating their memories of the school period. It also demonstrates how different generations strengthen their connection by practising and performing intangible traditions during the temple fair. Conversely, the Guangrengwang Temple and Baiyu Temple illustrate that heritage conservation and promotion practices can but do not necessarily contribute to social coherence or strengthening local identity. These findings provide empirical evidence that heritage does not inherently contribute to the sustainability or SD of its community, even though it is ontologically associated with broader society. Identifying, studying, and in some

cases, problematising these associations are crucial for facilitating heritage's positive contribution to sustainability.

The case studies have demonstrated that the longer the association is sustained, the more likely it is for it to exercise causal powers on other actors and associations. This finding has synchronic and diachronic significance. It confirms what has been predicted in the theoretical framework and provides a viable answer to why sustaining specific associations is desirable. In this light, decision-makers are encouraged to consider the interventions' long-term survival rather than pursuing a short-term project with a one-off investment. It also argues that small-scale but sustained practices and actions, such as individual worshippers' religious activities, can have an accumulated impact that eventually outlasts that of a dramatic and short-term intervention. Analysing the condition and relationship between the various co-existing associations reveals the conditions for a more sustainable assemblage. A heritage assemblage with multiple reinforcing and co-existing associations presents more vitality and resilience than one with fewer co-existing associations, associations that compete against each other or that is dominated by one particular association. Together with the finding highlighted in the last paragraph, this thesis has explained the connection between sustainable heritage and sustainable development. It argues that one must first accept that heritage is not necessarily sustainable and does not necessarily contribute to SD. However, if one can establish the associations through which heritage can benefit the broader society, the more sustainable the heritage and these associations, the more likely it can contribute to the sustainability of society. These findings related to the vitality, resilience, and emergent powers of heritage assemblages can apply beyond the scope of this PhD research to heritage research and the practice of other typologies and contexts. The idea that more co-existing and reinforcing associations indicate a more resilient world can be further developed and applied in broader research in sustainability.

As reviewed in Chs.2 and 5, several trends and approaches are prevalent in the latest heritage research and practices. The relational M/M approach established in this thesis presents potential advantages when compared against these prevalent and emerging approaches. First, as discussed in Chs.2 and 5, many heritage management systems worldwide, including China, follow a value-based approach and problem-solving model. Although the categories and attributes of values have been expanded, and these systems are varied in different geographical and cultural contexts, this approach generally requires a fixed frame of reference for value assessment. The attributes, such as objects, places, practices, and in some cases, human inheritors, are considered singular embodiments of these sets of values. The solutions emerging from such a model are generally deployed to solve specific problems, such as mitigating the threats towards these attributes. However, recent critical reflections have

contended that a fixed frame of reference poses challenges in capturing and acknowledging values and perspectives held by different human actors. It creates an implicit hierarchy and power imbalance by presuming who gets to decide and interpret these values before confronting the situation on the ground.

Compared to this value-based approach, the relational M/M approach does not presume which actor might hold more value than the other before listening to the actors. The significance of the actors and associations is case-specific to the aims of any project or policy or which aspect one attempts to understand. It should be clarified that the idea of case specificity does not mean that human conceptions solely determine their significance because the non-human actors also play a crucial role in forming these associations. As mentioned above and in Chs.2 and 5, the problem-solving model can lead to fragmented effort in heritage practices. For example, a solution to problem A might have mitigated the threats to building X or community group Y but negatively impacted community group Z because this group's association with the other actors has not been considered in that solution. Compared to this model, the relational M/M approach requires identifying as many associations within and beyond the heritage assemblages as possible and being aware that there can always be more associations emerging through the research or project. Therefore, solutions emerging from this approach would have to address their influence on the actors and associations across and beyond the assemblages.

Second, as discussed in Ch.2, the power issues with the fixed frame of reference have been identified and problematised by the early critical reflections in heritage studies and CHS, most notably within the discursive turn where power and discursive effects are front and centre in the discussions. The critique towards the 'Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD)' (Smith 2006) is partially towards the authorised frame of reference. However, as criticised in Chs.2 and 3, and by scholars adopting the 'post-discursive' turn of heritage studies, the discursive turn and over-emphasis on the intangible aspects of heritage have detracted the significance of non-human actors and material agency in the heritage making processes. It has also distanced heritage studies from practice. Practitioners feel they are unfairly portrayed, and the focus on discourse does not sufficiently account for the complexity and unpredictability in practice. The ontological and epistemological position of the relational M/M approach, which combines the philosophical traditions of CR and Assemblage theory, insists that the explanation of reality cannot be exhausted by human conceptions. It advocates that non-human actors' contribution to heritage production deserve recognition and consideration in heritage practice and research. The methodological incorporation of ANT also insists that heritage research must listen to the actors on the ground. Therefore, research and practice adopting the relational M/M approach must understand and consider heritage's emergence from the formation, sustaining, and

transformation of associations between actors, including those in the material environment. Solutions emerging from this approach must be based upon evidence on the ground rather than assumptions of any perceived power structure at work.

Third, as discussed throughout the thesis, this PhD research is partially built upon the post-discursive turn of heritage studies, mainly the relational perspective adopted in this paradigm shift. Inspired by the 'dialogical model of heritage' (Harrison 2013), this thesis has brought this idea forward in several directions. First, the thesis has further explored the ontological connection between heritage and sustainability from a relational perspective, suggesting that the associations of actors that form the heritage assemblages are also critical to understanding and facilitating sustainable heritage practice and heritage's contribution to sustainability. Second, incorporating CR, particularly the concepts of morphostasis and morphogenesis, introduces a focus on causality and a tool to capture and assess change. These two aspects are the basis for developing the relational M/M approach into policymaking, planning, and project evaluation tools. Third, the case studies have demonstrated that the methods developed under this approach, such as mapping the morphostatic associations and the morphostatic timeline, can be applied in research and practice in specific contexts. On the other hand, the abstraction of generative mechanisms from these cases in Ch.10 explores how empirical studies can feedback to the conceptual understanding of heritage and sustainability.

11.2 Limitations

There are several areas of general limitations stemming from the nature of the research. The first area of limitations arose from the relatively short timeframe of the fieldwork. Due to limited financial resources, the primary data were collected during two relatively short periods of fieldwork (March 2018 and September 2018) within one year, with the data of the case study region mostly collected during the first fieldwork. Considering the unpredictability and fast-paced development and change in China, the situations seen in 2018 may have changed since the fieldwork. It is also possible that the interviewees' opinions might have changed over time, as already demonstrated in the case studies. Despite the effort to follow up with such change by keeping in contact with some of the local participants and correlating the primary data with other researchers' data collected more recently, it is inevitable that some significant development might have evaded detection. However, since the aim of this thesis is not to present a generalisation, the data collected during the fieldwork is still invaluable in furthering the understanding of heritage practices on the ground. As stated throughout the thesis, the framework and approach established in this thesis encourage and allow the research findings

to be challenged and updated, which is in the essence of assessing the heritage assemblages'' sustainability.

The second area of limitations arose from the limited geographical scope covered by this research. It should be acknowledged that even between the three neighbouring municipalities, there are significant differences in heritage management on the ground, varied cultural traditions, and community compositions. It should also be acknowledged that the coverage of the three municipalities is not homogeneous, with Yuncheng having the fewest PCHS being investigated due to the unforeseeable change made during the fieldwork. Therefore, these conditions may have had an impact on the thoroughness of the cross-synthesis of the three case studies and the general characterisation of the case study region. On the other hand, the three municipalities covered in this PhD research only constitute a small area in Shanxi Province, let alone the entire China. This thesis is in no way trying to paint a full picture of heritage management in the entire country. Further research in other geographical regions may produce contradictive results to the findings of this PhD research. Therefore, continuous updates and re-evaluation of the research outcomes beyond this PhD research are necessary to examine their validity.

The third area of limitations arose from the power dynamic and conflict of interests between the various participants and the perceived power dynamic between the participants and me as a researcher. For example, during some of the interviews with the caretakers, the local heritage department officers were also present.¹⁰⁶ On the one hand, their presence was beneficial in reassuring the caretakers that they were 'authorised' to be interviewed, and the officers sometimes acted as translators because the caretakers' accents or dialects can be hard to understand. On the other hand, it should be acknowledged that the caretakers might not have felt free to speak in front of the officers, or sometimes the officers' interpretation might not have been accurate. Such limitations can also occur in the interactions between the participants and me, where the local participants might have perceived me as in the position of power due to my education and professional background, and the fact that I was bearing the reference letter from the local government as an essential requirement for me to conduct my fieldwork.

The fourth area of limitations lies in the potential impact of the theoretical contribution of this thesis on practice and the efficiency for such translation to take place. While bridging the investigation of theories and empirical studies is one of the initiatives of this PhD research, it

¹⁰⁶ These occasions are documented in the interview summaries provided as supplementary materials for this thesis.

can be unpredictable how the theoretical framework and approach may be received by practitioners and other decision-makers. It is also possible that issues may arise during the introduction of such framework and approach to practice. Therefore, it is crucial that these theoretical tools are tested and negotiated beyond this PhD research for their impact to be realised.

11.3 The way forward

The theoretical framework, approach, and methods developed in this thesis are promising starting points for further development. As mentioned in Ch.2, the relational thinking that inspires the theoretical framework established in this thesis has much connection with systems thinking. Some research methods from this tradition, such as systems dynamics, have been adopted and applied in heritage research (Fouseki and Nicolau 2018). The relational M/M approach and the relevant methods can complement these existing methods. How they can be incorporated is a promising future research opportunity. Besides arguing that incorporating CR, Assemblage Theory, and ANT is beneficial for this PhD research, Ch.3 has also, to some extent, highlighted the possibility to integrate these traditions in broader research beyond the heritage and sustainability subject fields. It is equally possible that a new understanding of heritage and sustainability will emerge through dialectical discussions of these traditions. Furthermore, as emphasised throughout the thesis, a Critical Realist understanding of the multi-deterministic nature of reality requires interdisciplinary research methods and approaches. Despite acknowledging that interdisciplinarity is essential in the approach adopted in this PhD research, there is inevitably a limit to one's interdisciplinary knowledge as an individual researcher. It is much more often in other research and practice contexts where one would be working in a team rather than alone. Therefore, it is even more crucial and feasible to adopt an interdisciplinary approach in future research and practice that build upon this thesis to examine and rectify any drawback.

The versatility of the relational M/M approach suggests that the methodology and set of methods applied in the case studies of this PhD research have the potential to be developed and applied in much broader and more varied contexts. As discussed in Ch.10, the hypothetical applications on the other types of heritage, such as historic urban landscape and intangible heritage practice and traditions, are merely the starting point for further development. It is inherent in this approach that its application to other contexts and heritage types must not come before empirical testing and investigation. Furthermore, applying this approach on various scales, from policy and strategy making to project evaluation, requires further development of different sets of methods. Adaptations would be necessary if this approach

were to bring fundamental changes to the heritage system at any point. Finally, as mentioned in Ch.10, approaches constantly interact with practices and manifest in various ways. These interactions and manifestations are worth continuous documentation and examination.

The examination of sustainable heritage management in contemporary China here has by no means covered all the relevant issues. The specific focus on the case study region's early timber building sites is a targeted and feasible choice for the scope of this PhD research. As a diverse and complex country with a vast territory, heritage practices, heritage-making, and political-social conditions manifest in myriad ways. More importantly, they are constantly changing. As mentioned in Ch.5, the emergence of public platforms in the digital age has accelerated and diversified the public discourse on heritage. There is also an increasingly multidisciplinary contribution to heritage research and practices in the country. In the meantime, there is always a degree of unpredictability in the public policy and state-led effort. All these potential changes can present new premises and demands for future research. Indeed, just as argued in this thesis, the 'sustainability' of this PhD's research outcome relies on continuous causal powers and the possibility to create new associations by engaging with more actors from all walks of society and even the non-human ones.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Examples of academic journals or publications on heritage within different disciplines

| Disciplines | Subject field | Examples of academic journals or publications (publisher, year of first issue/publication) | Focus (as identified on the journals' websites) |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Interdisciplinary | | International Journal of Heritage Studies (Taylor & Francis, 1994) | "Interdisciplinary heritage research, covering museums, tourism, cultural studies, anthropology and memory studies" (IJSH 2020) |
| | | Journal of Heritage Management (SAGE, 2016) | "interdisciplinary research into the relevance and meaning of Heritage Management and addresses the challenge of applying traditional management theories and techniques to the field of heritage preservation" (JHM 2020) |
| | | Heritage (MDPI, 2018) | "knowledge, conservation and management of cultural and natural heritage by sensing technologies, novel methods, best practices and policies" (Heritage 2021) |
| Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (the subject fields listed here are, however, also interdisciplinary) | Architecture | Journal of Architectural Conservation (Taylor & Francis, 1995) | "discussion on aesthetics and philosophies; historical influences; project evaluation and control; repair techniques; materials; reuse of buildings; legal issues; inspection, recording and monitoring; management and interpretation; and historic parks and gardens." (JAC 2020) |
| | | International Journal of Architectural Heritage (Taylor & Francis, 2007) | "conservation, analysis, and restoration of architectural heritage" (IJAH 2020) |
| | Archaeology | Journal of Community Archaeology & Heritage (Taylor & Francis, 2014) | "excavation, management, stewardship or presentation of archaeological and heritage resources that include major elements of community partnership" (JCAH 2020) |
| | Sustainability (development) research | Special Issues of <i>Sustainability</i> (MDPI, 2013) (There are about 150 past and open special issues with 'heritage' in the keywords by January 2021) | These special issues explore broad topics that emerge between heritage and sustainability and sustainable development, ranging from theoretical discussions to technically oriented research outcomes. (Sustainability 2021) |
| | | Journal of Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development (Emerald, 2011) | "research devoted to the sustainable development of cultural heritage and to the positive contribution of cultural heritage management towards a sustainable environment. Articles are particularly welcome on immovable cultural heritage and its role in sustainable development, as well as the sustainable development of immovable cultural heritage. Immovable cultural heritage ranges from cultural landscapes to monuments." (JCHMSD 2020) |
| | Study of Religions | Seven special issues of <i>Religion</i> (MDPI, 2019) with 'heritage' in the keywords by January 2021 | These issues explore topics on the relationship between religions (faith) and heritage. (Religions 2021) |
| | Tourism Studies | Journal of Heritage Tourism (Taylor & Francis, 2006) | "critically examine all aspects of heritage tourism. Some of the topics to be explored within the context of heritage tourism will include colonial heritage, commodification, interpretation, urban renewal, religious tourism, genealogy, patriotism, nostalgia, folklore, power, funding, contested heritage, historic sites, identity, industrial heritage, marketing, conservation, ethnicity, education and indigenous heritage." (JHT 2021) |
| | Social sciences | Heritage and Society (Taylor & Francis, 2008) | "examine the current social roles of collective memory, historic preservation, cultural resource management, public interpretation, cultural preservation and revitalization, sites of conscience, diasporic heritage, education, legal/legislative developments, cultural heritage ethics, and central heritage concepts such as authenticity, significance, and value." (Heritage & Society 2018) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Physical Sciences and Engineering (these journals and publications are also multidisciplinary but have a focus on technology and physical sciences) | Heritage Science (Springer, 2013) | “scientific, mathematical and computational methods and analysis of objects, materials, artefacts and artworks of cultural and historical significance in the context of heritage and conservation studies” (Heritage Science 2020) |
| | Journal of Cultural Heritage (Elsevier, 2000) | “multidisciplinary journal of science and technology for studying problems concerning conservation and awareness of cultural heritage in a wide framework” (JCH 2020) |

Appendix 2 Literature review on the theme of ‘community’

Ch.2 has reviewed some of the current debates in heritage and sustainability studies. As these debates expand into the realm of social and cultural issues, the role of community becomes more and more prominent. It frequently appears in both practice-oriented documents and academic literature. However, just as the word ‘heritage’ and ‘sustainability (or SD)’, the term community has taken on multiple meanings that are as contestable as they are all-encompassing. This section will review the conception of community, which shares some ontological similarities with heritage and sustainability, as well as how the idea of community has evolved in operational and political terms regarding heritage and SD projects.

The focus on community in both heritage and sustainability studies has grown significantly over the last three decades (Chitty 2016), both separately within the subject fields and in the overlapping research area of the two. Previously, the concept of community had already been a topic for discussion in two subject fields that are closely related to heritage and sustainability research, archaeology and urban planning (including urban studies and architecture more broadly), for much longer (for early examples from the two subject fields, see Childe 1940; Arnstein 1969). While the former concerns primarily past communities and the discussion over what they are and how they are formed¹⁰⁷ (for examples, see Yaeger and Canuto 2000; Knapp 2003; Mac Sweeney 2011; Harris 2014), the latter focuses more on the operational side of community engagement and public participation in planning and space production process, as well as community building and development through these processes (for examples, see Katz et al. 1994; McNeely 1999; Imrie and Raco 2003; James 2015). Both aspects are relevant in the fields of heritage and sustainability and will be discussed in this sub-section¹⁰⁸.

Within the discussions of human communities, much effort has been put into the categorisation and definition of the term. Ferdinand Tönnies’ *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (Community

¹⁰⁷ There is also the growing research interest in the public engagement of archaeology which has led to the emergence of public archaeology or community archaeology as a research area. This focus in the field of archaeology, however, is closely related to those regarding public and community engagement in the subject field of heritage, and therefore will be discussed together below.

¹⁰⁸ Beyond the aforementioned subject fields, community has also gained political relevance in the recent decades in both popular culture and political discourse and has had an even longer history of development in academic disciplines such as social sciences and political sciences, from which the research in archaeology and urban planning draws on. Due to the space limit of this sub-section, it will be reviewed in brevity only. For a more detailed review of the term in a broader disciplinary scope, see Mac Sweeney (2011)

and Society)¹⁰⁹ (Tönnies 1955 (1887)) is considered the first systematic conceptualisation of the term, where he defines community as rural social groups with close ties in juxtaposition with the modern urban society (Mac Sweeney 2011). Though the sentiment of resistance against the dramatically changing social structure is understandable considering the historical context of Germany during the process of early modernity and industrialisation, this characterisation has been criticised for being romanticising the notion and the comparison overly dichotomous (Harris 2014). This romanticisation tends to homogenise community members and offers a simplified and static view of the varied and dynamic relationships that coexist within the communities. This static and pre-given structural view of community was reinforced in the sociology branch (for example, see Murdock 1965 (1949)), which emphasises social structure over individual agency and fails to capture the transformation process within the communities [(Knapp 2003), as cited in (Harris 2014)]. Moreover, as will be revealed by the broadening of community categories, Tönnies's concept of *Gemeinschaft* is limited to only one type of community, the natural and grounded one, which was further defined by Murdock as one that requires co-residence and in-person contact (Murdock 1965 (1949)). This type of community and characterisation of community relations still dominates most of the discourse about this term in heritage and sustainability studies and is often considered having the most immediate and intimate relation with heritage sites or the basic unit of social structure that can facilitate and be influenced by SD (for examples, see Watson and Waterton 2011; Poullos 2014; James 2015). The romanticisation, homogenisation, and naturalisation of communities still permeate heritage research and practices and have been the subject of critique by CHS scholars in the last decade (Waterton and Smith 2010).

Besides the natural community that requires physical co-habitation of its members, most scholars from heritage and sustainability studies have recognised other categories of community relations, including ones that are tied together by intangible common beliefs, identities, or values such as religious community and the LGBTQ community. It is recognised by Anderson's definition of 'imagined community' based on his research on nationalism (Anderson 2016 (1983)) and has been taken on by researchers from archaeology (for example, see Isbell 2000). Though not always explicitly referring to Anderson's work, discussions on community in heritage research are closely tied with identity and values, especially regarding heritage of faith (for example, see Poullos 2014). However, as Waterton and Smith (2010) point out, the notion of community identity still does not escape the risk of homogenisation and

¹⁰⁹ The book is translated into English by Charles P. Loomis in 1955 with the English title *Community and Associations*. However, the translation of 'community and (civil) society' is perhaps more appropriate and widely accepted.

naturalisation of power and can lead to misrecognition of the community's representation in decision-making about heritage. They note that communities are entrenched with diverse interests, emotions, and energies, which can be both motivating and disruptive. The political implication of a romanticised and homogenised notion of past communities is also noted by Harris (2014), although this implication is much more pressing in heritage and sustainability studies that concern present and future communities.

Waterton and Smith (2010) advocate for a performative and processual characterisation of community to counter the homogenisation and romanticisation of the term, borrowing ideas from sociologists such as Burkett (2001) and Neal and Walters (2008), echoing the emergent property of Wenger (1999)'s notion of 'communities of practice'. These authors suggest that communities emerge through practices. It can be understood in archaeological terms where historical communities were defined and understood through common practices such as pottery making ((Yaeger 2000; Sassaman and Rudolphi 2001), cited in (Harris 2014)). It also implies the significance of activism that positions the community at the centre of practice. This activist perspective is valuable in architectural, heritage, urban planning, and sustainable development projects, where community consultation or involvement could become a box-ticking activities without active engagement and stewardship from community members (Perkin 2010). This emergent property also entails that community members need not have one set role in one particular community. The idea that communities emerge and evolve through continuous practices is relevant to how heritage and sustainability have come to be understood, as discussed previously in this chapter. Indeed, from an ontological perspective, these terms share some striking similarities in how they are constantly emerging and becoming. These similarities become even more apparent with the following theorisation of community from the discipline of archaeology.

Most of the discussions about conceptualising community, whichever form it takes, are based on the idea that it is only made of humans. This idea is being challenged, especially in the discipline of archaeology, and it presents a parallel and close connection with the post-discursive and anti-anthropocentric turn of heritage studies, as discussed in Sec.2.2. Researchers who adopt a relational and anti-anthropocentric view have suggested that communities need not only consist of humans. They suggest that to understand how communities (past and present) are formed, it is important to also include the non-humans that have participated in the making and becoming of community relations (Harris 2014; Fowler and Harris 2015). This line of thinking adopts the same theoretical framework that guides the post-discursive (post-humanist) turn of heritage studies and the relational thinking in sustainability studies, as can be recalled in Secs.2.2 and 2.4. However, one may start to wonder whether 'community' and 'heritage' would become one and the same if we were to

adopt this symmetric view in heritage practices. Nevertheless, as will be further explored in this thesis, what is indeed useful with this line of thinking and can connect the concepts of heritage, community and sustainability in practice is the emphasis on the dynamic and emergent properties of relations. Even without including non-humans in the 'community' when discussing a heritage project, it is still important to consider how the relations within this community are constantly and actively involved in the interactions between humans and non-humans. As Crooke (2010) suggests, in some cases, community and heritage can be so intertwined that they define and sustain each other.

As mentioned at the beginning of this sub-section, the discussions of community and heritage can be divided into two aspects, how community and heritage define each other and community engagement in heritage-related activities. Both aspects are similar to the discussions within community archaeology; only that community heritage might include heritage entities that are not necessarily considered archaeology.

In Heritage Studies (and CHS), this aspect leads to discussions in the second aspect about democratising how heritage (archaeology) and its value should be defined and interpreted not only (or in some cases, not at all) by heritage 'experts' but by the communities that share a strong connection with the sites or practices (Crooke 2010). This perspective can be applied widely but is primarily born out of the discussions regarding indigenous heritage, intangible practices and expressions, and museum collections (for examples, see Hemming and Rigney 2010; Prangnell et al. 2010). It can become less applicable to the tangible aspects of heritage¹¹⁰ that require technical and specialised care. The democratisation of the 'authority' to decide on heritage makes it possible to bring a diverse range of communities into this 'process as heritage'. On the other hand, it also contributes to a lack of recognition in some evaluation processes that do require specialised expertise (Muñoz Viñas 2002; Wells 2016), which usually concerns the aspect of heritage that remains "stubbornly tangible" (Walter 2016, p. 54).

Recognising the possibly contentious relationships within the communities, as discussed earlier, can help understand how community engagement in both interpreting and managing heritage can be problematic and complex, too. However, while the dynamics, fluidity, and diversity of communities and their relationships with heritage are duly emphasised by Waterton and Smith (2010), works in the CHS paradigm often position community as on the opposite side of heritage professionals. Heritage 'experts', seen as the authority of knowledge, are often

¹¹⁰ Note that this does not equate to 'tangible heritage', as the so-called tangible heritage also has intangible and tangible aspects, as discussed in Sec.2.3.

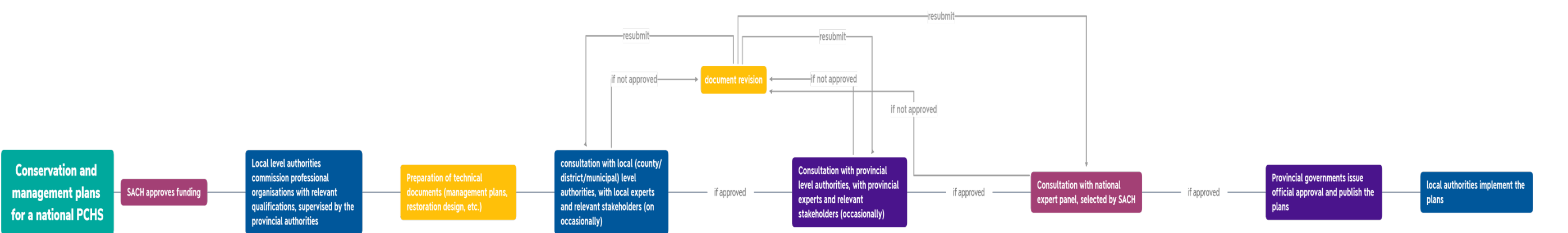
rendered as unable to change the power structure with the communities (Perkin 2010). In problematising the notions of community, heritage and community engagement, engagement activities that are initiated by political authorities, experts or professionals are often characterised as top-down processes, and many of the works suggest that in these processes, the community- “however well-meaning the experts are- is marginalised” (Watson and Waterton 2011, p. 4).

On the other hand, the term community is still used in a simplistic and generalised way in works from practitioners from international heritage advisory bodies such as ICOMOS and ICCROM (for examples, see Jokilehto 2016; Wijesuriya et al. 2016). In some cases, heritage communities are passively characterised as needing to be ‘managed’, ‘educated’ or ‘recreated’(Jokilehto 2016). It demonstrates that notions of community and heritage and their connections are taken for granted in many heritage activities, and although with the best intentions, the assumed stewardship entitled by some heritage professionals over communities reinforces the top-down impressions of the engagement activities.

Walter (2016), acknowledging the lack of communication between academics who tend to question heritage experts’ involvement and conservation professionals (the experts in question), points out that many conservation professionals are indeed open to conversations and involvement with a wider public. He uses the concept of narrative as a textual metaphor to propose an alternative perspective that encompasses the diverse discourses of values and the possibilities of changes through encouraging inclusive public participation in historic building conservation. In this narrative approach, experts’ opinions are not to be dismissed but nor will they be the only authority. Communities (both individuals and collectives) have the possibility to tell their stories and negotiate change in the historic environment while being informed and enriched by experts’ knowledge and expertise.

This section has reviewed the conceptualisation of community and what implications it might have in heritage practices. As seen in the discussion, the two aspects are intertwined. As will be further explored in this thesis, an active, diverse, and dynamic characterisation of community relations is crucial in understanding the role of communities in the making and re-making of heritage, as well as how SD can be facilitated within and for the communities. It implores the significance of following the practices and complex patterns of becoming within communities, which are not necessarily limited to the physical proximity and in-person interactions, and where heritage can be an integrated component.

Appendix 3 Indicative mapping of operational workflow with implicit steps necessitated by Requirements for Conservation Planning of the National PCHS (2018 amendment) (SACH 2018)



Appendix 4 Categories of the national PCHS under the Southern Project based on their post-restoration situations

Category A – Accessible

Most of the sites that are regularly accessible to the public have management units set up within them, with 5-20 staff employed under the administrative system of cultural heritage, depending on the sites' size and location. Those with a religious function are mostly not registered as official religious venues with SARA. Therefore, no resident monk may stay on site¹¹¹. However, they are considered religious spaces by visitors, even if the purpose of their visits might vary. There are usually statues of the subjects of worship installed in these temples, which could be either historic or contemporary. For most visitors, statues are the primary indication that these sites are active spaces of worship. A proportion of these sites are also tourist attractions or museums, run as non-profit organisations. For these sites, the income from tourism is required to be handed over to the government. Their maintenance expenses are then distributed through the centralised financial system (Director of management unit of CZ Temple 3 2018). Private tour companies manage a minority of them. These companies are responsible for funding the daily maintenance and minor restorations of the sites, and in return, they are given the right to use the sites (Site managers of JC Temple 23 2018).

Category B – Partially Accessible

This category covers a variety of situations. The sites in this category are not open during most of the year. However, if these sites are still considered religious spaces, worshippers, mainly from the village or the nearby villages, can access the temples during certain times of the year for religious activities. Many temples also host annual temple fairs, which happen at various times throughout the year, depending on the temples' local traditions and the deities worshipped. Like the ones in Category A, they are not managed primarily as religious sites, meaning they are not officially registered as religious venues but as cultural heritage sites. According to all the interviews with on-site managers, caretakers, and local-level cultural heritage administrations, keeping the physical health and safety of the historic places is their utmost priority. The religious activities are somehow implicitly tolerated, given that this priority is guaranteed. However, the extent to which they are tolerated varies depending on the local heritage authorities' attitudes. Such tolerance levels may also change over time.

¹¹¹ Among the 58 sites visited during fieldworks, only two have residence monks/nuns, one of which is run as a tourist attraction as well as a temple. The tourism company that runs the site provides free accommodation for the monks and the monks receive alms from worshippers for their daily expenses.

Two situations encountered during the fieldwork may shed some light on this complex and changing situation. According to the interview with one of the local level officials, there was once a plan to invite a monk to reside in a very remote temple to keep it ‘alive’ as a Buddhist temple. However, the invited monk eventually decided to leave because the temple’s location was too secluded, and the number of worshippers was dwindling. The interviewed official also added that this was only possible a few years ago as the ‘religious policy’ then was relatively relaxed, but it would not be possible now since the implementation of ‘religious policy’ has become stricter (Local official 3 2018).¹¹² A similar situation happened in another temple dedicated to a folk deity, where, as seen during a visit a few years ago, there were some statues of deities, commissioned by the villagers upon the completion of its restoration project in 2013, installed in the temple but with their faces masked by red clothes, meaning that they had not been inaugurated. By 2018, according to the on-site manager of the temple, those statues are still not inaugurated because “it is not allowed” now (Caretaker of JC Temple 12 2018).

Category C – Non-Accessible

Sites in this category are usually ones where only a single historic building remains in the temple complex, or it does not host any religious activity. The reasons for that can vary. According to the interviews with the caretakers of these sites, it is either because the locals no longer consider this place a space of worship, the sites are simply too remote, or that it is considered to be “too dangerous to open them” as national PCHS (for examples, see Caretaker of CZ Temple 15 2018; Caretaker of JC Temple 2 2018; Caretaker of JC Temple 9 2018; Caretaker of JC Temple 19 2018). However, as national PCHS, these sites are not entirely inaccessible. The caretakers usually open the doors on-demand to visitors who travel there to visit these historic buildings. In a rare case, the temple is inaccessible to the public or the villagers, and there is no statue left in the temple. However, the caretaker, being a Buddhist believer, places a red cloth in the middle of the main hall as a marker for his subject of worship and sets up his own worshipping space (Caretaker of CZ Temple 15 2018).

Even though the historic buildings are closed, sometimes the villagers still host religious or ceremonial activities around them because the sites of the temples are considered symbolic places for public gatherings and ceremonies. There was a funeral taking place in the public square right next to the only historic building left of a temple upon the visit during the 2018

¹¹² ‘Religious policy’ is used with apostrophe here because what the local official referred to is not exactly the written policy of the state regarding religious practices and religious venues, which has not changed significantly, but more about how such policy is implemented on a local level, which changes over time and is very often unpredictable.

fieldwork. Even though the building was not open, villagers were sitting around it to watch the performance and the procession of the funeral (). According to them, this place had always been a space for gathering. They also thought it would be beneficial to welcome tourists to their village to see the historic building. Although when asked what the tourists should see when they come to visit this empty old building, the villagers laughed and said, “That is for you experts to figure out. You know better than us!” (Caretaker and community member of CZ Temple 8 2018)

Appendix 5 Examples of the challenges for the private sector participation in the case study region

One such case is JC Temple 23, a Buddhist temple run by a private enterprise as a tourist attraction and a religious venue with Buddhist monks residing in the temple. A large complex of historic buildings dating from the 9th century to the early 20th century survives in the temple, making it a significant tourist attraction in the region. There is a highway going right by the temple from which the two pagodas of the temple are prominently visible (Figure 54 & Figure 55). A private tourism company has been managing the site since 2000. According to the site managers, the initial investment was through supporting a major restoration project of the temple. The village next to the temple also invested in constructing some tourism infrastructures in the tourist service area outside the historic temple. The agreement was that the investors could keep the site's profit, while for most of the other sites run by a non-profit management unit, the revenue from tourism would have to be submitted to central finance. Since it is a national PCHS, the site also enjoys state funding support for projects such as installing security infrastructures and the renovation of the gardens in and around the complex. The company is responsible for the security and the expenses of the daily maintenance of the site. According to the company manager, the maintenance costs about 70,000 – 100,000 RMB (~8000-11,000 GBP) a year with approximately 30,000 RMB subsidy from the administration (Site managers of JC Temple 23 2018). Besides the company, there are two other parties involved in the daily management of the site – the village nearby and the Buddhist monks staying in the temple. The worshippers from the village and visitors donate towards the monks' living expenses to gain merit. The company, holding the right to use the site, accommodates the Buddhist monks for free. The temple also opens for free for three days during the annual temple fair in the fourth lunar calendar month, organised by the village and the temple.

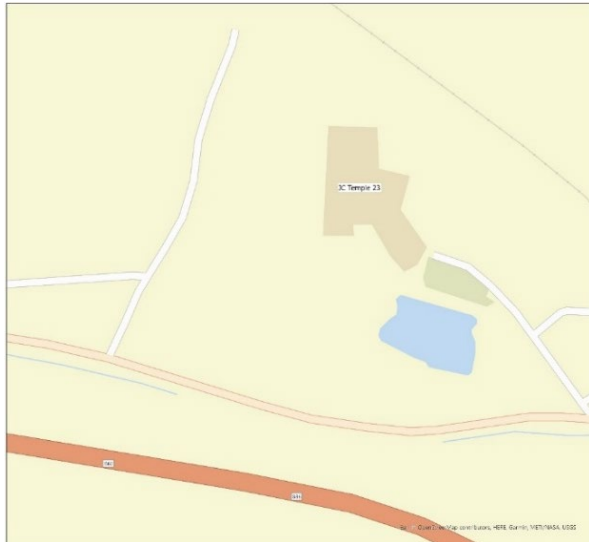


Figure 54 (left) Location of JC Temple 23 in proximity to the highway (S86) to the south, base map: (OpenStreetMap 2021)



Figure 55 The two pagodas of JC Temple 23, March 2018 (Tam 2018ah)

The initial investment received a good return. According to the site managers, the highest flow of customers reached 12,000 people per day during the national holidays in 2014, and the highest annual visitor number was 50,000-60,000 people in 2013. However, the struggle has become prominent in recent years as the tourist flow has slowed down, and the businesses which provide services for tourists, such as restaurants and shops around the temple complex, could not sustain themselves anymore. According to the managers, the company had been trying hard to boost the market by promoting the site to a broader public and integrating the site in the regional tourism development plan by cooperating with other major attractions in the area (Site managers of JC Temple 23 2018). The challenge of this site is telling because it enjoys many advantages compared to other sites that should contribute significantly to the operation's success. However, its sustainable management is still an economic challenge and depends mainly on the tourism market, implying that running these sites as tourist attractions cannot necessarily guarantee to sustain the connection between the sites and their management bodies in the long term. Despite the fact that China's domestic tourism has stayed relatively unaffected by the Covid-19 pandemic, the hard-hit tourism industry worldwide is a further piece of evidence of how fragile it is for a heritage site to rely solely on tourism for its economic sustainability.

Another type of private sector management presents itself as a type of philanthropic action from the private enterprise. As mentioned in Section 6.2, Shanxi province has a prominent mining industry, and successful mining companies sometimes show their interests in supporting the management and maintenance of historic temples as a way of gaining merit.

Even though they often seek the opportunity for financial return for the initial investment, some continue to contribute even when the profitable opportunities dwindle. One such case is JC Temple 17, a Buddhist temple in a precarious state before the 2011 restoration and was one of the first sites where the Southern Project was implemented. After the restoration, a private company for tourism development was set up by a mine owner in the area with the hope of developing it into a tourist attraction, accompanying a county development plan to turn the surrounding area into a natural park. However, the plan for the natural park fell through eventually, and the tourism company's plan also went with it. According to the site manager, the company, financially supported by the mining business behind, is still investing in the daily maintenance of the temple, allowing visitors and local worshippers to use and visit the temple (Site manager of JC Temple 17 2018). There seems to be no way of turning the situation around into a self-sustaining business unless some other external opportunities come around. Despite being aware that they are investing money for no return, the company does not seem to have the urgency to gain profit. It is, however, not to suggest that such 'free lunch' can be expected on a broad scale, but to show that on the one hand, there is a 'willingness to pay' from the private sector for historic sites, especially for historic temples, even when it is not profitable financially. On the other hand, many factors can steer a development plan of the site despite the good intention and vision from the initiators.

Appendix 6 An example of controversies in the case study region revolving around an internet influencer

One of the most notable incidents regarding the case study region and its early timber buildings started from an online social media platform but had a considerable impact on the ground, even influencing the local authority's attitudes and decision-making. An enthusiast using the online alias '*Aita Chuanqi* (lit. love pagoda legend)' and a potential pseudo-name Tang Dahua, who claimed to be passionate about historic buildings, paid frequent visits and made numerous online posts about his journey to the case study region since 2011 (Aita Chuanqi 2011,2012; Xiangrikui 2012). While Tang had been on various online platforms previously, the popularisation of Weibo (the Chinese equivalent to Twitter) around that time expanded his influence and audience. His commentaries became increasingly critical of the authority's neglect of historic buildings in the region and often contradicted the scientific dating conclusion of these buildings. He would post buildings in very dilapidated states, including ones that might have been on the schedule for restoration under the Southern Project. He would also post diagnosis of decay or his assessment of the historic buildings' value, which

was deemed misleading and incorrect by many academics and heritage professionals (Li 2012; Liu 2012b; Li 2013a).

However, controversies around his online commentaries and actions started to polarise when he started to recruit paid participants to go on tours with him to the case region, supposedly to 'document' and raise awareness for these structures. Besides the previous criticism towards his spread of misinformation about the buildings' architectural features or some unfair criticism towards the local heritage departments, serious concerns started to rise about the exposure of these sites to the wider public while the security of these sites was not guaranteed (Li 2012; Xiangrikui 2012). Because of its high concentration of early timber buildings, the case study region is also an area where thefts and looting are most severe. Before the Southern Project, thefts frequently occurred in the case study region, and several caretakers had described their personal encounters with thieves during the interviews for this PhD research (Caretaker of CZ Temple 6 2018; Caretaker of JC Temple 2 2018; Caretaker of JC Temple 15 2018). Many PCHS, even the national ones, did not have sufficient security before the Southern Project. It was feared by both other enthusiasts and the local authorities that the exposure of these sites online and through these publicised tours would increase the possibility of thefts (Xiangrikui 2012). Conflicts and even antagonising emotions were prevalent in the online discussions and among some of the local officials (Cui 2012). On the other hand, upon the fieldwork of this PhD research, a few years after the controversy, local officials expressed that despite feeling targeted unfairly at the time, the public attention did keep them on their feet and bring their attention to some of the most neglected sites (Director of management unit of CZ Temple 3 2018).

Appendix 7 Further description of the caretakers' profile and opinions

As the 'key holders', the caretakers are responsible for letting the worshippers use the temples for religious practices, given that the local authority allows it. Based on the interviews, they would have to respond according to the shifting positions of the authority in implementing the 'religious policy'. They nevertheless have their own various opinions on whether there should be religious practices in these historic buildings. 23 out of the 46 caretakers interviewed consider it beneficial to continue or revive the religious functions of these heritage sites and that statues are essential for them to be called temples. They think it is acceptable to allow worshippers from around the villages to conduct religious activities in or around the temples, given that they ensure the safety of the temples. Some admit that the worshipping population is shrinking and consider it suitable to introduce cultural or tourism functions (for examples,

see Caretaker of CZ Temple 5 2018; Caretaker of YC Temple 10 2018; Caretakers of CZ Temple 10 2018).

The caretakers' personal connections with these sites are diverse and representative of the local communities' connections to some extent. According to the fieldwork conducted for this PhD research, some caretakers have personal connections with the religious history of the sites, such as being the grandchild of the last Taoist priests of the temple and born in the temple (Caretaker of JC Temple 2 2018). Some forged their connections with the sites as students studying at these sites when they were used as schools (Caretaker and community management unit officer in Dongyi Village 2018; Caretaker of JC Temple 19 2018; Exhibition initiator of Longwang Temple 2018). Some others are incredibly passionate about the sites. They educate themselves on architectural history or international standards of heritage conservation, such as the Venice Charter (Caretaker of CZ Temple 9 2018). Some act as tour guides, encourage their children to carry on as caretakers and even advocate for the sites' protection at the local administrations (Caretaker of JC Temple 18 2018; Caretakers of CZ Temple 10 2018; Director of management unit of CZ Temple 3 2018). There are also a few who are considered outcasts of the community. For these people, having a role as caretakers at the sites have provided them refuge, both physically and emotionally (see Ch.7).

Regardless of their emotional attachment, when asked about the most prominent challenges regarding their role, 14 caretakers claimed that it lies in their meagre wage as caretakers, and 23 of them said that they still need to farm to make ends meet. The financial income for their role as caretakers is not considered wage but subsidy, and therefore, it is not protected by the minimum wage standard. Only a minimal number of them who are officially employed as employees in the public sector are entitled to a salary above the minimum wage. Most of the caretakers receive an annual subsidy of 3600RMB (roughly 400GBP), and this payment only just started in 2009. Despite such low wages, they are expected to treat it as a full-time job. Some are even required to live on-site (for examples, see Caretaker of JC Temple 2 2018; Caretaker of JC Temple 11 2018; Caretaker of JC Temple 12 2018; Caretakers of CZ Temple 12 2018).

Appendix 8 Introduction of Jiaodi Baiyu Temple

A brief history of the temple

The temple is located on a raised natural platform at the tail of a mountain ridge (Figure 56) about 500 metres west of Jiaodi Village. The raised platform is reinforced with a stone retaining wall at the temple complex's foundation (Figure 57). A one-lane concrete road connects the

village to a slope leading up to the temple complex's gate. Between the village and the temple is an open terraced agricultural field (Figure 58). The temple complex is separated into two parts. The southern part is a semi-open courtyard enclosed by a short wall on the east side, and a slight slope lines the west side. The extant temple gate is also a stage facing inwards, called *wulou* 舞楼 (dance tower). The temple entrance is through a low passage underneath the stage platform where a few historic stone steles are stored. The stage tower is flanked by two two-storey side towers (*erlou*), and to its east side stands a *kanlou* (watch tower) connected to the east side tower through a corridor¹¹³ The watch tower is for the spectators to watch the performance on the stage. Opposite the *wulou* is Sanxian Hall (Hall of Three Deities), the gate to the main temple complex. Between the stage tower and the Sanxian Hall is a large courtyard. The north half of the Sanxian Hall is another stage (*xitai*)¹¹⁴ facing Yuhuang Hall (Hall of the Jade Emperor) – the temple's central hall. The main complex of the temple has two courtyards, separated by Yuhuang Hall. The courtyards are surrounded by two rows of side halls (*langfang*). The back hall, called Sanshenfo Hall (Hall of Three Buddhas), is flanked by two 'ear' halls (*erfang*). (Figure 59)



Figure 56 Baiyu Temple, as seen in May 2013 (Tam 2013g).



Figure 57 Section of the retaining wall under the south courtyard, as seen in December 2013

¹¹³ Based on the historic inscriptions found in the temple and the terrain of the temple ground, it is reasonable to believe that there is only one *kanlou* on the east side but none on the west side where a long strip of slope is.

¹¹⁴ This stage was also called *wulou* (武楼) according to the description on another stone stele in the temple from 1471 but with a different character *wu* (武) which means 'martial art'. The difference of the two names, however, is possibly unremarkable, as they were either used in a homophonic manner or it was because the performance, which is usually traditional opera, can be interpreted as dance or performance with a lot of actions. For clarification, the south stage will be called *wulou* and the inner stage behind Sanxian Hall will be called *xitai* (theatre stage) from hereafter.



Figure 58 Jiaodi Village (far end) and agricultural field (front) seen from Baiyu Temple in April 2013 (Tam 2013h).



Figure 59 Plan of Baiyu Temple and photos of main buildings, as seen in April 2013 (CHCC 2015) (translated by Lui Tam).

Baiyu Temple was designated a municipal PCHS in 1997, a provincial PCHS in 2004, and a national PCHS in 2006. It is unclear when the temple was first founded, and no mention of the temple can be found in the historical chronicles of Lingchuan (CHCC 2015). Therefore, the various historic stone steles on site are the most direct and credible historical records of the temple. A set of two stone steles from 1212 (Figure 60) states that there was already a *Donghaishen Ci* (Temple of the East Sea Deity)¹¹⁵ just south of the current location before, but it was beyond repair and deemed too small. It was then decided to move and reconstruct the temple in the current location using donations from its community¹¹⁶. The reconstruction took place between 1211-1212 (Guo 1212). This historical record, in combination with the regional building archaeological research, suggests that Yuhuang Hall has retained the main structure from the late Jin Dynasty (1115-1234CE)¹¹⁷ with a few components replaced in later restorations and repairs (Xu 2003; Wang and Xu 2009; CHCC 2015) (Figure 61). The relocation of the temple in 1212 is likely when the initial construction of today's Yuhuang Hall took place. Several other steles and inscriptions in the temple provide information for the subsequent repairs, alterations, retrofitting, or new constructions within the temple.



Figure 60 The pair of steles from 1212, recording Donghaishen Ci's reconstruction, as seen in March 2018 (Tam 2018u)



Figure 61 Jin Dynasty components of Yuhuang Hall, with painting from a much later date, as seen in April 2013 (Tam 2013i).

¹¹⁵ The name of the temple at the time indicates that it was dedicated to the God of the East Sea. The worshipping of this deity can be traced back to as early as 61 BCE. Most known temples dedicated to this deity are along the east coast of China (Wang and Li 2008). It is, therefore, rather peculiar to find a *Donghaishen Ci* so far inland in the Jurchen territory. The 1212 steles state that the worshipping of this deity for rain praying purposes was common across the Jurchen territory.

¹¹⁶ The 1212 stele specifies that the community who initiated the reconstruction was Xiajiao Village, a historic name of Jiaodi Village. The stele also states that the village chief was able to invite 'famous craftsmen' to carry out the reconstruction, indicating the community's commitment.

¹¹⁷ The typological analysis of the building's features suggests that the main structure is from 1209-1213.

A stele from 1471 records a historic restoration of the temple complex. The inscription on the stele mentions the temple name as *Yuhuang Xinggong* (the Travelling Palace of the Jade Emperor), which possibly relates to the Jade Emperor being worshipped in the central hall at the time. It also provides information for the historic names of the other buildings in the main temple complex, which indicate their functions or the deities worshipped in the temple. Besides calling the inner stage *wulou* (武楼), it also mentions a *sanmen* (三门), which is a homophonic name for *shanmen* (山门), a common name for the temple gate. It is reasonable to believe that this *sanmen* was indeed where the Sanxian Hall is today, which suggests that the temple complex in 1471 only started from this point and the building at the site of today's Sanxian Hall¹¹⁸ was the former temple gate (Monk Lu'an 1471). This hypothesis is supported by another stele from 1923, which records the new constructions of the south *wulou* (dance tower) and the east *kanlou* (watch tower), confirming that the south courtyard was a later extension (Yang 1923). This major restoration of the entire temple complex and the extension of the south courtyard in 1923 suggests an increasing need to accommodate larger crowds that would have participated in the temple fairs or other festivities and congregated in the south courtyard to watch the performance.

An inscription on the stone retaining wall on the east side records the construction of a west wall and the east retaining wall from 1624-1626. Another extension is suggested by an inscription on the bottom side of the along-ridge tie-beam (*shunjichuan*) beneath the central ridge purlin (*jitian*) of Sanshenfo Hall, which records the hall and its 'ear halls' construction in 1644. The inscription mentions the name Sanshenfo Hall which suggests that the temple was also used to worship Buddhist images. The mix of various religions within the temple is very much present today and will be elaborated further in this section. Sanshenfo Hall and Yuhuang Hall each has four dolomite columns on their front facades. It is unclear when the stone columns were installed, but it is reasonable to believe that they were installed at the same time. Therefore, their installation should be no earlier than in 1644. The inscription on the 1923 stele mentions the white dolomite columns (described as 'jade columns') of Yuhuang Hall and suggests that *Baiyu Gong* (Palace of White Jade) was named after them (Yang 1923). Although it is unclear when the name Baiyu Temple was first used¹¹⁹, its emergence would not have been earlier than the installation of the dolomite columns.

¹¹⁸ According to the extant structures, the Sanxian Hall as we see it today is a construction from later than Ming Dynasty. There is no credible historical record regarding any major restoration or reconstruction during the Qing Dynasty.

¹¹⁹ The earliest mention is on an 1870 stele.

There are a few stone post holes on the ground in front of Yuhuang Hall and Sanshenfo Hall. According to the villagers, these holes were used to set up temporary structures in front of the halls during the temple fair, possibly tents for the performance dedicated to the deities inside the halls. There is so far no evidence indicating what these tents might look like or are still being set up nowadays.

The temple's recent history shares some similarities with many other sites within the case study region. The temple was used as a primary school from 1948 to the 1970s. Traces from this time could still be seen before the restoration under the Southern Project (CHCC 2015). In the 1980s, the temple's religious function was resumed under the religious policy outlined in Chapter 5. A stele from 1987 records an extension of the 1923 stage (Xu 1987). Another stele from 1996 records the renewal of the temple statues in 1995, and a 1997 stele records an overall building repair (n.d. 1996, 1997). These recent actions from the local community¹²⁰ before its 'heritagisation' suggest that after the temple resumed its religious function, there was robust willingness from the community to revitalise the festivities and maintain the temple. As unlikely as it might have seemed, the stage's concrete extension from 1987 has proved to play a crucial role in the temple's fate before and after the restoration. The temple's conservation management plan, the restoration under the Southern Project, and the post-restoration situation as seen in 2018 will be elaborated in the following few sections. Despite its religious function, the temple has not been under the jurisdiction of the Religious Bureau since the 1980s but instead, under the cultural departments in the county.¹²¹

The brief history outlined above not only provides information for the constructions and interventions of the temple since 1212 but also suggests how the worshipping activities and the connections between the temple and its worshipping community have evolved. The manifestation of these connections will be further established below.

The gods in the temple

As alluded to above, the temple's various historic names suggest that there have been shifts and a mix of religions or faiths associated with the temple throughout history. Evidence from the historic stone steles and inscriptions in the temple has shown that the temple was associated with the *Donghaishen* (God of the East Sea), a deity from ancient Chinese mythology, the *Yuhuang* (Jade Emperor), a central figure in Taoism, and Buddha, as

¹²⁰ The community here needs further defining as it does not only refer to the villagers of Jiaodi Village. The composition of the temple's community will be further elaborated in the next section.

¹²¹ The Cultural Department of Lingchuan County was the temple's management body in 1981, which was shifted to the Lingchuan County Museum after it was founded in 1984 (CHCC 2015).

suggested by the Sanshenfo Hall. Most of the other deities in the temple have folk religion origins. According to the 1471 stele, the two side halls were used to worship *Erxian* (two female deities), *Longwang* (the Dragon King), *Canguan* (God of the Silkworm), and *Shenggu* (the Sacred Maid). It is worth noting that the three female deities (*Erxian* and *Shenggu*) are legendary historic figures elevated to deities. Their worshipping is characteristic to the case region, especially *Erxian*, as evidenced by the numerous temples dedicated to them in the area, such as Xixi *Erxian* Temple, Zhongping *Erxian* Temple, Zhenze *Erxian* Temple, Xiaohuiling *Erxian* Temple, Nanshentou *Erxian* Temple, Xilimen *Erxian* Temple, and *Erxian* Temple in Dongnan Village, just to name a few.

The on-site observations present a vivid scene of the deities being worshipped in the temple in contemporary times. They speak very much to the practical nature of local worshipping steeped in everyday life or vice versa. As in Baiyu Temple, the Sanxian Hall, as the former temple gate, is dedicated to *Sanxian* (three deities), which refer to three female Taoist deities. The one in the centre of the three, *Bixia Yuanjun* (The Primordial Sovereign of the Coloured Clouds of Dawn), is believed to oversee fertility (Ye 2007). In the side halls, the *Niuwang* (the Cow Lord), the *Mawang* (the Horse Lord), the *Nainai* (or *Songzi Nainai*, the Maiden Who Brings Children), and the *Luojie* (the Silk Maid) are worshipped, further suggesting the worshippers' wishes are related to agricultural and handicraft production and fertility. The *Yuhuang* is still worshipped in the Yuhuang Hall as the central figure, along with several other typical Taoist deities. However, at the back wall of the Yuhuang Hall, a small shrine was set up to worship Buddha. Before the Southern Project restoration, the shrine, with the character *fo* (Buddha) written on the wall, was set up on a convex square of the hall's base platform, indicating that there might have been an above-ground structure, though it was unclear what type of structure it might have been. The Buddha is the central figure in the Sanshenfo Hall. Alongside Buddha are the *Taishang Laojun* (The Supreme Venerable Sovereign, the manifestation of *Laozi*, the founder of Taoism) and Confucius. They are a typical combination of the three religions being worshipped within one temple.

The natural and socio-cultural setting

Jiaodi Village is in one of the most mountainous areas of Lingchuan County. As shown in Figure 62, the village and the temple are in a river valley between two mountain ranges. The south side is Huangwei Mountain, which belongs to the South Taihang Mountain range and is one of the scenic attractions of Lingchuan County. The temple is on a natural mount which is an extension of Huangwei Mountain (CHCC 2015). The river that created this valley is now dry, but the riverbed is still visible and has become agricultural fields, connecting to the floodplain between Jiaodi Village and the temple. A path leading to the river from Jiaodi

Village's historic village gate is still being used to connect to an artificial reservoir. Baiyu Temple is visible from multiple angles all around due to its high position.

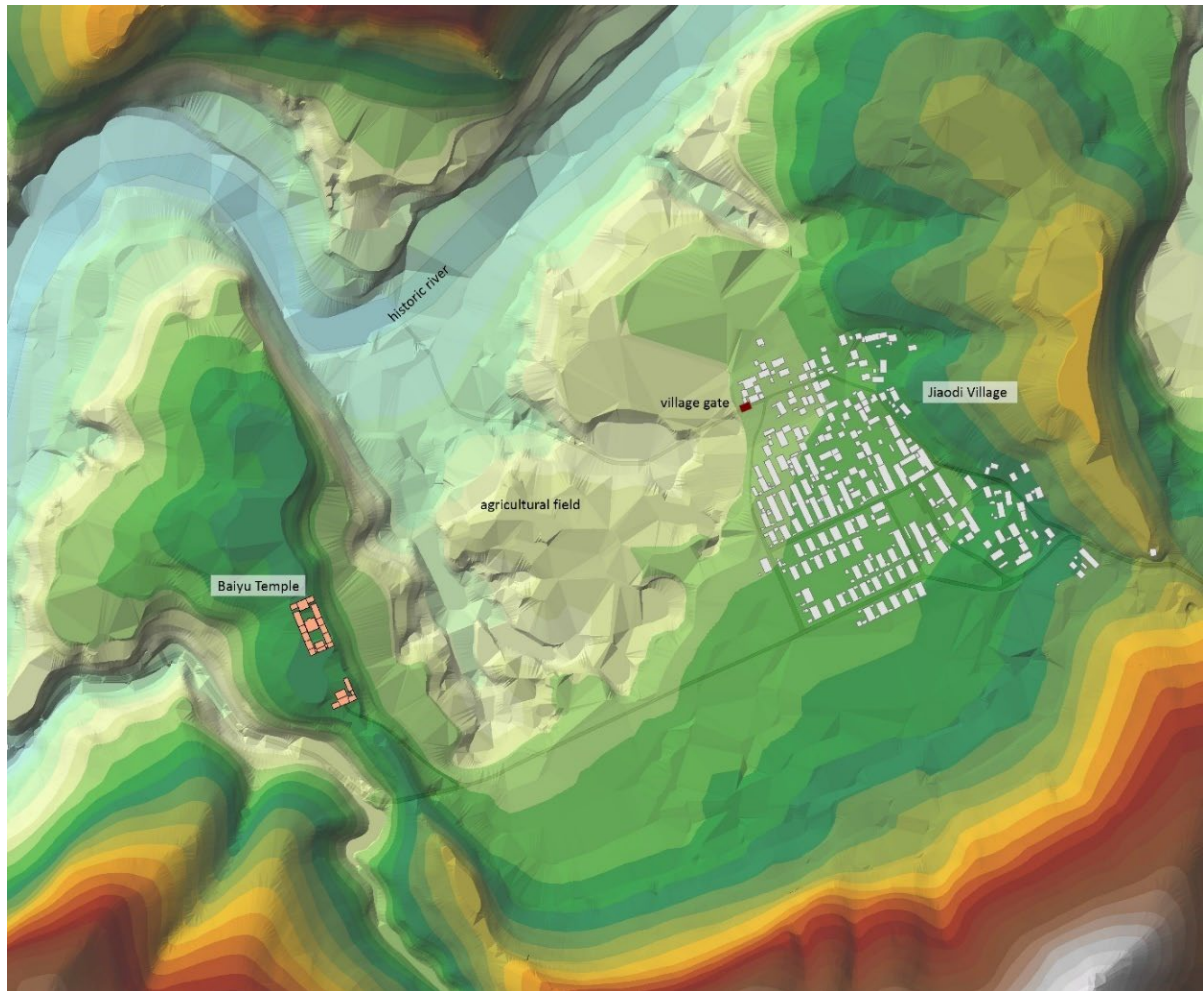


Figure 62 Topographical map indicating the terrain surrounding Baiyu Temple (CHCC 2015) (adapted and translated by Lui Tam).

Jiaodi Village is associated with the temple based on the inscriptions on the stone steles. The village, whose name varied slightly in historical times, was always mentioned with the temple, even though another village to the west of the temple, Geta Village, is indeed closer to it based on physical distance. No other village was mentioned as a donor village before 1471, but it is reasonable to believe that the temple's influence was much more expansive as the 1212 and 1471 steles' texts were drafted by people outside of the village, and the 1471 stele was carved by a stonemason from another county. They also record that people from areas beyond Jiaodi Village funded the reconstruction and restoration of the temple. The 1212 stone steles record the craftsmen's names and origins, such as the carpenter, the tile mason, the brick builders, and the mural and statue artists, who were from various villages. The temple's wider community is supported by records from all the subsequent stone steles, which list in detail

the contributions from each village within the local commune of *Jiaoyili* to the various extensions and repairs of the temple. The number of contributing villages was up to 27 in 1923.

Besides the information regarding the temple's construction history, a stele from 1870 records the historic connection between the temple, the natural environment, and the local community. It paints a vivid picture of the temple's local management system at the time. The stele records that there was once a pine forest on a slope to the southeast of Baiyu Temple. These trees belonged to the *Jiaoyili* commune and were planted specifically to repair and maintain the temple. There was a clear boundary for the forest and strict rules preventing any community member or outsider from stealing the timber. The 1870 stele was set up to be a reminder because the forest was gradually forgotten by many, and the old boundary steles were in decay.

Recounting the temple's construction history and that of its historical community above illustrates the historical narratives and assemblage of the temple and shows that it was never a stand-alone monument. It was sustained and transformed with its evolving community and the natural environment around it. As theorised with the concept of morphostasis in Chapter 3, the connections that uphold this assemblage require the input of causal powers to be sustained. One of such inputs can be well demonstrated by the setting up of the 1870 stele. These connections, however, are also always subject to potential obsolescence, which is further elaborated on in Chapter 7.

Jiaodi Village

Besides being associated with Baiyu Temple, Jiaodi Village holds more traces that illustrate the temple's closest local community's historical religious profile. As shown in Figure 63, the village first developed in the northeast part in a loose spatial pattern and was extended to the southwest. The village's recent development shows a much more rigid spatial pattern, while the symbolic public functions, such as the village pond and the village committee, remain within the oldest part of the village. It was already mentioned that a historic village gate on the west side of the village faces directly towards Baiyu Temple. The arch gateway acts like a frame surrounding Baiyu Temple's silhouette when one walks out of the village through it (Figure 64). Judging from the spatial relationships between the village gate, Baiyu Temple and the historic river, it is reasonable to believe that the village gate is placed strategically to enable close access to the river and create a direct visual connection with the temple.



Figure 63 Functions and construction dates of extant buildings of Jiaodi Village (CHCC 2015) (adapted and translated by Lui Tam).



Figure 64 Baiyu Temple seen through the village gate, as seen in April 2013 (Tam 2013b)

Above the gateway is a small shrine dedicated to Marshall Guanyu, a deity widely worshipped in the case region. Other religious buildings in the village confirm the village community's religious activities in historical times. Two other temples consisting of historic buildings from

the late Qing Dynasty or early Republic of China era survive in the village, though they could have been founded earlier. The temple near the village pond is called *Qingxiu Gong* (Palace of Clarity and Beauty), suggesting that it was a Taoist temple, while the one near the village gate is called *Sanjiao Tang* (Hall of the Three Religions), dedicated to Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. Another small shrine dedicated to *Guanyin* (Avalokiteśvara) can be seen in the village. The mix of faiths demonstrated by the village temples is coherent with the situation in Baiyu Temple. Although the village's temples are now empty and void of worshippers, the mix of faith is still very much alive in the community.

Appendix 9 Introduction of Guangrenwang Temple's history, background and primary interventions of the post-restoration make-over

The temple is situated on an earth mound northeast of the village, about seven kilometres north of the town of Ruicheng. It is in the northwest corner of the ruins of the ancient Wei city (ca. 403-225BC). About 800 metres southeast of Guangrenwang Temple is the relocated Yuan Dynasty (1366-1468AD) Yongle Taoist Temple.¹²² Guangrenwang Temple was designated a provincial PCHS (Protected Cultural Heritage Site) in 1965 and a national PCHS in 2001. There are only two historic buildings left on the temple ground, and there was no trace as it was found in 1958, which could indicate its historical layout (Jiu 1959). However, another article in 1984 describes that there were two side halls on the temple ground. It is unclear when these were built and when they disappeared (Chai 1999b). The north-facing stage is located on the south end of the mound, opposite the south-facing main hall. The surviving stage was constructed in Qing Dynasty while the main hall is believed to have retained a Tang timber structure, despite its roof tiles, windows, doors, and walls have been replaced in the centuries to come (ibid.). On the lower ground, in front of the temple was a pond, corresponding with the Dragon Spring which is identified in historical records as having a close relationship with the temple. The pond has dried out for decades due to the decreasing level of the underground water, but its shape is still visible. Across from the fields north of the Wei City's site, Zhongtiao Mountain forms the backdrop of the temple, another crucial element of its natural setting (Li 2015; Qi 2020).

¹²² The discovery of Guangrenwang Temple is believed to be the result of the relocation of Yongle Temple from 1958-1964. The relocation was a major heritage project considered to be one of the most significant achievements at the beginning of the PRC. Guangrenwang Temple, being very close to the new site of Yongle Temple, was 're-discovered' by those who participated in the relocation project in 1958 (Jia 2017).

The earliest known academic literature hypothesising that the main hall of the temple was a possible Tang structure was published in 1959 (Jiu 1959). It was the first time shown in written records that the temple attracted the interest of architectural historians in the country. The article, published in the *Journal of Cultural Relics*, provides a very brief description of the setting, the layout, the architectural features of the main hall, as well as the conservation state and use at the time. It also summarises the inscriptions on the two Tang Dynasty stone steles in the temple. Along with its architectural features, the two steles are considered significant evidence for the dating of the historic main hall's structure. Jiu asserted that despite having experienced several alterations after its initial construction, the architectural structure of the main hall still retained the Tang Dynasty style (ibid. p.43). This view was subsequently endorsed by several other architectural historians since then and became a consensus (Chai 1999c; Fu 2001; He 2014). The verdict is essential to reading the 'heritagisation' of the temple. Upon this verdict, the temple has gained its fame among architectural historians and heritage professionals as one of the four Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE) timber structures left in the country.¹²³

¹²³ With many existing contested opinions, the most common understanding is that there are about 4.5 Tang timber structures left in the country, which are the main hall of Nanchan Temple, the east main hall of Foguang Temple, the main hall of Tiantai Nunnery and the main hall of Guangrenwang Temple (all in Shanxi Province), as well as the ground floor of the bell tower of Kaiyuan Temple in Hebei Province. While the first two are recognised as Tang structures without much dispute (although the first one had been significantly restored in 1978), there is no definite evidence for the construction dates of the surviving main halls of Tiantai Nunnery and Guangrenwang Temple. During the Southern Project, new evidence was found in Tiantai Nunnery which suggested that its main hall was constructed during the Five Dynasties instead (Shuai and He 2017). It makes it more desirable for the state and population that the main hall of Guangrenwang Temple retains its Tang structure status.

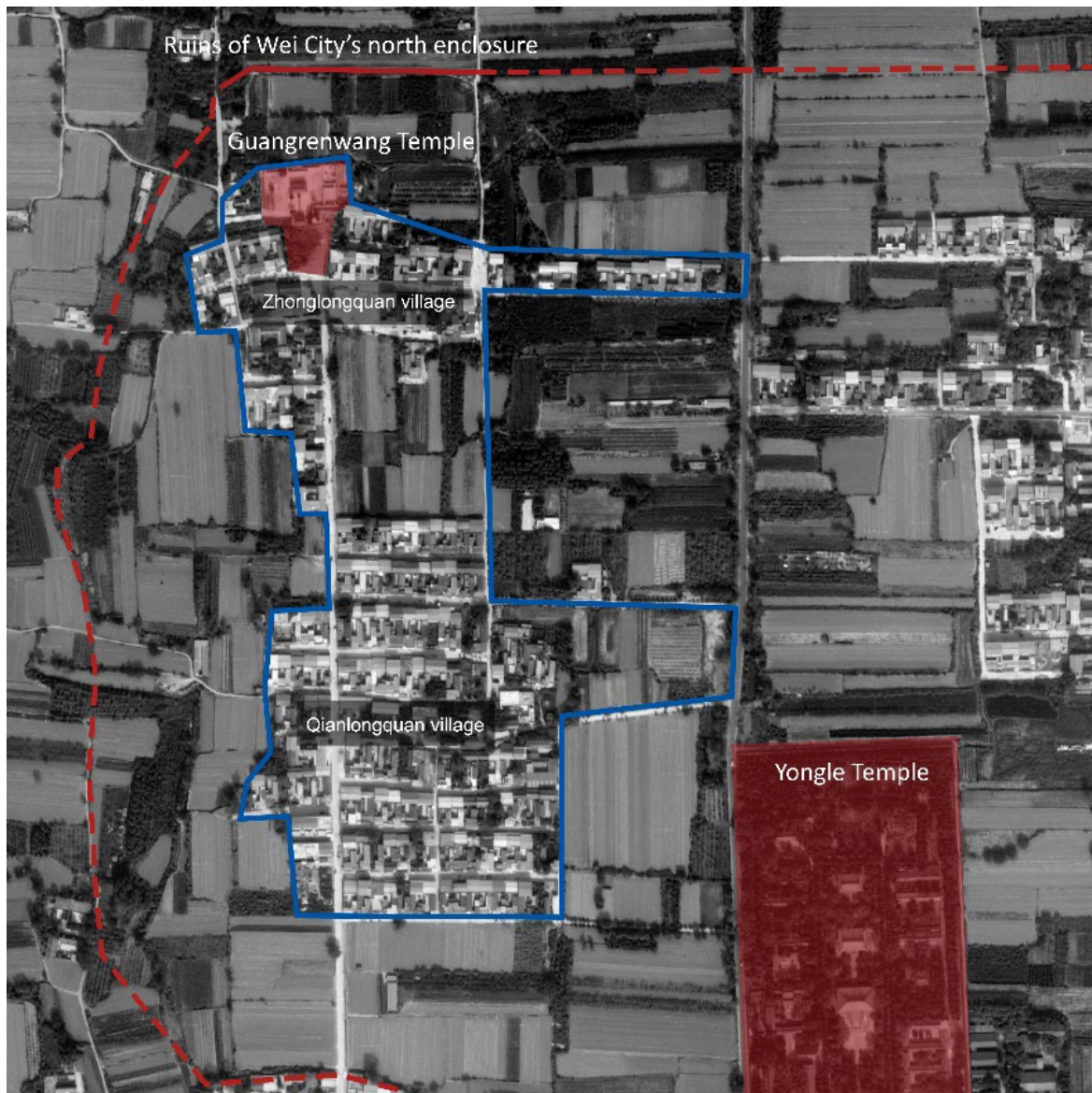


Figure 65 Location of Guangrenwang Temple in relation to Zhonglongquan village and Qianlongquan village, Yongle Temple and the ancient Wei City, base map: (Google Maps 2021)

Four historic steles survive in the temple, two from the Tang Dynasty and two from the Qing Dynasty. The one from 808CE records the water system in the area, which is the earliest record of the Dragon Spring (*longquan*) and the initial construction of the temple. The 808CE inscription is titled '*Guangrenwang Longquan Ji*', suggesting that Guangrenwang was already the subject of worship at the time. It also records that the temple was built next to the spring because it was believed to be where the deity resides who can avoid draught. Another stele from 832CE mentions the ancient Wei City and that there was a spring in the northwest corner of the city, which can be confirmed by the archaeology (Figure 65). It records that the temple built in 808 was a result of drought and commissioned by the former governor and that the temple buildings were already in a dilapidated state. Another drought season between 831-832CE prompted the reconstruction of the temple by the villagers commissioned by

Ruicheng's governor. The 832 inscription records that rain came pouring down upon this reconstruction and exclaimed the significance to pay tribute to nature. The surviving main hall is believed to be the result of this reconstruction. Both 9th-century steles mention that the temple was surrounded by mountains, and the area was crisscrossed with creeks. Indeed, Zhonglongquan (Middle Dragon Spring) village is only one of the three villages named after the Dragon Spring¹²⁴. These historic records confirmed the close relationship between the temple, the local community, and the natural environment.

The two Qing Dynasty steles record two restorations of the temple. The 1758 one describes that the temple was restored in 1745, which can be confirmed by the inscription seen inside the main hall. The stele describes that the temple was still well maintained, but the stage (*yuelou*) needed restoration by 1758. The village chiefs commissioned the repair of the stage and the east wall of the main hall, funded by several surrounding communities. The inscription also mentions that five communes (*she*) discussed and agreed that anyone who stored branches in the temple should be fined, suggesting the scope of the historic community who managed the temple. Besides the stage and the main hall, the inscription records a repair of another building and two corner gates. While it is unclear where the building was, it provided information on the historic access to the temple, possibly through two corner gates on both sides of the stage. Another stele from 1812 records that the temple needed another repair by 1806. It mentions the restoration in 1745 but not the one in 1758. The inscription describes that the restoration of the stage started in 1806 and was completed by 1812. The buildings were re-decorated, and the temple walls were repaired in 1811. The 1812 inscription also mentions that the repair was partly funded by selling a few trees in the temple, suggesting that trees were not only planted to provide timber for the repair but also used as a commodity to support the temple's maintenance. Another restoration in 1906 is recorded by an inscription written on a board underneath the ridge purlin of the main hall. A Qing Dynasty local chronography of Ruicheng mentions the Dragon Spring and records that it was connected to the Yellow River, which runs south of Ruicheng. In the same entry, it mentions the temple as *Wulong Ci* (Wulong Temple). A village named *Houlongquan* village was also recorded in the chronography (Mo 1764).

¹²⁴ The other two villages are Qianlongquan (front Dragon Spring) village and Houlongquan (back Dragon Spring) village.

After it was 're-discovered' in 1958, a restoration was carried out in the same year by Shanxi Cultural Relics Management Committee and Ruicheng County People's Committee.¹²⁵ It has never been assessed how much percentage of the structure has been 'altered' during this restoration. The portion of materials from the Tang Dynasty is a 'Ship of Theseus' type of question whose answer no one seems to be willing to find out. There has been some criticism among architectural historians stating that many of the components have been replaced without a basis of sound historical evidence (Chai 1999d, p. 323). According to Chai, the 'careless' intervention during the 1958 restoration was not guided by the traditional philosophy of maintenance but rather resulted from a lack of in-depth research, understanding of China's architectural history, funding and expertise at the time. He considered that it would be advisable to 'restore the structure to follow the Tang style' in the future (ibid.), which suggests that his criticism towards the 1958 restoration focused more on the incorrect form of the components used for replacement rather than a concern that the historical fabric was being substantially replaced. After this restoration, SACH also issued criticism regarding the intrusive interventions taken during the project (Jia 2017, p. 89). Besides the criticism against the 'inaccuracy' of the new components' form, these interventions also have implications for further research. For example, in 2011, during a survey for an investigation of timber materials used in historic buildings in the case study region, the surveyor realised that the Tang Dynasty components available for C14 examination were limited (Peng 2011, p. 60). It demonstrates that despite the debate on how much materiality matters regarding the 'authenticity' of historic buildings, the information carried by the historic fabric is not retrievable once the material is lost.

The 1959 article states that the statue of the dragon king was missing at the time. No information has been found regarding when the temple lost its historic statues and other temple buildings. Jiu also recorded that after the 1958 restoration, the temple was used as a 'recreational venue for the people' and was one of the scenic attractions (Jiu 1959, p. 44). It suggests that the temple's religious status was, to some extent, considered a thing of the past, and the desire to use it for tourism was already present in the 1950s. Guangrenwang Temple was used as a primary school during the 'socialist transformation' movement' in the 1960s-1970s. The primary school moved away in 1981, and the temple was never registered as an official religious venue under the new administrative system for religious affairs (Jia 2017;

¹²⁵ On one of the beams inside of the main hall, an inscription reads "*Yi Jiu Wu Ba Nian Shi Yi Yue Shi Jiu Ri Shan Xi Sheng Wen Wu Guan Li Wei Yuan Hui Rui Cheng Xian Ren Min Wei Yuan Hui Chong Xiu Guang Ren Miao Ji Nian*" (To commemorate the restoration of Guangren Temple on November 19th 1958 by Shanxi Cultural Relics Management Committee and Ruicheng County People's Committee).

SARA 2020). Nevertheless, upon a visit to the temple in 2011, statues were present in the main hall. Even though the temple might not have the same popularity as a space of worship as it used to, there are still religious activities in the temple after its transformations and heritagisation.

Despite the proximity to the main attraction, the Yongle Temple, Guangrenwang Temple rarely received visitors throughout the years since the 1950s. The temple, especially its surroundings, slowly fell into a dilapidated state after the primary school moved away (Jia 2017). Before the latest restoration, the temple was only enclosed with a short brick wall, and the entrance was through a small picket fence that could be easily breached. There have been caretakers at the temple since 1993. However, their presence was still far from enough to safeguard the temple site. In December 2012, one of the two Tang steles was stolen, which, fortunately, was soon recovered (ibid.). Such was the situation of the temple when Ding, the senior vice president of *Vanke*, one of the largest residential real estate developers in the country, allegedly went on a historical architectural tour in Shanxi and encountered Guangrenwang Temple in 2012. Subsequently, *Vanke* contacted the local authority of Ruicheng County, intending to get involved in the restoration of the temple, which was due to start in 2013. However, the local authorities in Shanxi, as well as SACH, were cautious and sceptical at the time when a private corporation, especially a real estate developer, who is often perceived to be the ‘enemy’ of historic buildings, attempts to get involved in a heritage project. Their request was refused eventually with the reasoning that the restoration project of a national PCHS must be carried out by organisations who have first-class qualifications in heritage conservation (Liang 2015; NPC of PRC 2017).

The Project’s interventions on the site

As shown in Figure 66, a small public square (1) (see respective numbers for guidance in Figure 82) is created in front of the entrance to the temple, next to the site of the dry Dragon Spring pond (2). The pond (Figure 67) was not refilled with water but only planted with grass which was said to be taken from the Yellow River’s banks by the project team (Wang 2016a). Three existing earthen caves (3), which are one of the common forms of vernacular architecture in the region and were dug into the earth mound where the temple is located, are transformed into small exhibiting and resting spaces (Figure 68). The entrance to the temple was redesigned, different from both the entrances before the Project and from even earlier. The access from before the Project was an earth slope stretching from the east side of the pond up to the southeast corner of the temple ground (Figure 69). According to the temple’s caretaker interviewed during this PhD research, the earlier entrance, at least as he remembered from the 1950s, was a pathway that went across the middle of the Dragon Spring

pond. It split into two ascending paths, which lead to the southwest and southeast corners of the temple ground (Caretaker of YC Temple 4 2018). The new entrance (Figure 70) takes visitors through a winding ascent (4) (Figure 71) to the ticket office, which is connected to a new office, a small community library and a living space for the caretakers (5). Visitors are then led to an enclosed introduction space (6). A full-scale section of the main hall is engraved on the ground, and a timeline on the wall shows where the construction date of the main hall is located in history relative to other well-known historic timber buildings in China (Figure 72). On the opposite wall is a plaque with information about the Project and donors and participants' names (Figure 73).



Figure 66 Public Square created by the Project in front of Guangrenwang Temple, March 2018 (Tam 2018z)



Figure 67 (left) The Dragon Spring Pond (*longquan chi*), March 2018 (Tam 2018e).



Figure 68 (right) Renovated earthen caves by the entrance of Guangrenwang Temple, March 2018 (Tam 2018aa)



Figure 69 (left) Entrance to the temple via a slope before the Project, March 2011 (Tam 2011a)



Figure 70 (right) New entrance with flights of steps towards the ticket office at the southeast corner of the museum March 2018 (Tam 2018s).

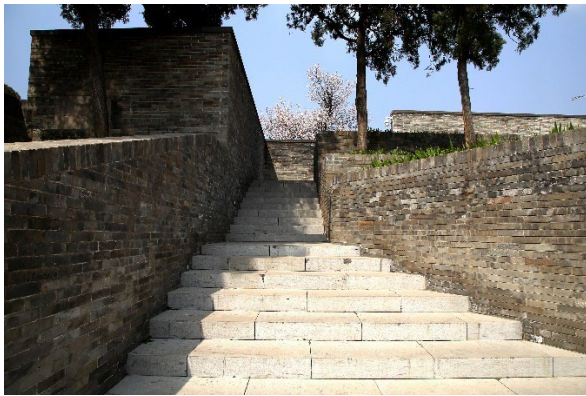


Figure 71 (left) The winding ascent to the ticket office, March 2018 (Tam 2018al).



Figure 72 (right) Introduction space with a section of the main hall and timeline display, March 2018 (Tam 2018k)



Figure 73 (left) Plaque with names of donors and participants of the Project, March 2018 (Tam 2018x)

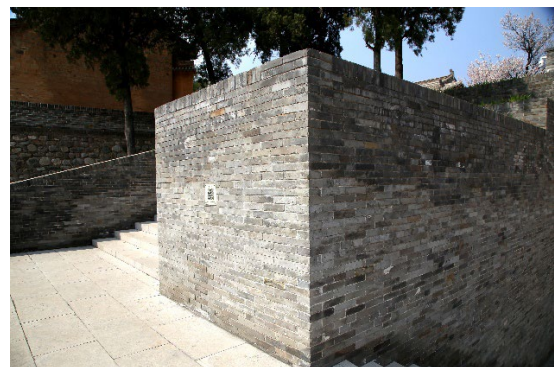


Figure 74 (right) Limited view of the main hall's roof from the entrance staircase, March 2018 (Tam 2018o)

From the entrance to this point of the introduction space, the temple's main hall is blocked from the visitors' sight by the enclosing walls. Only a few occasional glimpses of the roof are possible, and only if one pays attention (Figure 74 & Figure 75). This way of approach is in contrast with the previous entrances, which led the visitors to the main temple ground via the side of the stage (Figure 76). The visitors are then directed to exit the introduction space and turn into a narrow ascending corridor (7). The walls that are flanking both sides of the corridor block out the other area of the temple and create a restricted frame pointing towards the side façade of the main hall, creating an image of the historic building's elevation (Figure 77). While walking through the corridor, the visitors' attention is also directed towards the next exhibition space (8) through a wall opening (Figure 78). The visitors are encouraged to turn towards this space after the corridor, where enlarged models of bracket-sets of the surviving Tang structures in the country are displayed, with information and architectural drawings of these buildings exhibited on some permanently installed panels (Figure 79). This second exhibition space is connected to another long corridor (9) at the back of the temple. It takes the visitors to a raised platform (10) on the central axis of the temple, where an information panel explains the ruins of the Wei City and the Zhongtiao Mountain as a significant element of the historic setting for both the ancient city and the historic temple (Figure 80). The visitors are then encouraged to continue along the edge of the temple ground towards yet another corridor on the west side (11), where some brief information of other early timber structures in the region is displayed (Figure 81). Next to this corridor is a resting space (12). Except for a few openings, the museum space is separated from the main temple ground (13) by walls. The circulation is guided along the site's edge rather than towards the centre, where the historic buildings stand. The historic steles are relocated and embedded into the wall behind the main hall (14). New statues of the deities in the main hall were also commissioned during the Project by *Vanke* (Jia 2017).

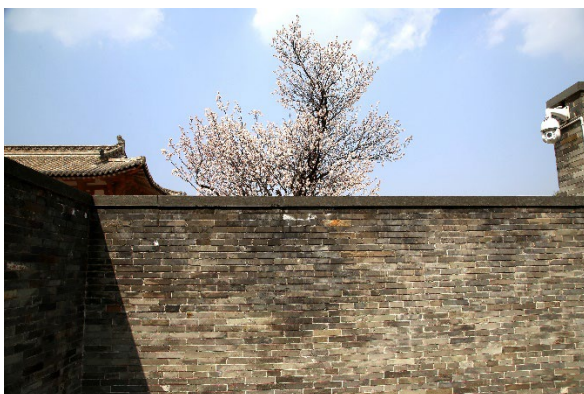


Figure 75 (left) Limited view of the main hall's roof from the entrance staircase (Tam 2018p).



Figure 76 (right) View of the main hall at the top of the entrance slope, as seen in March 2011 (Tam 2011d)

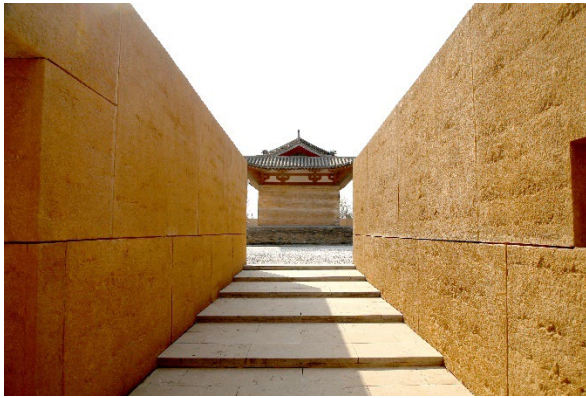


Figure 77 (left) Elevation of the main hall from the corridor towards the temple ground. (Tam 2018f)



Figure 78 (right) View of the *dougong* model display through the wall opening of the corridor. (Tam 2018ai)



Figure 79 Exhibition space with *dougong* models and information panels (Tam 2018g)



Figure 80 Information panel about the natural setting of Guangrenwang Temple with Zhongtiao Mountain in view. (Tam 2018i)



Figure 81 Corridor with information panels about early timber structures in Shanxi Province (Tam 2018c)

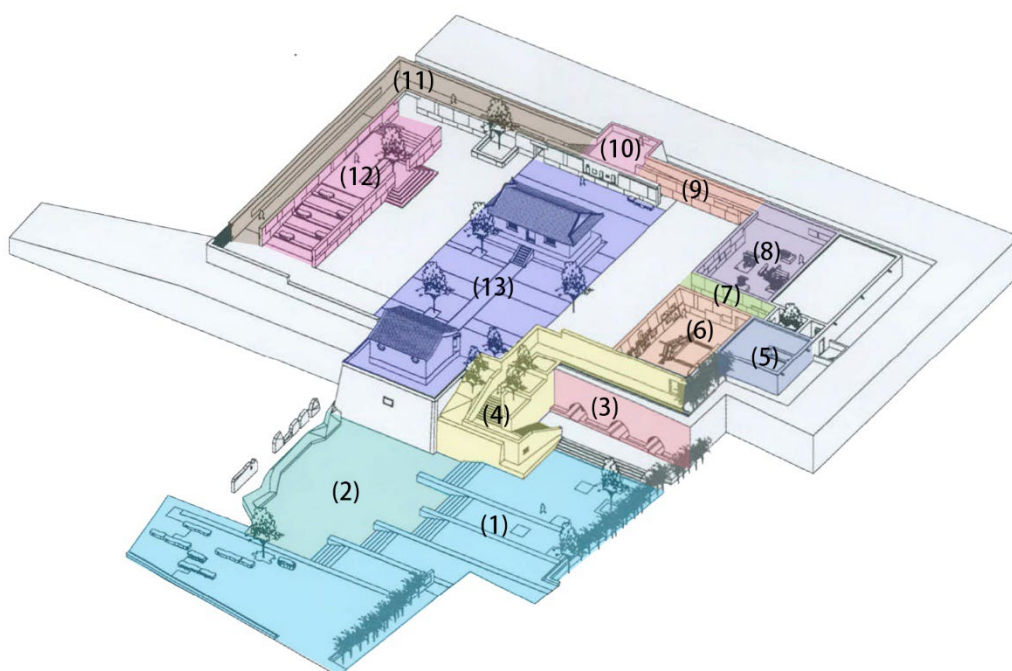


Figure 82 Axonometric view of Guangrenwang Temple after the Project (annotated by Lui Tam). Base image: (Wang 2016a, p. 114)

Appendix 10 Table of identified actors

| Groups | | Actors |
|------------------|--|---|
| Human actors | funder and initiator | <i>Vanke</i> (the corporation and the individuals involved) |
| | architects | URBANUS (The leading architect Wang Hui and the design team) |
| | heritage support team | CHCC (the leading heritage expert Lv Zhou and the team of heritage professionals) |
| | other academic and professional commentators | Architects, architectural academics, and heritage professionals |
| | The public sector | SACH, provincial and local heritage departments of Shanxi Province (institutions and individual officials) |
| | Local community | Caretakes of the temple, village chiefs, and other community members |
| | visitors | Local and other visitors |
| | Media | Journalists from newspapers, magazines, and online blogs |
| | General public | Public members who have commented on the Project, mostly through online platforms |
| Non-human actors | Guangrenwang Temple | The ‘Tang Dynasty’ main hall, the stage, the Dragon Pond, and the temple ground |
| | Immediate surroundings | The village square, the open-air museum space, the fields next to the temple |
| | Outer settings | The Wei City archaeological site, the Zhongtiao Mountain, Yongle Temple, Zhonglongquan Village and Ruicheng town. |

Appendix 11 Actor's opinions and the most debated issues

| Issues | Actors | Opinions | Reference |
|---|-------------------|---|--------------------------|
| The Dragon Spring | Caretakers | “我们给他们（万科和设计师）提了不少意见，有一项最终没被采纳，我觉着挺遗憾。”张大爷像主人一样跟笔者说道，“庙南边原来有一片龙泉，唐朝的时候就是‘因泉建庙’，没有泉，就没有庙。庙修得很好，却只是壳子，没有魂。哪怕弄个循环水，有个泉的样子呢？” | (AC Editorial 2016) |
| Sustainable management | Local authorities | “从当地管理者角度上说，万科搞这么一件事，就像送给乡下穷亲戚一个大冰箱，不仅要买更多的食材放进去把它使用起来还更耗电费，实际上带来了负担” | (AC Editorial 2016) |
| | LO9 | “Now there's a willingness to find a management body for Guangrenwang Temple, and to restore the Dragon Spring. They want to do some ‘ <i>nongjiale</i> ’ (rural hospitality). It'll be managed as a tourism attraction but supervised by the heritage department. We asked for approval last National Day, the county mayor office already agreed. There are 4 people now at the management unit of Guangrenwang Temple, but the county mayor's office hasn't finally decided yet. It is not so easy to ‘adopt’ these historic buildings. If it's not well done then the site can be damaged. It is mainly about developing tourism in the surrounding, in the village. Vanke just handed over after the make-over. They don't have the willingness to really run it. They are coming here again this year, just an activity, to plant some trees. It's not a big thing. We connected with them last week. “ | Interview with LO9, 2018 |
| | Vanke (initiator) | “丁长峰听到这一说法，哭笑不得的同时换位想之又无不道理。” | (AC Editorial 2016) |
| | Architect | ““设计中考虑更多的是如何在当下语境中活化文物。一件国宝的可持续生存，不是一座偏僻的乡村所能孤立地支撑的，需要用旅游业来支撑，需要特殊的文物表现方式（presentation）。” | (Wang 2016a) |
| | HP2 | “In this case, it is then more important to recreate the cultural connection between the villagers and the temples. There are many ways to recreate this connection. That's why I supported the project of Wulong Temple in the first place. Because I think that could be a way to recreate such a connection. And to some extent, it has achieved this purpose. Of course, it is quite important to monitor the situation in the long term to examine its effect. We need to observe the changes. But at least at that time, there was a lot of attention, and people had a sense of belonging. So I think it's quite good. This is a successful case, and there is a lot of positive feedback from the local authorities. What we did is to make something that the community no longer wants into something that they think is pretty good and want to pay attention to it. But of course, how they will pay attention to it, how to maintain it, how to create cultural life in it, these are questions for a long-term process. But I think it's a good beginning.” | Interview with HP2, 2018 |
| Exhibition theme, curation and interpretation | Media | “展览制作精良：精致高雅的展板上，古建筑的形式与建造，被知识阶层理性地加以抽象和分析…….游线、内容、制作，处处透露着精英文化阶层的审美趣味与历史想象。” | (AC Editorial 2016) |
| | Architect | “一种意见认为五龙庙更值得叙事的内容是民俗性的祈雨文化，这比起侧重于古建筑知识也有更广的阅读群。另一种意见认为整治后的五龙庙空间序列更像个博物馆，而弱化了传统的宗教礼仪序列。…….鉴于现实中资金和资源的局限，这个小测试否定了我们团队有条件，有能力来操作祈雨文化这个主题，迫使我们选取可操作的建筑主题。…….放大这个价值点，把庙的主题引导到古建筑史，用这种“知识情境”替代其固有的“民俗情境”会引发质疑。回答这种质疑需要区分考古学者“解码者”的身份与建筑师的“编码者”身份的区别。” | (Wang 2016a) |

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| | Heritage professionals | “展示本身具有多重可能性。“龙计划”对五龙庙的环境整治为原本缺少展陈空间的五龙庙提供了展示相关历史文化的可能性。展陈的内容反映了人们对于对象相关价值的认识。五龙庙作为 1960 年山西省级文物保护单位和 2001 年全国重点文物保护单位，其宗教和民间祭祀活动早已不存。对五龙庙的历史和相关传说也存在许多需要进一步研究和确认的内容。在这种情况下，根据全国重点文物保护单位关于五龙庙的介绍中强调的五龙庙在建筑历史研究方面的价值来确定展陈内容，是比较恰当和稳妥的选择。” | (Lyu 2016b) |
| | | ““龙计划”对五龙庙环境整治提供了可能的展示空间和环境，为各种可能的展陈创造了条件，可以根据五龙庙研究的情况，不断丰富和更新展示内容，使作为全国重点文物保护单位的五龙庙持续发挥积极的社会效益。” | |
| | | “首先，保证内容的真实、完整与准确性可以说是阐释工作的前提条件。……使用混凝土与钢板进行木斗拱的仿制与其材料属性也不相符……给人一种“不真实“的感觉。材料的替换或许给摹品带来戏剧性的展示效果，但同样也容易引发普通游客的错觉。” | (Guo 2017) |
| | | “其次，五龙庙及山西部分经典寺庙建筑被浓缩为一系列的简图展示于东西两侧的庭院。……同时，正殿的等比剖面图也被镌刻在地面之上（图 6）。与置身于大殿中的观察方式不同，人们以一种从未有过的观看方式在解读五龙庙建筑。这些图示成为阐释五龙庙历史价值的元语言，也正是这些从主殿抽象而来的图像剥夺了本体的话语。通过这些符号（元语言）的不断复制与增殖，现实本体被抽象符号逐渐替代。观者的目光也转而聚集于异质的摹品与抽象的图示之上，随着阐释方式的增加与规模的增大对于建筑本体的弱化也就愈加明显。这些图示的出现转移了人们对于近在咫尺的原件的观察，也削弱了五龙庙大殿作为一个整体给人带来的感受。” | |
| | | “那么什么是正常的阐释呢？笔者认为，这还是要回归至对于建筑本体的展示中，特别是在阐释对象并没有离开原有存在环境（即非异地展示）的情况下，无需借助大量的图示、模型，以及视觉化的手段对其进行辅助性说明。就本案来说，近在咫尺的大殿本身便是最佳的述说者，让五龙庙自身去述说这千年来的沧桑变化，而我们能做的则是摒除多余的干扰，为他提供一处符合其独特气质与历史价值的物质环境，而不应削弱或剥夺其作为阐释主体的地位。即便要对某些重要或特殊之处进行释义，也应尽可能以文字或少量图示（不影响展示主体地位）作为引导，而不是制作与本体相似或重复的展示内容。在建筑遗产的展示与阐释过程中，建筑本体始终是表达的主体，其阐释的方式与程度应符合本体的特质与可承受范围，且不可让冗余的符号与图像将其遮蔽。” | |
| | | “如果从王辉所设定的“编码者”与“解码者”的身份来分析，让文保学者们最难以接受的或许是他利用环境“绑架”了建筑，即通过现代简洁的外部空间环境设计将这座千年古庙从恒定的传统语境中剥离出来。正是这种“视觉效果”与“身份变迁”促使五龙庙在“重生”的同时，也被抬上了展品台。建筑与环境的对立使得正殿与戏楼从“历史的证言”变成了“历史的展品”。这是典型的后现代建筑设计手法，通过并置不同时代的元素来制造空间张力与历史想象。在这里建的庭院既是一台信号增强器，同时也是一个大型的展品台，其功用是让两座历史建筑从日常用品转变为一件艺术品，如同置于客厅的一件家具被移入了博物馆的展厅。作为展品的主殿与戏台尽管没有被移入异地的博物馆，但是一座新建的博物馆却将它们纳入其中。尽管这种作为展品的内质转换是从五龙庙被划为历史保护文物时开始的，但“展台”的出现却空前放大了文物建筑作为艺术品的这一特性。” | |
| | Other architects (academics) | ”其次，现在来看好像从建筑学角度展现五龙庙的成分比较多些——唐代的建筑样式、斗拱构件等，我觉得应该不只是把它作为一个建筑学的唐代建筑，可能从它的文化意义、包括从这个区域的活动进行展开，有一个功能上的定位会比较好。目前 | (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016) |

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|---|--|---|---|
| | | 五龙庙周边是建筑博物馆的性质，我觉得如果要深挖一下，如“龙”文化或者是祭龙这种民俗活动，可能会使得这个场所感更鲜活一点。”（陈薇） | |
| (Museumification) | Vanke (Initiator) | “跟其他古建保护不太一样，我们更愿意将现在的“五龙庙”称之为“五龙庙博物馆”。在这个项目中，我们采用了现代博物馆、美术馆的运作手法，跟文物古建保护结合，创造了大量的回游、展示、远眺、思考和冥想等全新的空间体验，可以总结为四个字——“游、学、思、乐”。” | (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016) |
| | Other architects (academics) | “通过使整体环境“博物馆化“，而将五龙庙本体从原有的宗教定位转化为世俗的知识定位……从而令文物本体化身为巨大的实物展品。” | (Zhou 2016) |
| (Museumification of the historic buildings) | | “在五龙庙环境整治项目中，古建筑（作为大型展品）被精心放置在新的形式语境中……它一方面对“展品建筑”进行着多角度的重新审视和框定，另一方面它提供了一个涵盖性的总体人工情境，“展品建筑”被试作片段而在这个新的解释之场中被重新配置……在五龙庙项目中，原先静态的空间格局同样被动态的游览路径所重组。场地被转译为 一个开放、流动的当代展览空间。” | (Lu 2016b) |
| Design related issues | Caretaker 2 | “The office is so much better now, but this open kitchen makes the fire alarm go off every time we want to cook. We can't use it” | Interview with caretaker 2, March 2018 |
| | | “They put the Tang stele in the outside wall, exposed to the elements. That's not very well thought out.” | Interview with caretaker 2, March 2018 |
| | | “The drainage is not very well done. The rainwater doesn't get drained when it rain. The quality of the project is not so good.” | Interview with caretaker 2, March 2018 |
| | Architect | “在批评声中比较一致的是对环境整治后铺装材料的不认同，有的是从美学角度倾向荒地，有的是从技术角度倾向使用砂土，这样似乎更有一种历史的存在感。事实上，我非常认同这种美学上拉斯金（John Ruskin）式的怀旧，但并不认同沧桑感就是一种原真，因为这个庙能够跨域千年存在，就是因为香火不断，一直活跃，破旧感只是近期的状态。……当地的黄土貌似坚硬，而一旦下雨则软弱烂泥，即使在我们用碎石与土混合夯过基层的铺石子的地方，雨后也有不少陷脚之处。因此铺装材料的选择完全依据使用功能。在戏台前和主殿后碑墙区人流密集的地方采用了硬质石材，利于行走；而在其他地方则用碎石，一方面可以在雨季步行，另一方面希望有人能在人迹稀少的安静环境中通过听到自己的脚步声感觉到自己的存在，从而有一种更好的在心灵上与古庙对话的意境。在实际操作中，材料选取的范围也会受条件所限。” | (Wang 2016a) |
| | Other architects (architectural historian) | “显而易见的是，表面看来对“历史样式”的弃用是两设计最大的共同点。而且，建造材料也都使用的是相对而言更属于当下时代的“新材料”。尽管这些表现并不意味着就比选择相反路径的设计建造更“现代”，甚至从五龙庙自身所经历的让建筑现在的外貌有些怪异的后代维修看，无视古老建筑旧貌、执意选择当下建造方式（很可能是清以后的重砌砖墙），似乎还可从中寻得深层次的暗合。但实际上，可以想见，后世维修添加砖墙时，并非“执意”选择与“历史样式”区隔，而是有意的结构加固与形象的焕然一新……” | (Ding 2016) |
| | Other architects | “第一个方面，是场所感的把握。我们能看出来这里是村庄，周围是田野，还有古城的遗迹，远处的山峦等，借助原来的照片我们还能想象到这个场所以前的状态，当我们把那些“垃圾成堆“的内容过滤掉，把环境的积极方面想象回来时，我感觉这个空间可能还需要延续一些作为乡野的场所感，这种乡野的感觉，在现在这个空间里可能有些被削弱了，比如如果那片石子换成一片土地的话，那种有一点荒凉，村庄田野的场所感可能更能够延续出来……” | (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016) |

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| | | “第三个方面是尺度感。我刚才和王辉交流的时候也提到，他特别强调从那条东边夹道走过来看到五龙庙东山墙的那个入口处，这是他刻意营造的，从草图到最后实现，从拍照的日景到夜景都很强调这个。我在网上看到这组照片的时候，就稍微感觉到一点不很舒服，觉得五龙庙好像很委屈，被夹在两片墙之间，现场感觉也是这样。如果这两道墙矮一点，能把五龙庙托起来，感觉会更好。因为五龙庙的墙体本身不是很高。现在的墙跟它对比之后会显得五龙庙的尺度小了。当然我觉得王辉选择的这种黄土色预制板墙，总体还是很好的，只是围墙的尺度 和五龙庙的尺度如果更细微地匹配一些会更好，不一定全是同一个高度。还有，或许不从这条正对五龙庙山墙的甬道进入，而是从一个角（比如原来场地格局中的东南角）进来，曲折行进之后从斜向透视的角度看到这个场地与五龙庙，也许会更好。”(李兴刚) | |
| | Media | “昔日脏乱的环境被村民广场、图书室、混凝土挂板围合的具有博物馆功能的庭院所取代。建筑师精心设计了通往五龙庙的入口及各个观赏角度，在建筑材料、色彩、体量的选择与设计上，既本土又现代，处处包含着对文物的敬畏之心，很好地体现了当代人对待历史的态度。” | (Wang 2016b) |
| | | “当然，具体的设计手法仍有可商榷的余地，比如：原来的入口台阶和空间序列能否清晰低保留，表达出历史的痕迹；五龙庙与古魏国城墙之间那条轴线能否更为开放，让田野进入到场地之中，如此，这一农耕时代的遗构也许才能唤醒来访者的文化记忆。” | (Huang 2016) |
| | Other architects (academics) | “第三个价值是它本身的地形地貌与建筑结合在一起，所呈现出来的地景审美价值。我不否认，原来对着的垃圾彻底毁掉了原有地形地貌的观感。不过如果忽视那些很容易清理的垃圾，就会发现原来的地景未必都是消极的，其中黄土地貌很多丰富且微妙的变化相当有趣。当然，是否把它抹平无关于文保的法律法规问题，尤其现在的设计还在很大程度上具有可逆性。只是我觉得遗憾的是，现在呈现出的铺装方式和空间尺度更像是都市广场或公园的移植，如果如李兴钢所说，更多体会到并有意识地强化乡野本身的一些特征的话，工程呈现出的面貌也会由于扎根于当地而具有其独特性。”（刘滌宇） | (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016) |
| | | “设计师对五龙庙边缘的着力强度也胜于中心。当我面对五龙庙山墙，从东侧进入主院落之时，心理感觉停顿了一下，似乎直奔五龙庙不对，最吸引我的是戏台。看完戏台依然没有要去五龙庙的意识，我又走向了院落西侧，然后是北侧、东侧。这个场地的边缘有一种吸引力，吸引着人沿边缘走，边缘是项目中最精彩的部分。这个感觉跟我进所有的庙观的感觉都不一样，很特别。甚至当把所有的空间都走完了，我仍然没有去看那个主殿的欲望，我是自己说服自己去看的。”（刘克成） | |
| | | “……但过于强调“神性氛围”的营造，也限制了建筑师在设计多样性和灵动性方面的发挥。例如相较于高台上五龙庙周边为乡土“安心”的神性之地，坎下五龙泉旁为村民“安身”的公共广场则不免稍逊人意。由于两者采用了相近基调的神性氛围设定，导致为人服务的村民广场略显呆板和萧索。……其对“在地性”的照料和“日常性”的入微方面显有缺失。” | (Zhou 2016) |
| | | “但也正因对“法度视觉”的严格追求，甚至过度设计，导致东侧次轴线被太过强调表现，同时在流线安排上也缺乏对顺畅进入正殿大门的转折引导，以至于在相当程度上影响了五龙庙传统中轴的统率性认知地位。另一方面，过于严谨的“法度空间”缺乏偶然的趣味性，而设计者对静态对位视觉的偏爱，则让建筑少了几分适意的身体自在感，令人对这一设计的最终形式难免产生“巧而不妙，神而未灵”的些许遗憾。” | |
| | Other heritage professionals | “The environment improvement of Wulong Temple should be pleasant and people friendly. The design shouldn't overshadow the main 'host. It should be | Interview with HP5, 2018 |

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| | | <p>centred around the little temple. The design is not local. It changes its initial state and tradition. “</p> <p>“Really? The local community has this opinion? Why didn't they say anything?</p> <p><i>The caretaker told me that the design team didn't really consult them until they started construction. Then he voiced his opinion about the Dragon Spring.</i></p> <p>This is the first time I have heard this. Prof Lv told me everyone who went there liked it. The way they intervened with the site is very problematic. The museum has taken the main stage of the temple. It is a proclamation of the architect's ego. It also altered the original setting. The new buildings are not Chinese, not of Ruicheng, and not of that village. I talk about this case a lot. The information is wrong. I know that the project has been approved by SACH. Let's not talk about whether the building is actually Tang Dynasty or not. There is at least a Tang stele on site. When I saw it first online, I was very shocked and started commenting online. Prof Lv said I should go there to see it myself. Anyone who has been there liked it. I went there later. The provincial government officials want to explore a way for the revitalisation of these buildings. They keep telling me that it is very good. When I went there, I told him all my objections. And he thinks they do make sense. A colleague I brought with me, a city girl, upon entering the museum, said, ‘ah, <i>xiaoqingxin, xiaoziqingdiao</i>’. You should note these down. I think they are very accurate. Of course, I went there a year after its completion. There is no one there anymore. The completion ceremony was very grand. Even Wang Jun, the journalist, also supported it. I asked him, is this still a temple that belongs to Ruicheng? I know that this is supposed to be an innovative exploration. But SACH made a mistake here. Why did they choose this one? For the restoration, I insisted that we should have only very minimum intervention to the existing building. Eventually, we only changed the tiles and didn't do anything else. Who knows, this environment improvement project did this to the site. I feel very upset about it. I think our academics should be interpreting the Chinese Principles, and they shouldn't support this. The museum takes away the characteristic of the temple. What are we trying to preserve? We are trying to preserve the cultural and social setting of the site. We can do a very good project to improve its setting. We can clear out the surroundings. Now the historic buildings have become an object. It is already a very small temple; now, it is even smaller by comparison. This is not the way to respect the temple. It is a shame. All these academics who have their names engraved on it. It is a shame.</p> | |
| General opinions | Caretaker 1 | “原来我们守夜都是住在戏台上”范大爷说道。“现在庙的样子你喜欢么？”“喜欢喜欢！”范大爷笑咪咪地直点头。” | (AC Editorial 2016) |
| | Caretaker 2 | “这个事功劳很大，三门峡和临汾的专家都来过这里，看完了都说，这里（的保护工作）是国内最好的。” | (AC Editorial 2016) |
| | Vanke (initiator) | “第一，这项工程，是我国古建文物保护史上一次大胆的探索与创新，政府、企业、乡村和个人，甚至包括意大利等国际综合力量都共同参与协作的过程。过程中，运用了互联网、社交媒体、众筹等一系列新的方法筹集资金，并推动了这项工程顺利实施。” | (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016) |
| | Heritage professionals | “五龙庙的大殿和戏台都已经过保护修缮，但村民并没有对它表现出应有的尊重，这可能有很多原因。现在的环境整治，再现了一个良好的环境，衬托出五龙庙大殿、戏台、让大家感受它的历史、感受它的神圣，使它重获尊严，这正是这个项目非常有价值的地方。” | (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016) |

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| | Other architects | “第二点感触是我觉得“龙·计划”团队的工作，在几个方面还是非常成功的：一是帮助五龙庙找回它作为唐代遗构应有的尊严，同时为村民创造了一个公共空间。即使将来这个院落本身是被管控的，但它前面的广场序列也可以成为村民日常生活中可以享用的公共空间，而不再是一个消极空间。二是从文保单位融入当下日常生活这个角度做了非常有益的探索。团队不只按照既定的目标对五龙庙的环境进行“整治”，实际上为更广大的社会层面提供了一个民间的公共博物馆，这个有游园性质的室外博物馆，达到了一种超越简单的“环境整治”、超越景观设计的状态。”（李兴钢） | (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016) |
| | Other architects (academics) | ““人工情境”替代了“场地“同意了片段之物。这个新的情境提供了对物不一样的阅读方式，并通过精心设计的空间漫游组织起来。然而回到从北侧麦田所见的图景，田野与庙宇之间的松散并存产生了一种自然生成的情境，它的叙事是模糊的，也会触发或悲或喜的不同情感。与之相对，人工情境是对知识的现场化（领域化），它需要更为清晰的表意来提供一个解释之场，也因而牺牲了意境的开放性。” | (Lu 2016b) |
| | Local officials from other counties | “I don't agree with that restoration (the Project). I think the exhibition isn't very well done. That big bracket set at the entrance feels very superficial. I don't think they've done a good enough job. The state gives thousands of thousands of <i>yuan</i> , but it's not well done. The operational model is something everyone agrees with though. “ | Interview with LO10, 2018 |
| | Heritage professionals | “ <i>Vanke</i> participated with a genuine wish to do something to preserve our traditional culture. But of course, there is a publicity consideration because it coincides with their exhibition at the Milan EXPO. But they also realised it was very difficult. They experienced many obstacles from the conservative power of the heritage departments. Many academics or heritage professionals also tend to support interventions that are relatively low profile. They think the interventions should highlight the historic buildings. So most of their opinions are about the lack of research and the fact that the surrounding buildings are much more prominent than the historic buildings. I think they have done a bit too much, like Datong. But I still support the project of Wulong Temple, while I am strongly against Datong's projects because they crossed the baseline of the safety of the historic buildings. The Wulong project didn't destroy the historic buildings but have improved the environment. I think it is an opportunity well used. Many objecting voices are from the perspective of its legitimacy. They think the buildings are too prominent. Some prefer the new intervention to be so minimal that it may as well not exist. I think the positive aspect of this project is to provide the local heritage departments with an alternative way of improving the environment. It can be considered as something from an urban environment imposed on something in a rural environment. But I think it is an interesting combination.” | Interview with HP1, 2018 |
| | Heritage professionals (architectural historians, academics) | “Speaking of the case of Wulong Temple, that contingency score system we just talked about, Wulong Temple won't score very high there. Its value is only recognised by us who study architectural history. For people who work in tourism, for example, they wouldn't think it's very important. There was no transportation. There were no infrastructures. I think it's quite good that someone has improved the environment now. I think it's quite good that the private company wants to fund a project on this site. But the problem is how this fund will be used. I still think it is crucial to have people who have the professional knowledge to make decisions. The architects need to have the knowledge needed. Of course, <i>Vanke</i> has its agenda. If they really just want to improve a temple, they can find a small Qing Dynasty one. They are surely thinking about the publicity effect in choosing Wulong Temple. They all believe that this is a Tang Dynasty temple. And among all the Tang temples, this is probably the only one they can do something about. So for the company, this is a very good publicity return for the money they spend. Of course, they wouldn't say this in public. They would say this is purely for the | Interview with HP3, 2018 |

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| | | benefit of the heritage. Among the real estate developers in China, there is a trend now to do business in villages. Sometimes they just sell the entire village for a development project. I think Vanke must have an agenda to create its unique brand in this area. It's certainly not a pure heritage project..... If the funding comes from the private sector, maybe there can be a bottom-up system instead of a top-down control system. Maybe some well-respected NGOs can take up the work to design such a system. For example, Vanke can provide the funding, and probably also a purpose, and they can cooperate with some NGO and a research institute such as HEI.”（徐怡涛） | |
| | Local official from Ruicheng county | “There were two consultation meetings in the government here, and many rounds of revisions. The SACH approved in principle eventually. This project is not the same as other environment improvement projects. The official from the province came and inspected after the Project, but didn't know whether to say this is right or not. The deputy head also came and see, and said they needed to contact Vanke. Eventually the province department agree with what's been done overall. They think this can be a pilot project, and are open to further collaboration. This model is relatively successful. “ | Interview with LO9, 2018 |
| "giving it back to the community" | Media | “仪式结束后，嘉宾们受不住龙王赐雨的恩惠，纷纷离场，而从远远近近村子里赶来的乡亲们，早已挤在庙檐下或坐或站都找到了自己舒服的位置，终于开始了自己的娱乐。红脸的关公在台上又一次吼出了气镇山河的高腔，伶俐的红娘又一次把千年的情爱故事在手绢中翻转，老乡们又回到了属于他们的气场。在他们周围，简约精致的新院落与它包含的“知识”默默伫立，“金字塔”尖上的精英文化，与养育了它的“金字塔”基上的乡土真实，就这样颇具实验性与戏剧性地，并峙在一起。” | (AC Editorial 2016) |
| | Architect | “五龙庙已然从农村的邻里中心转换为国家级文保对象，它的功能也从农耕文明的祈雨场所转移为消费社会的旅游目的地。” | (Wang 2016a) |
| | | “暗线则是通过提升五龙庙的环境品质和重新解读五龙庙，加强了这一场所的凝聚力和活力，使村民重新在这一世代相传的公共空间聚集、交流，为当下农村精神价值的重塑创造出契机。” | |
| | | “这个村有这个庙是一种庆幸，让庙回归村子的日常生活，是对充满问题的当下农村的一种救赎。创造有精神性的公共场所是重塑乡村精神支柱的必要条件。” | |
| | Vanke (initiator) | 我们为“龙·计划”立下了三大目标：（1）“还庙于村”，恢复五龙庙作为一个乡村配套和公共场所的属性，让它回到村民的日常生活中，让村民能主动地爱庙护庙；”（侯正华） | (Hou 2016) |
| | | “通过环境整治，我们把村民广场重建后还给龙泉村村民，重新成为村民集会、休憩和交流的中心，极具“乡村场所感”。”（丁长峰） | (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016) |
| | Other architects | “从建筑师的角度我想提的意见只有一点，既然出发点是一个希冀民众参与的文物保护设计项目，我觉得还是可以更好地发动村民来一起参与，比如说某一段墙或者某一个构造作法，是不是可以真的用夯土墙来打，由村民们自己来参与建造，用传统的，习惯的建构方式。”（庄惟敏） | |
| | Heritage professionals | ““龙·计划”对五龙庙的环境整治使得这座原本少人问津，村民把它周围的场地当作垃圾场的庙宇又一次成为村里公共活动的中心。当我们看到看庙老人眼中兴奋的光芒，当我们看到村民由衷笑容表达出的欣喜，当我们看到人们一幅一幅地阅读庙中关于中国古代建筑的介绍，孩子们在庭院中快乐地嬉戏，当我们看到蹒跚的老人在家人的陪伴和搀扶下从县城专程来到五龙庙，缓缓爬上高坡，在五龙庙新形成的庭 | (Lv 2016) |

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| | | 院中一处一处地参观，最后走下大殿与家人一起合影，这样的场景真的让人感动。” | |
| | | “尽管五龙庙最初是被作为博物馆来进行设计定位的，其目的是通过五龙庙在建筑史上的地位来吸引游客，并向其展示五龙庙的历史信息与建造知识。但从环境改造后的接过来看，其产生的社会价值甚至超出了当初的设想，环境整治达成预期目标（博物馆）的同时，还原了作为宗教场所的原始功能（庙宇）。五龙庙的场所氛围吸引了乡民的好奇心，从而使他们以极高的热情参与到五龙庙的空间活动中。改造后的环境作为五龙庙与乡民之间的媒介，从物质和精神活动两方面激活了这所千年古庙的场所精神。” | (Guo 2017) |
| | Local official from Ruicheng county | “但修庙的万科毕竟是“外来的和尚”。丁长峰告诉我，一开始听说万科对五龙庙有意，芮城县的一些领导也不理解，觉得万科就是来做房地产的，那可以来芮城选更重要的项目。有个领导直接跟他说：“修这么一个小庙，对县里也是个负担。之后还要修路，要整治周边环境，不断有人来参观……这就像是给乡下穷亲戚送了一个大冰箱，本来我穷日子过得好好的，现在还要交电费，来了人还要买菜，买猪肉。”” | (Jia 2017) |
| Tourism and business opportunity | Caretaker 2 | ““我以后就一直守着这里，把门票收好，把这个庙守好。” | (AC Editorial 2016) |
| | Vanke (initiator) | “……环境整治工程完工后，五龙庙的重新开放给龙泉村带来了旅游参观人群、经济收入增加。整个过程代表了今天向服务业经济转型的大方向，特别是进入新常态之后，大力发展旅游业、服务业等第三产业，对于传统的农村，无疑是一个新的经济增长模式。”（丁长峰） | (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016) |
| | Village chief | “米兰回来之后，王民刚花了一万块钱参与“龙计划”众筹，留下一片“龙鳞”作纪念。但对他来说，最迫切的问题是村民的现实利益。五龙庙整治能够给村庄带来什么？他还看不清楚。城南村有 2470 人，几乎全部务农，基本都是标准的“一亩三分地”，人均年收入只有 4000 元。整治后的五龙庙对村民免费，对游客每人收费 15 元，门票收入先交由县财政，再由财政全额返还用于五龙庙的运营和维护，村里并没有收益。有多年景区开发经验的薛文波测算过，五龙庙改造前，游人来了就是上土坡看看大殿，半个小时就够了；现在来的大多数是建筑专业人士，看看大殿，看看古魏国遗址，看看碑刻和古代建筑展，会延长到两个小时，但还是没有打破芮城旅游“永乐宫＋五龙庙＋大禹渡”的半日游模式。在村民们看来，目前的五龙庙看上去很美，但还是留不住人，他们不愿意为一线商机去冒险。” | (Jia 2017) |
| | Construction supervision (local tourism developer) | “其实五龙庙的“活化”效应更多是隐性的。如今，因为五龙庙，也因为这里是待开发的城郊结合部，各种投资已经开始涌向城南村，王民刚形容是“一片热土”。对这个村庄来说，目前触手可及的是永乐宫壁画临摹基地的筹建。因为永乐宫壁画出名，每年全国各大美院都有学生来参观临摹，久而久之形成了一个稳定产业。以前的临摹画室就在永乐宫的侧院，学生们平时就散住在永乐宫家属区和周边小旅馆里。据说未来的临摹基地将大大升级，规划用地 800 亩，城南村占其中的 378 亩。 但薛文波不看好这种大建基地的模式：“虽说每年都会来 7000 多学生，但这就是个‘流水席’，学生一般在这里待两周，吃住简单，消费水平也不高，人均每天花费 50 块钱左右。建一个 800 亩的正式基地，一人顶多管 5 亩，光日常维护就得多少人、多少钱？学生们乐得自由自在，还不一定愿意集中在一起。最后结果很可能就是，钱花出去了，房子建起来了，没人来，空在那里。”他和王辉向县里建议，不如就在周边的村子里设点，鼓励村民改造自己家空闲的房子，做针对学生群体的民 | |

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| | | 宿，这样还可以把乡村游激活，古魏国城墙、永乐宫、五龙庙几个点也能串起来了。” | |
| Social impact (community and general public) | Architect | “..... 使这个千年古庙的文物本体在获得国家文保资金修葺之后， 又获得了环境品质的改善，融入到当下生活。完工后，原本无人问津的古庙吸引了络绎不绝的参观者。有意思的是， 一般性的观众（从守庙人、村民到县领导）基本上都认同乃至赞赏环境整治的效果，而在文保专业的圈子里则听到一些质疑的声音。” | (Wang 2016a) |
| | | “我们所面对的文保对象， 几乎都是源于使用的目的，但随着它的文化艺术价值远远高于其日常功能，它会逐渐从日常生活中被剥离出，成为另一种被孤立起来的存在。.....当现代气象预报替代了从龙王爷那里的祈福，当现代灌溉技术替代了自然水源，当现代生产枯竭了自然资源，五龙庙和五龙泉都淡出了村民生活。而当村民把祖上的圣地当作垃圾场的那一刹那，村民的当下生活也淡出了他们的传统生活。可怕的是这种淡出剥夺了村民的存在感。不难设想，这一届农民的主要身份是城市化过程中流浪在城市的打工者，唯一让他们能够感到安全的地方是家乡的村庄。而他们在城市里获得的微利在把自家的瓦房变成混凝土砖房的同时，他们对村里公共精神场所的漠然，乃至破坏却又在建设性地毁灭唯一能够安抚自己的遮蔽所（shelter），使他们在自己的故土上成为没有根的自我流放者，丧失了存在感。” | |
| | Heritage professionals | “最近山西芮城五龙庙（ 又称广仁王庙） 的环境整治项目在建筑界和文物保护界引发了广泛的讨论。人们对这一项目结果表达了完全对立的观点。这本身就是一个很值得关注的现象。” | (Lyu 2016b) |
| | | ““龙计划”对五龙庙环境整治是社会各方广泛合作的结果，这里有万科在文化遗产保护方面表达出的责任感，有设计部门 URBANUS 都市实践对改善五龙庙环境表现出的巨大热情，有文物保护专业机构清华大学建筑设计研究院建筑与文化遗产保护研究所的技术支持，有文物保护专家对环境整治方案的严格审查和积极建议，有国家文物局及省、市文物局的热情鼓励和支持，更有施工单位、材料供应单位的无私投入和赞助，村民对项目的积极参与，最终使五龙庙的环境整治工程得以完成，并得到了村民的喜爱，也得到了大多数到过现场的人们的积极肯定。” | |
| | | “这使五龙庙再次成为一个社会公共活动的中心，再次让人们关心、尊敬这里的古代建筑，这也是五龙庙应当发挥的社会价值。从这个角度，这次环境整治就是成功的，值得赞赏的。”（吕舟） | (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016) |
| | | “笔者认为，从文物保护的角度，从发挥五龙庙作为全国重点文物保护单位的社会价值的角度，从让文化遗产活起来的角度，让五龙庙已经焕发出的活力延续下去，并在社会参与的滋养下得到更充分的发挥，真正做到“发挥文物的公共文化服务和社会教育功能，保障人民群众基本文化权益，拓宽人民群众参与渠道，共享文物保护利用成果”，是“龙·计划”对五龙庙的环境整治项目的启示，也是继续扩大五龙庙项目社会效益需要考虑的问题。” | (Lv 2016) |
| | | “但《内罗毕建议》还有一项重要建议，那就是将“服务社区生活“作为遗产地的一项职责纳入其中，这说明对于建筑遗产的保护已经超越保存其历史价值的初级要求拓展到服务社区，以及如何有效地与社会发展形成良好的互动循环关系之上。因而，我们可以说环境整治后的五龙庙符合了《内罗毕建议》中提出的服务社区生活，以及振兴地方文化的倡议，而这也是当代文化遗产保护的发展趋势之一。” | (Guo 2017) |
| | Media | “这次环境整治赋予了五龙庙新的功能，为其再度成为凝聚当地人心、增进村民文化认同的精神家园，创造了条件。” | (Wang 2016b) |

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| | Other architects | “现在五龙庙在我面前呈现出的是这样一种场景，这种场景不是把建筑孤立地保留下来，只体现它的本真，而是让所有的民众都能参与到里面去，这使一种公共参与的场景，我们觉得它意义更加重大。”(李兴钢) | (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016) |
| | | “说到文物给我们的感觉是离老百姓的距离很远，文保的任务就是把它保护下来，但很多时候这种文物保护的目的和意义却似乎没有体现。从五龙庙这个项目中我看到了作为建筑师的责任，建筑师王辉通过这个项目把文物保护带给社会的意义表达出来了，这件事意义很大，本身具有示范性。”（庄惟敏） | |
| | | “现在五龙庙在我面前呈现出的是这样一种场景，这种场景不是把建筑孤立地保留下来，只体现它的本真，而是让所有的民众都能参与到里面去，这是一种公共参与的场景……人们融入在里面来来去去、体验、学习，我认为这个意义要远远大于仅把它们完好地保存下来。”（庄惟敏） | |
| Social Impact (private sector participation) | Heritage professionals | “其次，万科作为企业，它捐助的经费是否能够用于五龙庙这样的全国重点文物保护单位的环境整治？在鼓励社会各方面广发参与文化遗产保护，让文化遗产活起来的今天，万科愿意在文物行政管理部门的监管下捐赠并参与五龙庙的环境整治，当然应当得到支持和鼓励。在项目运行过程中也的确得到了各级文物保护行政主管部门对设计方案的严格评估和热情支持。” | (Lyu 2016b) |
| | | “龙计划”对五龙庙环境整治是一个有益的社会参与文化遗产保护的探索，对这样的探索社会应该给予更多的关心和支持。 | |
| | Media | “启动这次环境整治的“龙计划”成功汇集了社会力量，大家有钱出钱，有力出力。建筑师捐献了设计，选用的皆是真材实料。保护工程完成后，交给当地政府管理，成为地方优秀资产，为村民服务，面向社会开放。参与者不索要任何回报。这样的保护模式，与一些地方推行的以文物建筑的使用权换取保护资金的所谓“认领方式相比，更具公益性，是值得大力推行的社会力量参与文物保护的方式。” | (Wang 2016b) |
| | Heritage professionals | ““龙·计划”对五龙庙的环境整治是一次社会参与文物保护的实践，其社会意义本身或许比它的设计手法更值得讨论，它的意义远远超出环境整治本身。企业的意愿、建筑设计方的热情和投入感动了施工方、材料供应方，也感动了村民，最终使每一个人都把对五龙庙的环境整治当做自己的事，都为五龙庙的环境整治结果而自豪。在这样一个并不复杂的环境整治项目中展现出了巨大的社会热情，而这正是社会参与文化遗产保护最为重要的部分。” | (Lv 2016) |
| Connection between the heritage and the setting | Architect | “一方面我们所能做的是让新的信息（包括空间和空间叙事）与文物本体保持必然的关联性（例如对庙轴线的放大，对五龙庙建筑信息的延展），保持文物本体的核心性加强，而不是被稀释；另一方面，这种再创造的主题是为了实现设计主旨的手段，而不是主旨本身，即用空间体验的明线激活工作目标的暗线：明线是以五龙庙为主体、围绕这个历史文本展开的一系列有层次的空间序列，并植入相关展陈，从而使观者能够更好地欣赏、阅读、理解文物，并由此获得在古代文物环境下别样的身心体验和愉悦；” | (Wang 2016a) |
| Authenticity of the historic setting | Architect | “《威尼斯宪章》强调“历史文物建筑的概念，不仅包含个别的建筑作品，而且包含能够见证某种文明、某种意义的发展或某种历史事件的城市或乡村环境”。自从这个宪章被推广以来，最少干预文物所处的环境是遗产保护的普遍共识。整个五龙庙的环境整治设计过程经历了近 10 版的修改，也是在不断地减少不必要的干预，使五龙庙尽可能处于环境的真实性和完整性之中。” | (Wang 2016a) |

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| | | <p>“但保持“原真性”在操作层面上存在着悖论，因为即使在挖了考古探沟后，我们也无以判断围绕五龙庙环境的原始状态。……因此，并没有可靠的依据来推断五龙庙所处的历史环境的模样。”</p> | |
| | | <p>“这种文物环境材料改变所带来的非原真性，并没有根本性地贬损文物的价值点。比之于本体文物上唐代大木作与其他后世更换的、不原真的建筑维护构件所带来的不和谐感，这种非历史“画境”的处理也至多是小巫见大巫。设计对原真性问题考虑更多的是如何润物细无声地微调文物主体和其环境的空间关系……”</p> | |
| | | <p>“不同于那种用历史感来突出文物的所谓“原真性”处理，设计中是使用礼仪化的空间序列来突出文物的崇高感。坦诚而言，这种空间序列也不是参照原真的祭祀礼拜线路，而是符合对这个场所重新编码的当下空间叙事。这种叙事首先还原的是对文物的敬重，从而唤醒了在礼教社会下连穷乡僻壤都不缺失的、而在今天高度物质文明条件下却丢失的邻里文化和民俗文化，并让这种文化融入到当今空心化的乡村日常生活中。……精神问题永远是时代的问题，因而这种创造必然立足于当下，但这并不与保留场所原真性的理念冲突。只有让日常生活连续不断地介入五龙庙，只有让五龙庙的存在对于村里人来说是灵魂性的存在，它才具有原真性。”</p> | |
| | Heritage professionals | <p>“在这种情况下，选择更能体现当代观念和技术条件的设计手法来表达对于作为环境主体的文物建筑的尊重，是一种更为积极和真实的态度。保护历史并不意味着对现实的虚无。不尊重现实本身就是不尊重历史，对历史的模仿也并不意味着对历史的尊重。用反映当代技术、文化特征，又体现对文物的价值、尺度、形态尊重的设计或许才能更好地体现今天人们对于历史、现实和未来正确的态度。从这个角度，“龙计划”对五龙庙环境整治的做法总体上是恰当的。”</p> | (Lyu 2016b) |
| | | <p>“但综合环境整治前的实际状况来看，五龙庙并不具备恢复历史环境所需的条件。因为在漫长的历史演变中，除正殿与对面的戏台外，其他建筑物都已消失，而外部围墙则为近代村民自发砌筑，即便在考古发掘后也没有找到原墙址的确切位置。加之五龙庙本身缺乏详细的历史记载，荒芜秽迹的现状环境并不属于五龙庙的原初状态。而在无确证资料下的臆测式重建则是不被允许的，因此历史环境重建一说无从谈起。此外，建筑及其环境自建成之日起就处于持续变化之中，有时功用也在不断调整，无论恢复至何时都无法完整表达其真实的历史状态。”</p> | (Guo 2017) |
| | | <p>“两部宪章（威尼斯宪章及内罗毕建议）均继承了将古代建筑作为“历史见证“的基本作用，同时注重古迹主体及其所在环境的整体性。就此来说，五龙庙环境的整治并不完全符合其要求。”</p> | |
| | Media | <p>“都市实践参与的山西芮城县五龙庙整治计划，对环绕这座唐代遗构的周遭场地作了颇为大胆激进的景观设计，可以想象，这样“大”的动作，难免会让一些人大跌眼镜，似乎粗暴地违背了文化遗产保护的基本原则，因为保护对象所在的场地同样属于“原真性”的一部分。可是，五龙庙周围场地的“原真性”究竟是何模样？哪个年代、哪个时期的场地才具有真正意义上的“原真性”？经历千年的沧桑变迁，尤其是最近几十年乡村生活方式的剧变，加之祈神求雨的功能早已不存，在整治前，五龙庙周围的场地垃圾遍地，混乱不堪，此时，建筑师能否介入，有没有权利赋予它我们这一时代的文化特征？在这一不可复制的特殊案例中，我认为答案是肯定的。”</p> | (Huang 2016) |
| | Other architects | <p>“第二个方面是时间感。对于一个历史性的空间来讲，时间感的提示可能会更为重要。五龙庙本身的修缮已经使它丧失了很多时间感，那种时间的痕迹，是硬生生的时间累积而成的。在现在这个空间环境里，时间感似乎也被损失掉了一部分……原始的那些痕迹如果能更多地保留，时间感的呈现会更好。”（李兴钢）</p> | (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016) |

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| | Other architects (academics) | “.....今天看了现场后，如果让我来划保护范围的话，那肯定不光是五龙庙这个唐代建筑，可能是这个山头。五龙庙以前是有活动的，我们所在的戏台是演戏的地方，它周边一定会有一些观看演出的场地，不然这组建筑和场所就发挥不了作用。我们现在所坐的戏台，它与庙之间构成的空间关系，可能是我划线会考虑的重要功能问题。或者反过来说，如果从这种社会功能角度出发，我们所谓的划线应该包括建筑和历史环境。我们划线的目的是要体现它具有的价值，我想这组建筑群的价值，最重要的就是比较早的地方性的神庙，这是很难得的。我们看到留存下来比较早的木构建筑都是佛教寺庙，作为一个地方性的神庙，如果能够追溯到那么久远的话，我觉得在这一点上的价值还要多挖掘一些。”（陈薇） | (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016) |
| | | “.....第二个价值.....这里是地方信仰活动的一个重要场所。土岗上一个规模不大的龙王庙建筑，对面是一个戏台，在与龙王信仰相关的重大节日，戏台唱着戏，当地人在戏台和建筑间的院落里聚集。而现在的设计弱化了这个方面——我们从正对五龙庙山墙的横轴线进入这里，院落和戏台在整个空间序列中变得次要了很多。本来在中国传统建筑中并不强调横轴线，况且正对轴线的纪念性对景属于西方文艺复兴以来的空间塑造方式。为了强化纪念性而削弱民俗场所感，得失如何，可以见仁见智。”（刘涿宇） | (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016) |
| | Other architects (architectural historian/academics) | “我印象比较深的是原先来的时候庙周围的红墙，和保护标志的碑，就在这儿（戏台）和五龙庙中间那儿，有个很简单的砖台，碑就立在上头，红墙估计就是保护范围的基线。我的意思是，五龙庙这 30 年、或者 60 年的空间的历史，也是可以考虑的，比如我自己，应该还有很多人，都是这期间来的，看着红墙、远望魏的城址，看着保护碑。而且这道墙，价格碑，也是很很短的一段时间以来的北方的庙的常态，以及变成文物保护单位以后的状况。.....我会建议学生是否可以保留墙和碑，在原位，起码一部分，比如至少朝内的一面.....”（丁焘） | (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016) |
| | Other architects (academics) | “事实上，五龙庙在 2013 年落架大修后，无论是文物本体还是周边环境都已沾染了浓厚的“虚构”色彩。特别是被红墙保卫的空荡庙院空间，完全是五龙庙申请文保单位后才出现的“虚构”产物，而此前五龙庙主体一直被当作乡村小学来使用，其原初状态的庙墙界域和形制已不可考。.....这次设计在本质上，就是对文保部门所“虚构”出来的五龙庙既存环境的“再虚构”。” | (Zhou 2016) |
| Religious/folk connotation vs knowledge | Other architects | “五龙庙之所以能受到如此多的关注，恰恰不是因为它是“庙”，而是因为它是仅存的数量微乎其微的“唐构”之一。庙是场所，它具有在地性，在使用中获得意义；唐构是知识的载体，它具有抽象性，在知识和传播中体现价值。五龙庙作为庙的身份几乎已经消解，也因此逐渐脱离了与身处的村落之间的关系。.....那么在环境整治工程中如果将其依然视作“庙”，投射并重塑庙的情境，固然是一种方式，但这样的方式是“隐匿”当代介入的。王辉建筑师选择了对它知识身份的认同，将它作为知识载体的身份物质化和丰富化，从而让知识在情境中传递。“知识的情境”使得更广泛的兴趣和资源得以注入，也不排斥无关的日常的发生.....” | (Dou 2016) |
| | Other architects (academics) | “但是五龙庙毕竟是五龙庙，它是一个有深厚文化内涵的乡村精神建筑场所。五龙庙属于道教一支，为农耕社会祈天求雨，保佑五谷丰登，天、地、人交汇，人神对话之地。五龙庙居于村与天地之间，龙代表天，为斯水之神。潭为龙之居所，村为人之居所，田为人赖以生养的根本，潭为田得以滋养的源泉，庙为人敬奉龙之祭台。“村—潭—庙—田”之间的关系为这个项目最重要的关系。.....五龙庙产生并存在的意义在于它表达了人对自然的敬畏，村民通过年复一年的活动仪式，塑造了一种共同价值观，强化了同根同井，守望相助的集体意识.....虽然五龙庙的祭祀功能已不复存在，但这种价值观今天依然有重要意义，建筑师应当重视，尊重并强化这一价值观。目前的方案对于天、地、人的关系重视不够，潭及土地有些被边缘化。”（刘克成） | (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016) |

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| | | <p>“面对彼时的五龙庙这块事实上“人神两亡”之地，王辉在设计之初的价值目标简单而明确——要引人，更要“通神”……如何在不采用任何传统宗教性空间手段的前提下，用世俗的形式重新凝聚乡土精神、萃取文化意义，使五龙庙再度返魅为一个新的“神行场所”？……事实上，在现代建筑体系中，可供建筑师使用的与“神行”相关的思想资源和形式资源极为匮乏，而博物馆作为从最早的缪斯神庙发展、转化而来的“现代知识神殿”，也的确是最符合将五龙庙打造成新神性场所的当代建筑类型选择。“博物馆和博物馆化的想象（museumizing imagination）都具有深刻的政治性，因为这意味着通过高度体系化的知识收集与陈列，而虚拟性地拥有了这些知识的产地空间，以及支配空间的合法性权力。……在笼盖全域的“博物馆化”神性氛围基调下，博物馆具体的展陈内容、及其与五龙庙本身是否贴切都已无关大局。”</p> | (Zhou 2016) |
| | | <p>“在被精心设计的建筑图景中，这座庙宇更多被视作一件珍贵的唐代木构遗存，它的意义来源于其作为知识的物质载体。……然而在以麦田为前景的照片中，古建筑似乎回归了原先作为庙宇的状态，它的意义来源于现场的使用和经验，场所性因而浮现出来。与大多数文物建筑的情况相似，五龙庙的这两种性质之间隐含着冲突：不在场的知识（例如文物的“价值”寻求着在现场的物质呈现，而本地的场所性——作为日常空间使用的庙宇——则由于传统乡村社会的解体而被消解。……因此五龙庙的环境整治项目可以被视作一种新途径的尝试：一方面设计视图通过对知识的现场化产生新的空间情境；另一方面，它视图通过引入新的空间情境……来重新形成与本地、社会和景观的联系。……然而无论如何，这一途径的起点是在普遍性知识的基础上创造新的场所性，它在事实上替换了原有的本地场所性，虽然后者常常已经被消解。”</p> | (Lu 2016b) |
| | Heritage professionals | <p>”前文所述，五龙庙的环境整治并没有危及到主殿及戏楼的本体安全与历史价值构成，但在活化文物与服务民众方面却做到了最大化，并促成了一种地域传统与民间信仰的继承与发展。……这其中既有节日性祭拜广仁王的传统因素，也有普通村民的精神生活诉求。这正是五龙庙在当下农村的社会变迁过程中所扮演的真实角色，它为村民的精神需求再次提供了一方园地，而没有演变为表演性祈雨活动的场所。但环境的改造也产生了一个副作用，那就是五龙庙身份的复杂化，以及空间情景上的戏剧化。对于乡民来说，五龙庙的作用是依旧是俗世性的，过去祈雨，现在祈福。他们并不介意五龙庙的复杂语义，反而乐享其成，在得到一处高质量的休闲场所的同时，还获得了一种地理上的优越感；对于普通游客来说，五龙庙是体验性的，他们既可以通过观赏建筑来怡情怀古，可以浏览周边庭院了解古建知识；而对于古建研究者或者建筑保护的专业人士而言，五龙庙则是知识性的，其“价值”与“真实性”才是他们所关注的。这种情况在宗教文物保护案例中是常见现象，一座建筑既是重要的历史文物，又是信仰的精神场地。”</p> | (Guo 2017) |
| (remaking of heritage value) | Other architects (academics) | <p>“涉及到价值判断，不可避免存在主观的成分，对价值的呈现也肯定有见仁见智之处。但任何一个文物主体，都有多重的解读可能，也都有多重的价值维度，较多干预有可能在强化大家公认的价值的时候，损害到主体一些没有被认识到或发掘出来的潜在价值。”（刘涿宇）</p> | (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016) |
| (Cultural legitimacy) | | <p>“中国具有漫长“官修正史”的传统，历史叙事的“文化合法性”往往取决于叙事者的“身份合法性”。体制内的建筑文保工作，在很大程度上是“官修正史”这一传统的当代延续与拓展。而这种对“历史叙事资质”的变相垄断，导致长期以来对中国建筑历史的文化叙事很难再更具批判性和多样性的意义上深入展开。在如此逼仄的叙事语境下，“龙计划”借助民间资本的力量，以令人耳目一新的人文态度、运筹策略和空间形式，成为全面突破既有历史空间“官式记忆”模式的一次文化创新，堪称中国建筑文保领域一个难能可贵的“新典范”。”</p> | (Zhou 2016) |

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| Religious connotation | Media | <p>“一年之后在五龙庙的这场祈雨仪式，是“龙计划”团队为竣工一周年专门组织的。这当然是一种表演性场景，但也可以说是对昔日寺庙作为乡村精神中心的情境重塑，对五龙庙重新回到村民日常生活的一种召唤。”</p> <p>“如同传统乡村社会解体的隐喻，五龙庙的宗教功能消解之后，如何在一个空心化的村庄重建另一种神性？这是“龙计划”要面对的。王辉认为，五龙庙的最重要价值在于它是仅有的四个唐代木构之一，否则也不会被尊为国宝。放大这个价值点，把主题由宗教引导到古建，用“知识情境”替代历史上的“民俗情境”，才是“活”的保护。”</p> | (Jia 2017) |
| | Village chief | “五龙庙被选中，让所在地城南村主任王民刚也颇为意外。他告诉我：“五龙庙在芮城县志上只有很简单的两行介绍，后来五龙泉没水了，更被人忽略了。”2015 年米兰世博会“龙计划”启动时，王民刚被邀请作为村民代表去米兰，他一开始还有些担心，“这毕竟涉及到宗教问题、信仰问题。前一阵附近有个庙会，村支书上台讲了话，就被免职了”。世博会“龙计划”现场的隆重也让他措手不及，准备的介绍五龙庙的讲稿没用上，干脆临场发挥了。” | |
| Revitalising the heritage site | Vanke (initiator) | “第二，这是一个非常典型的期望将“死文物”变成“活文物”，“死保”变“活保”的过程，我们相信这对于未来山西省文物活化的过程具有重要的参考意义。”（丁长峰） | (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016) |
| | Local official from Ruicheng county | “芮城县旅游文物局副局长景宏波告诉我，芮城这么个小县，就有 12 处国家级文物保护单位，包括 5 处古建、7 处遗址，再加上省级、市级、县级文物，一共 200 多处，而且是少有的“唐、宋、元、明、清不断代”。从另一方面看，也带来了繁重的管理难题。因为中国实行“属地管理、分级负责”的文物保护体制，市级、县级文物的经费主要由市、县财政自己承担，面对数量庞大的低级别古建筑，市、县财政显得力不从心，部分古建甚至很难获得经费支持。2013 年底，山西省也尝试鼓励民间资本参与文物保护，让当地企业家“认领”修缮一批迫切需要保护的古建筑。景洪波认为，这次的五龙庙环境整治，无论是主体还是思路，都可算是文物保护的另一种“活化”尝试，对于金字塔底端的基层文保尤其有参考价值。” | (Jia 2017) |
| | Provincial official | “After the Guangrenwang Temple project, we want to initiate more environmental improvement projects to improve the infrastructure (such as hospitality services) of more sites. I think the private sector can participate in the infrastructure and service projects, but not on the heritage itself.” | Interview with PO3, 2018 |
| | Other architects (academics) | “2013 年末至 2015 年初，国家文物部门对五龙庙及戏台进行重新修复之后，四围红墙和一道门锁，把五龙庙与周遭环境决绝地切割开来。这种在中国建筑文保领域极为同行的常规做法，实际上是把围墙内的空间，视为一具将历史遗存当做僵尸“封印”起来的水晶棺，以此来保护所谓的物质“真实性”尽可能少地受到时代变化因素的干扰，从而能近乎恒定地留存下来。……如果没有“龙计划”的介入，五龙庙不过是尘封的物质遗产库存单上所记录的一个名号而已。” | (Zhou 2016) |
| (cultural legitimacy) | | “……从这个角度看，“龙计划”对于五龙庙文物本体最富于创造性的贡献，是将其原本“无菌化”的“隔离环境”，置换为一个“过滤性”的“缓冲环境”，让当代生活与历史遗存之间保持某种低烈度但却具有日常性的无缝交接。即便不考虑“龙计划”通过拓展旅游市场为五龙庙所增加的经济吸引力、通过再造精神性公共空间为龙泉村所提升的社群凝聚力、以及通过广泛的媒体传播而得到极大跃迁的社会知名度，仅从其通过神性贯注和人性滋养，令“僵尸态”的文物本体“活化”为综合性的人文生态核心这一条来评判，五龙庙环境整治设计就无疑攫取了比寻常文保项目更丰富、更贴身、更具生命力的“文化合法性”。” | |
| Legislative legitimacy | Heritage professionals | “做方案的时候，考虑了相关法律法规的规定，如不允许在保护范围内建任何与文物保护无关的东西。在设计工程中特别邀请了当地考古部门对院子做了勘探，寻找 | (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016) |

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| | | 原有庙宇格局可能的痕迹，结果没有找到任何遗存，那么在这种情况下，设计依据了已经公布的保护范围的边界来处理。国家文物局最后能批准这个项目，也是因为专家认同了这样的设计原则。”（吕舟） | |
| Enhance the site's sense of existence | Other architects | “.....在现在这个场地里我最感动的一处空间，或者说最能够让我找到五龙庙这个空间存在感的场所，就是背后上去的北面那个台子，从那里眺望矮墙外面的田野、远山和被展牌提示和想象的古城遗址。这个场所点能够把历史与当下、遗迹与现代、人的行为与情怀、聚合在一起。这当然也正是建筑师精心营造的一处动人空间。”（李兴钢） | (Editorial of Architectural Journal 2016) |

Appendix 12 Introduction of Dongyi Longwang Temple

Dongyi Village

The village was mentioned as Dongyi Village in the historic chronographies of Year 11 of Guangxu Emperor (1885) and Year 45 of Kangxi Emperor (1706) of the Qing Dynasty and Year 19 of Wanli Emperor (1591) of the Ming Dynasty (Feng and Wang 1591 (1625); Zhang 1706; Cui 1885)¹²⁶. It is visible in the historic regional maps in these chronographies and belonged to various communes (*xiang* or *li*) in different periods. These chronographies also record that Lucheng County had belonged to Shangdang Prefecture before the Ming Dynasty, which was renamed Changzhi Prefecture in 1529 (Feng and Wang 1591 (1625)). While Shangdang no longer stands for any administrative region, it is still frequently used to describe this area with distinctive and consistent cultural characteristics. Unfortunately, not much more of the village history can be discovered from these historical records. Currently, Dongyi Village belongs to the local commune of Chengjiachuan District, whose management unit's office is in the village. The proximity to Lucheng has brought some characteristics of a townscape to the village's settlement space, with restaurants and shops lined along the main street into the village and a space for pop-up vendors next to the village square (Figure 83 & Figure 84).



Figure 83 (left) Shops along the main street (Tam 2018af).



Figure 84 (right) Pop-up vendors next to the village square (Tam 2018y).

The village today comprises residential courtyards mostly built after the 1950s, with some traditional courtyards still surviving. These traditional courtyards are adorned with more decorations than the more recent ones, with aspirational short phrases or the courtyards' names written above their gates' lintels. However, upon the 2018 fieldwork for this PhD research, these traditional courtyards were mostly dilapidated, some even on the verge of

¹²⁶ Some claim that the village used to be called 'Huangyi Village' (Shen 2008). However, no historical record has been identified to support that claim. It was called Dongyi Village in the 1591 chronography, which is the earliest one consulted during this research.

collapsing. Most of them did not seem to be fully occupied at the time. Such a situation is not uncommon in rural China. It suggests that families in the village are relatively affluent. They would either rebuild their homes or build a new one somewhere else, which is more economical than maintaining the traditional dwellings since these dwellings often have intricate timber decorations and structures requiring frequent maintenance (Figure 85). According to the community members, many villagers would seek occupations in Lucheng, where some of the senior members of the village committee used to be civil servants (Caretaker and community management unit officer in Dongyi Village 2018).

Besides Longwang Temple, there are a few other religious and public venues in the village (Figure 87). One historic village gate at the east boundary of the village still survives (Figure 86). Above the gateway is a small temple called Sanguan Pavilion. Upon the 2018 fieldwork, the gateway was still standing, but the temple building above it had already half-collapsed. Nevertheless, recent offerings were still present in front of the collapsed statue, which probably is a statue of Confucius based on the offerings. Within the village, there are a few small temples or shrines dedicated to *Guandi* (Marshall Guanyu) and *Guanyin* (Avalokiteśvara), both popular subjects of worship in the region. These small temples or shrines are still actively maintained or worshipped. Besides religious venues, there are several critical locations for social services, including the village square, the primary school and stage, and the community service centre, all post-1950 constructions. Next to the village square, tucked away in a small alley, is the historic Ancestral Temple (*Zushi Miao*), which is still intact but no longer hosts regular worshipping activities. The locations of the two ponds are still visible in the village, but both have dried out. To the west of the village is an open field with a mountain as the backdrop. As will be further explained below, these elements of the village's natural setting also play a part in the association between Longwang Temple and the local community.



Figure 85 (left and right) Intricate details of the traditional dwellings in Dongyi Village (Tam 2018j).



Figure 86 Historic village gate of Dongyi Village (Tam 2018h).

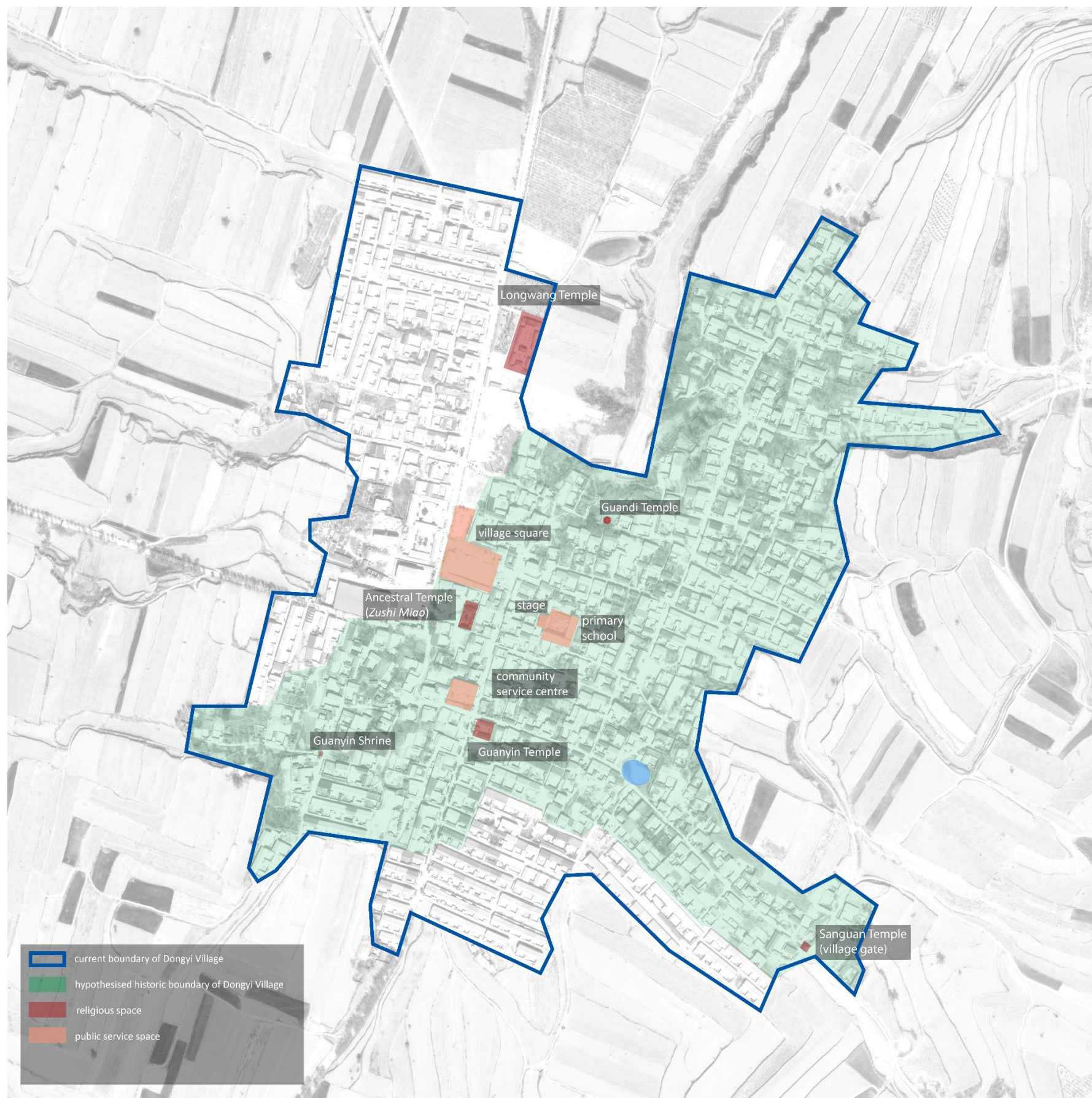


Figure 87 Religious and public spaces in Dongyi Village, base map: (Google Maps 2021)

Longwang Temple

There are relatively scarce historical records to inform about Longwang Temple's history. The surviving local chronographies of Lucheng from the Ming and Qing Dynasties do not mention the temple (Feng and Wang 1591 (1625); Zhang 1706; Cui 1885).¹²⁷ The historic steles in the temple have also been lost. Therefore, there is no known textual reference from which the temple's construction history can be confirmed. Based on typological studies of early timber buildings in the region, the main hall can be hypothesised to be a Jin Dynasty (1115-1234CE) structure (Xu 2003; Wang and Xu 2009; SACH 2015a).¹²⁸ The rest of the buildings are either from the Qing Dynasty, the Republic of China era, or new constructions from the 2013 restoration under the Southern Project.

The temple is on the edge of the current village settlement. There is an approximate boundary visible between the more historic area and the recent development of the village. It may be hypothesised that there used to be a short distance between the temple and the village's historic boundary (Figure 88). Currently, the approach to the village is from the road north of the village, which is connected with the primary motorway leading to the town of Lucheng. Considering its proximity to the town of Lucheng, it may also be hypothesised to have been one of the historic approaches to the village. If these above hypotheses were valid, Longwang Temple would have been seen by anyone approaching the village from this direction before reaching the village.

The temple complex was used as a village primary school during the 1950s-1960s. It became a middle school in 1977 and was designated a provincial PCHS in 1986, at which point the county cultural heritage department became the responsible government body for the site. However, it was not until 2004 that the middle school moved out, and the site went into the custody of the village committee, and subsequently, the Chengjiachuan community

¹²⁷ One Longwang Temple is mentioned in two chronographies from the Qing Dynasty (1706, 1885) and one from the Ming Dynasty (1591), but it is described to be within the town of Lucheng, while Dongyi Village is described to be outside of the town. Therefore, it is quite certain that this Longwang Temple is not the same as the one in Dongyi Village.

¹²⁸ There is no specific building archaeological study carried out for the main hall of Longwang Temple. The dating of the main structures is based on the typological study of early timber buildings in the region (Xu 2003). It is also stated in the Information Database of the National PCHS, published by SACH (SACH 2020). There is an inscription dating 1796AD ("*Jia Qing Yuan Nian Wu Yue*", the fifth lunar month of the first year of Jiaqing Emperor) found on one of the tiles of one of the roof spines, indicating that the tiles of the roofs might have been replaced during that time (The Project Department of the Restoration of Dongyi Longwang Temple 2012).

management unit (*Chengjiachuan Banshichu*). The Chengjiachuan management unit is representative of the temple's collective ownership. Some buildings were briefly used as dwellings from 2004 until 2006, when the site was designated a national PCHS. In 1992 and 2004, there were two minor repairs by the village and the local authority (Institute of Shanxi Ancient Architecture Conservation 2007). The restoration of Longwang Temple under the Southern Project was carried out in 2013 (National Heritage Centre of Tsinghua University 2015).



Figure 88. Map of Dongyi Village and Longwang Temple, base map: (Google Maps 2021)

Based on the on-site observation during this PhD research, there are currently two courtyards in the compound. The first courtyard is formed by the main gate, the stage and two side halls. The gate and the side halls are one-storey, while the stage is a two-storey structure. A stage faces towards the main hall in the second courtyard, and a gateway opens underneath the stage platform. Two flights of steps on both sides of the building lead to the platform on the first floor. At present, there are paths to go around the stage building to reach the second

courtyard. However, the gateway suggests that there used to be some form of dividing structure, either as walls or buildings that separate the first courtyard and the second one. Otherwise, the opening would not have been necessary. The second courtyard is formed by the stage, the main hall with two ‘ear halls’ (*duodian*), and two rows of side halls, two on each side (Figure 90).



Figure 89 The main hall before the 2013 restoration, May 2011(National Heritage Centre of Tsinghua University 2015)



Figure 90. The second courtyard of Longwang Temple, March 2018 (Tam 2018ad)

According to the restoration design portfolio, the buildings that were to be restored (*zhongdian xiufu*) included the main hall, the north side halls in the second courtyard, and the west ‘ear hall’ of the main hall. The rest of the buildings were subjected to ‘minor restoration of existing condition (*xianzhuang xiuzheng*)’¹²⁹. However, besides the apparent restoration of the side halls in the first courtyard, comparing the pre-restoration photos and post-restoration situation also shows that all the side halls and the gate have gone through significant intervention during the restoration. It is worth noting that there is an apparent differentiation regarding the caution towards intervention between the main hall and the rest of the buildings. Despite being labelled ‘major restoration’ in the restoration design, the principle of ‘minimum intervention’ was much better executed on the main hall’s intervention than the side halls, which were subjected to ‘minor restoration’ but were reconstructed almost entirely (Institute of Shanxi Ancient Architecture Conservation 2007). It is not possible to confirm the rationale behind such decisions, but the implications of these interventions contributed to the community’s decision to use the temple after the restoration, which is elaborated in Section 9.2.1.

Comparing the initial survey drawings of the temple’s layout and photos taken before the 2013 restoration, the restoration design drawings and the post-restoration situation reveal some

¹²⁹ These terms (restored – *zhongdian xiufu*; minor restoration of existing condition – *xianzhuang xiuzheng*) referring to the specific intervention categories stipulated in the 2015 Chinese Principles (ICOMOS China 2015, p. 90).

significant changes in the temple's layout and buildings. According to the survey drawings and photos taken before the restoration, the side halls in the first courtyard extended into the second courtyard. On both sides of the stage, walls divided the first and the second courtyards (Figure 97). An opening on the east wall allowed access to the second courtyard, and the gateway under the stage appeared to be closed in the pre-restoration photos (Figure 91) (Institute of Shanxi Ancient Architecture Conservation 2007). The initial survey drawings and photos before and during the 2013 restoration indicate that there were traces of two side-dressing towers (*zhuanglou*) found on the ground on both sides of the stage (Figure 92 - Figure 94). The two bricked-up openings on the sidewalls of the stage indicate that the former dressing towers were connected to the stage on the first floor, which would have been easy access for the performers to enter the stage (Figure 93 & Figure 94) (National Heritage Centre of Tsinghua University 2015).



Figure 91 The north facade of the stage, pre-restoration, 2007 (Institute of Shanxi Ancient Architecture Conservation 2007)



Figure 92 The stone base of the dressing tower revealed during the 2013 restoration, May 2013 (National Heritage Centre of Tsinghua University 2015)



Figure 93 The east sidewall of the stage before the restoration, March 2011 (National Heritage Centre of Tsinghua University 2015)



Figure 94 The west sidewall of the stage after the division wall was demolished, August 2012 (National Heritage Centre of Tsinghua University 2015)

The restoration design drawings show that the side halls in the first courtyard were to be rebuilt smaller, leaving room for the dressing towers to be reconstructed (Figure 98). Despite the restoration design portfolio labelled the intervention as ‘repair upon current state’ (*xianzhuang xiuzheng*), a second-degree intervention¹³⁰, the two side halls in the first courtyard were really reconstructions. According to the restoration design, the reconstructed dressing towers would be the division of the first and second courtyards (Institute of Shanxi Ancient Architecture Conservation 2007). However, the dressing towers were not reconstructed in the end, which explains the paths going around the stage and the space next to it at present. Instead, two flights of stairs were added to the side walls to reach the stage. According to the process records during the restoration, two very shallow trenches were open to reveal the foundation of the dressing towers (Figure 92).

It is unclear what decisions were made to change the reconstruction plan. There are some stone linings at the sites of the two dressing towers, but there is no sign to explain what they are. The pre-restoration survey drawing shows a well on the east side of the temple gate (Figure 91), which was believed to be related to rain prayer (Shen 2008)¹³¹. The restoration design’s master plan shows that the well is no longer there, but no mention of the well’s intervention is in the design portfolio.

Traces of the school era were wiped out during this restoration but could still be seen from pre-restoration photos, including windows and doors added to the façade of the stage and the main hall (Figure 91 & Figure 89) (Institute of Shanxi Ancient Architecture Conservation 2007). The side halls before the 2013 restoration were possibly reconstructed during the school period, especially since they sat on top of the remains of the dressing towers. After the 2013 restoration, a small public garden was created to the west of the temple upon demolishing some dormitories and kitchens built against the temple’s western exterior wall, and the surrounding environment was renovated (Figure 96 - Figure 98).

¹³⁰ According to the China Principles, the first-degree is ‘major restoration’ (*zhongdian xiufu*), which ‘may involve disassembly and replacement of elements or addition of new fabric’, whereas ‘minor restoration of existing condition’ (*xianzhuang xiuzheng*) usually means simple repairs (ICOMOS China 2015, p. 90).

¹³¹ In this article, the well was mistakenly described to be on the west side of the gate.



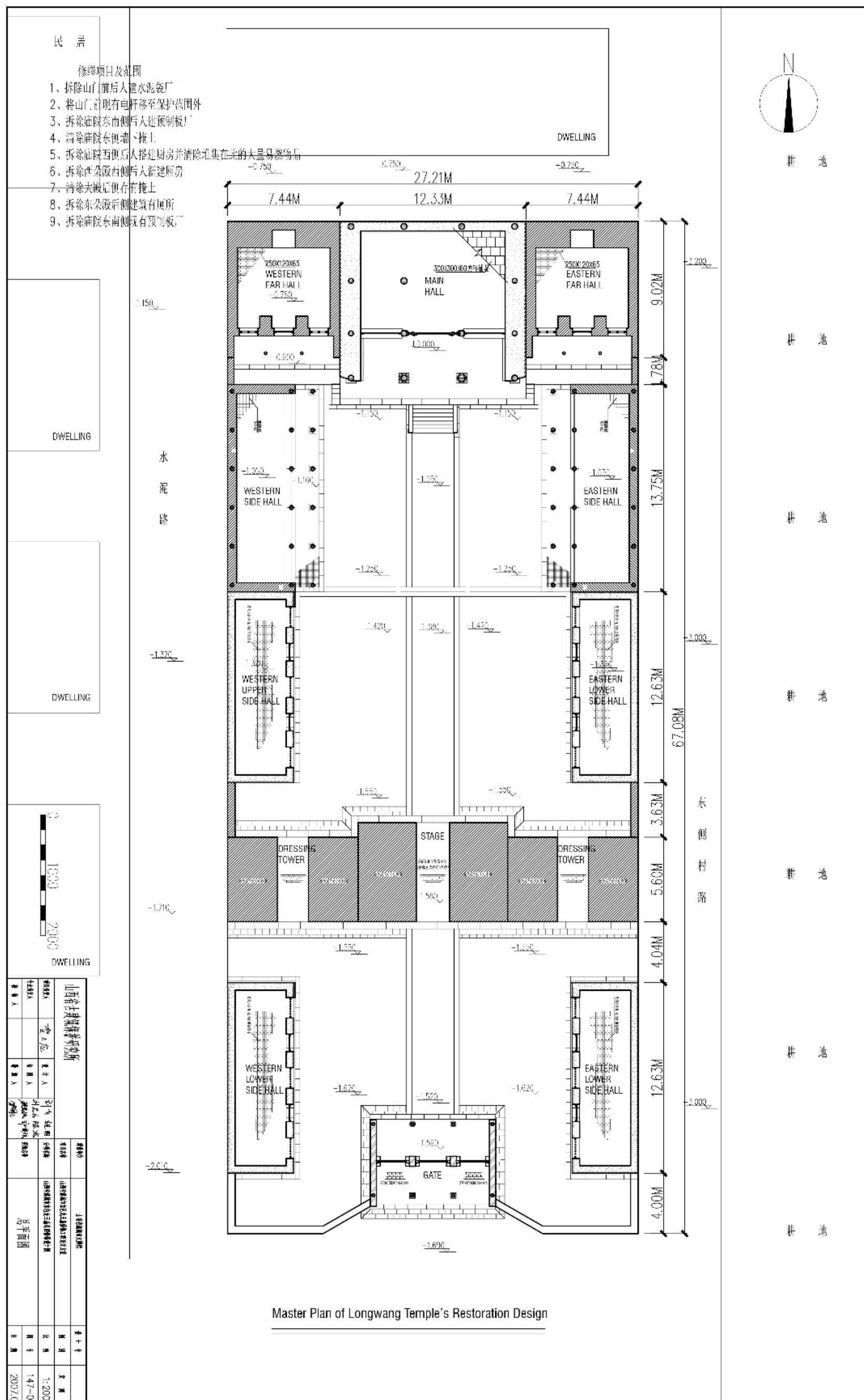
Figure 95 The stage of Longwang Temple, March 2018 (Tam 2018ag)



Figure 96 West side of the temple after restoration, March 2018 (Tam 2018ak)

At present, religious activities are happening in the temple around the main hall, where villagers or visitors pay tribute to the Dragon Kings, the Yan Emperor, and some other deities. According to a community member, religious activities were still happening even during the school era, albeit rather quietly (Volunteer at Dongyi Longwang Temple 2018). The temple is considered a Taoist temple by the community members now, but according to the local chronographies, worshipping the dragon king was considered to be part of the belief system that worships elements of nature and society rather than Taoism (Feng and Wang 1591 (1625); Zhang 1706; Cui 1885).¹³² The temple did not officially become a religious venue following the religious policy of the 1980s, and it is not a registered religious space under SARA (SARA 2018). The two side halls of the second courtyard are now installed with exhibitions. The one on the east side has a brief and somewhat dated exhibition about an intangible heritage expression from Dongyi village – *Kangzhuang*. The one on the west side is a relatively new exhibition about agriculture and the everyday life of this village and the region. It is one of the very few national PCHS seen in the case region during this PhD research where the local community can be seen to try to use the space actively. Evidence supporting how these actions contribute to enhancing the associations between actors within the heritage assemblage of Longwang Temple is further elaborated in Section 9.2.

¹³² In these chronographies, the descriptions of temples are divided into two categories, '*tanmiao*' (altars and temples of Confucius and other Chinese indigenous deities), and '*siguan*' (Buddhist and Taoist temples). Although the Longwang Temple in Dongyi Village was not mentioned in the chronographies, the other Longwang Temple in the town of Lucheng was included under the first category.



The Longtaitou Festival

According to the local community, Dongyi village holds one of the largest annual temple fairs in the region, a significant festival called Dragon Raising-head (*Longtaitou*) (Caretaker and community management unit officer in Dongyi Village 2018). This festival was mentioned in the historic chronographies by its formal name '*Yin Long*' (attracting the dragon), and *Longtaitou* was recorded as its common name. According to the chronographies, people were supposed to spread ash on the walls to retain the dragon, which symbolises bringing precipitation and water. It is a festival to mark the start of the spring and bring life back to the world after a cold winter (*jingzhe*) (Feng and Wang 1591 (1625); Zhang 1706; Cui 1885). The festival is celebrated in other temples in the region and beyond. According to the villagers, since the restoration of the Longwang temple in 2013, the local community decided to 'revitalise' the festival to make it grander (Caretaker of CZ Temple 13 2018; Exhibition initiator of Longwang Temple 2018; Volunteer at Dongyi Longwang Temple 2018).

According to Shen (2008), the *Longtaitou* festival usually lasts for five days, during which the temple fair lasts for three days. During the five days, the main ceremonies include 'water-fetching' (*jibai qushui*)¹³³, 'drying/showing the Dragon King' (*shai longwang*), 'slashing the drought demon' (*kan hanba*), and 'Saishe performances' (a series of performances or practices belonging to a local cultural tradition called *Saishe*). However, the setup and schedule of these ceremonies and performances are indeed flexible, as the situation observed in the 2018 fieldwork was different from how it was described in the literature. The 2018 *Longtaitou* festival lasted for three days, from the 1st to the 3rd day of the second lunar month. The themes of the three days were 'inviting the Dragon King' (*qing longwang*), 'the Dragon King's parade' (*longwang chuyou*), and 'sending off the Dragon King' (*song longwang /yuan shen*).

On the first day, a ceremony was held in the morning by the field to the northeast of the village facing the eastern mountain range to invite the Dragon King. A parade was then formed at Longwang Temple. The village seniors led the parade, carrying the Dragon King's tablet, which was usually stored in the temple (Figure 99). They were followed by a table of offerings carried by villagers. Villagers carried a long dragon puppet (Figure 100), and a local music band playing traditional folk instruments accompanied the parade. The parade went around the village and returned to the temple, where the village seniors prayed to the Dragon King and other heavenly deities, following the instructions of a Taoist priest hired from Lucheng.

¹³³ It entails praying to the Dragon King, rain praying, and fetching the 'spirit water' (*shenshui*).

The priest held an instruction book and called out specific prayers and instructions during the ceremonies.

A local traditional performance called '*Kangzhuang*' (lit. 'carrying costumes') was held in the afternoon. It is a parade of villagers carrying their children on top of poles. The children were strapped onto the seats on top of the poles, dressed up as various deities or characters. The parade started at the village square and went around the square for several rounds while the local band and dance troupe performed. The parade then went around the village on a different and longer route than the Dragon King parade in the morning. The *Kangzhuang* parade route went through some of the historic parts of the village, past a couple of temples and shrines, and paused and circled twice at a small square and the social service centre. It ended back at the village square, where the parade circled a few more times (Figure 101).



Figure 99 (left) Parade to invite the Dragon King, March 2018 (Tam 2018v)



Figure 100 (right) Offering table and the dragon puppet, March 2018 (Tam 2018t)

The temple was relatively quiet in the afternoon. Spontaneous worshippers would drop by to offer incense and pray, and some preparations were made for the next day by the village's volunteers. In the late afternoon, traditional opera was performed at the stage in the primary school. Despite the drizzling weather, villagers and visitors brought their tuk-tuks or stood in the corridors of the school buildings to watch the performance.

The second day was the main event of the festival. Some differences can be observed compared to the first day, indicating the significance of this day. Ceremonies were held in the temple in the morning, packed with villagers and visitors from the region. The theme for this day was the 'parade of the Dragon King'. The first part of the ceremonies was a prayer for inviting the Dragon King to come out of the temple. The ceremony was performed by the village seniors and the Taoist priest. There were also representatives of donors who sponsored the festival and honoured village members who had successful careers elsewhere. A group of musicians, led by the inheritors of a provincial ICH music performance *Yuehu*, was invited from another village in the region to perform at the ceremony instead of the local music

band. The *Yuehu* music performance is one of the essential elements of the ceremony, part of the *Saishe* culture of the region (Shen 2008). After the ceremony, a statue of the Dragon King, previously stored in one of the ear halls, was carried out in a parade onto the street. The parade was led by the village seniors, the *Yuehu* music crew, the offering table, the dragon puppet, and the local dancing crew. They were joined by the *Kuangzhuang* parade along the street.

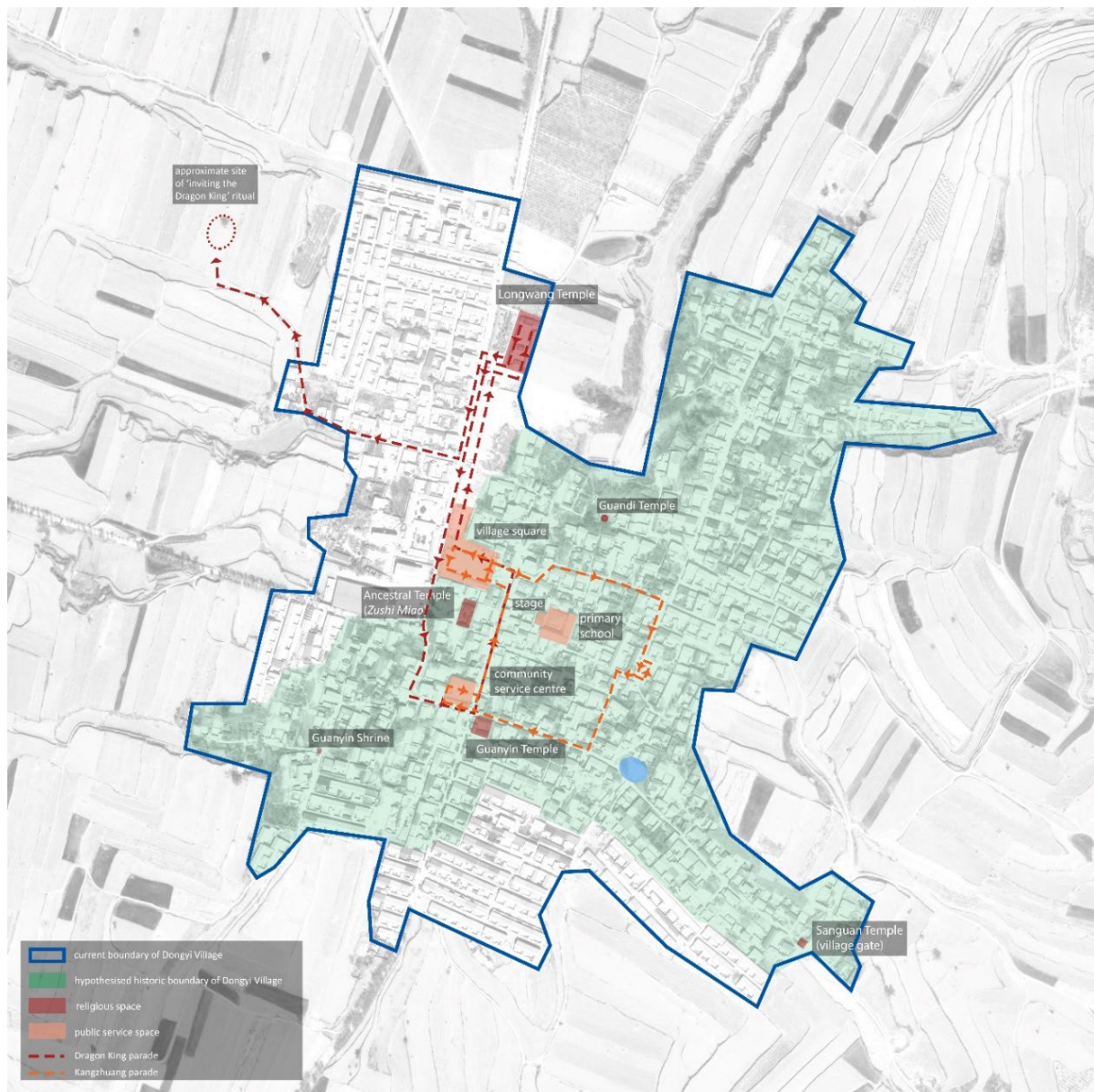


Figure 101 Parade routes of day 1 of the *Longtaitou* festival, base map: (Google Maps 2021)



Figure 102 The *Kangzhuang* parade during the *Longtaitou* festival in Dongyi Village, March 2018 (Tam 2018n)

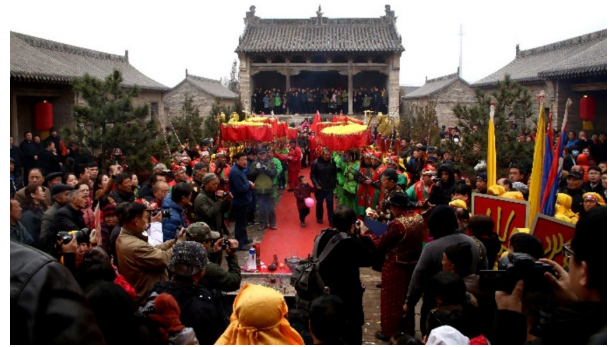


Figure 103 Longwang Temple packed with worshippers and visitors on the second day of the *Longtaitou* festival, March 2018 (Tam 2018q)

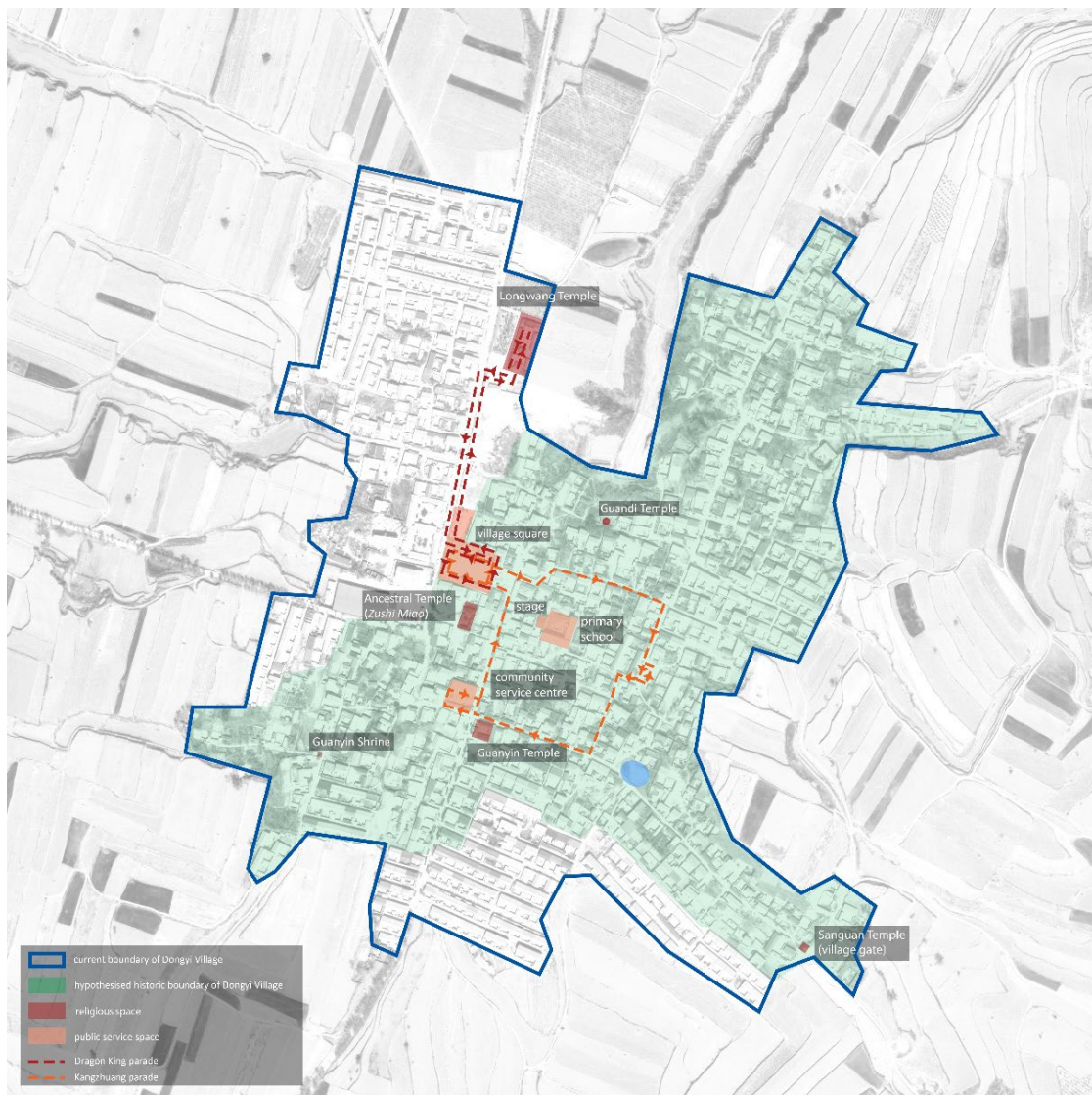


Figure 104 Parade routes of Day 2 of the *Longtaitou* festival, base map: (Google Maps 2021)

The parade went around the village square before heading back to the temple. A closing prayer ensued as the Dragon King statue was put on the porch of the main hall for people to worship and present offerings. As the official ceremony drew to a close, spontaneous worshippers from the village and the surrounding area came to present their offerings and prayers. Besides worshippers, some also appeared to be travelling priests as they performed long verses of chants. A village volunteer recited prayers for each worshipper based on their specific wishes of the year. Whether deemed formal or informal, all types of religious practices were welcome in the temple. Besides worshipping, some villagers and visitors visited the exhibition space, especially the community museum in the west side hall. The festival was also an occasion for social reunions. Friends and family either enjoyed a lunch feast at the local restaurants, villagers' homes or some local snacks in the pop-up market. In the afternoon, villagers and visitors enjoyed more opera performances at the primary school.

The third day was a closing ceremony to send off the Dragon King. Ceremonies were performed at the village square by the village seniors and the Taoist priest. The local band once again performed music for the ceremonies, accompanied by the local dancing crew. A prayer for the village community's peace, health, and prosperity in the coming year was read out by the village senior and burnt. The three-day festival was then concluded with the statue of the Dragon King returned to the temple. The weather had been cloudy and drizzling during the three-day festival and promptly cleared out as the Dragon King was 'sent off'. Coincidence or not, it had only strengthened the villagers' belief that nature and human spirits are indeed connected. Such a connection is only one of many that could be observed during the 2018 festival. The actors' interactions and connections will be further discussed in the next section.



Figure 105 The parade to send off the Dragon King, March 2018, (Tam 2018w)



Figure 106 Rituals to conclude the festival at the village square, March 2018 (Tam 2018ac)

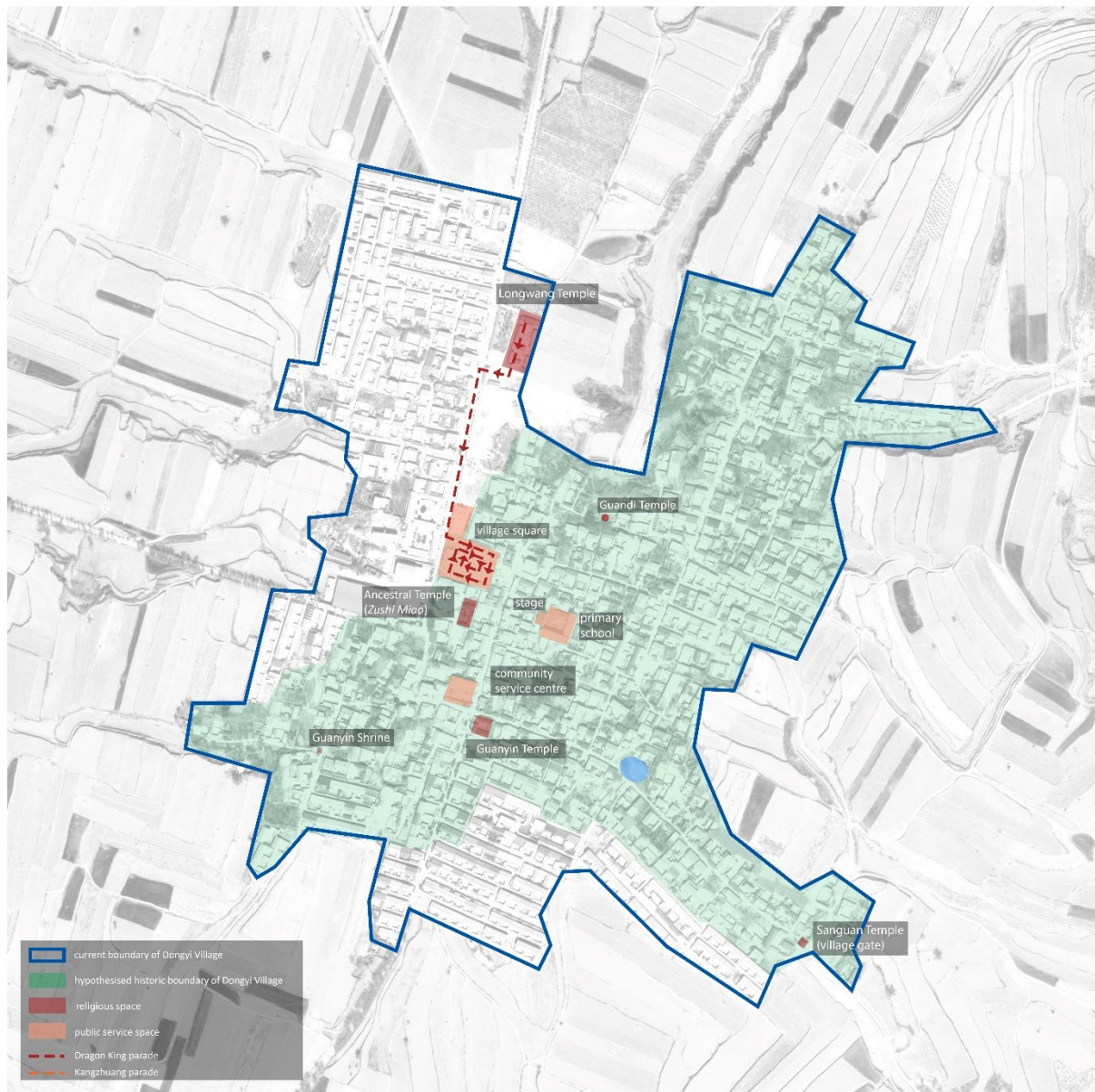


Figure 107 Parade route of the Day 3 of the *Longtaitou* festival, base map: (Google Maps 2021)

Appendix 13 Examples of collated interview data

(interviews with caretakers in the Changzhi Municipality – refer to interview summaries in Appendix 15 for further details)

| Temples (anonymised) | temple fair? | Was a school? | Interview data (caretakers) | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|--|---|---|------------------------------------|---|--|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | | | personal connection with the sites/ how many years as caretakers | opinion on the site's function (should it be open to the public?) | opinion on community participation | relationship with the local authority | challenge | still do agriculture work? | went to school in the temple? |
| CZ Temple 1 | N | | enthusiast and advocate | They can be centres for studying historic buildings, cultural exhibitions, and specialised study trips | | | not enough funding to ensure security; no new tour guides | | |
| CZ Temple 2 | N | | | | | | | | |
| CZ Temple 3 | N? | | | | | Direct advocacy and advice | | N | |
| CZ Temple 5 | Villagers in the surrounding come here to worship on the first day of each lunar month, but there isn't a lot of worshipping activities. The temple fairs are held outside of the temple elsewhere. | | | ICH can use these PCHS. There is no more monk here after the ROC period. It is difficult for it to become religious venue again. | | Report to the county department, who monitors and supervises on daily bases | So hard to commute | N | |
| CZ Temple 6 | | Used to be storage space and barn for animals. The murals were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. | Was also caretaker of the other temple in the village | There should be statues and it would be nice if the community members can come here to play chess. | | | There was an incident when someone forced the door a couple of years ago | | |
| CZ Temple 7 | The villagers would come and worship during the Spring Festival, but the temple fair is held in the new temple. | | | Open during the Spring Festival for worshipping, but not open for the rest of the year. The villagers don't really want to watch opera performance in the temple. They prefer it at the stage in the village. | | | | Y | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|--|--|--|---|---|--|---|---|
| CZ Temple 9 | Y | | enthusiastic about Venice Charter, village chief | There needs to be 'spirit' in the temple. During the political movement in the 1940s, the statues were destroyed. Now it's very strict and we can't install new statues. There is not much worshipping at the temple because there are 5 other temples in the village. | I think caretakers should be elected through recommendations from the villages. In this way, the caretakers can foster support from the villages and the caretakers can help out during temple fairs in different villages. | | | | |
| CZ Temple 10 | N? | | father and son managers | Mostly enthusiasts come here. Not a lot of worshippers. We do charge for tickets and the county department set up a small new exhibition. New statues were installed in 2003. | | | The temple is so secluded. It is quite lonely up here. | | |
| CZ Temple 11 | Y, Temple fair on the 13th day of the 4th lunar month. During the Spring Festival there is dance performance. | | Have been caretaker for over 30 years | The temple should always have worshippers. It would be nice to have more tourists too. | The local residents should participate in the caretaking | We call (the authority) every day to report | Not enough salary | Y | |
| CZ Temple 12 | Y, people from nearby counties and this village come here to worship. Temple fair is on the 6th day of the 6th lunar month. The village organises opera performance. People come to worship in the temple. | Y. It was a commune before the Cultural Revolution. During the CR the stage was demolished. It became a school afterwards until 1975-78. Worship only started again in 1996 after a restoration. | I've been caretaker for 5-6 years. The village recommended me (to the authority) | | | We report to the county museum. The county and municipal authorities also come here to inspect. | It's a great responsibility, a bit too much. | Y | Y |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|----------------|---|
| CZ Temple 13 | Y2 | Y | former carpenter | community museum; temple; study trips from academics and students | | | | | Y |
| CZ Temple 14 | | | one of them an outcast | | | We report via Wechat to the county every day, regardless of any incident | | | |
| CZ Temple 15 | Y/N Temple fair on the 23rd day of the 6th lunar month | Y | The village chief examined us and chose us | The sites shouldn't be used for anything. It is more important to protect them. | | We have a Wechat group where we can report to the county department | Not enough pay. We still need to distribute labour even when we have busy farming seasons | Y | Y |
| CZ Temple 16 | | | I've been a caretaker for more than a decade | I think it is good to open it up and have more visitors, but it would be difficult to manage | | Spontaneous inspection from the county | It's quite simple | Y | |
| CZ Temple 17 | | The statues were gone during the Cultural Revolution | 3-4 years | | It's usually not open. It's too much trouble to manage. If they want to develop tourism, we need to get better pay. Worshippers are not allowed even during the first and 15th days of the lunar months. They go to the other temple to worship. I'd rather we don't let anyone come to this temple. | | We have a Wechat group where we can report to the county department | Not enough pay | |

Appendix 14 Interview questions

Actor group A: National officials in the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH)

Q1: What's your responsibility regarding national timber architectural heritage conservation in China?

Q2: What's the state policy most relevant to your work in general?

Q3: How do you work with the other administrative levels?

Q4: How do you work with heritage professionals?

Q5: What are the most challenging parts of your job?

Q6: What's your understanding of sustainable conservation?

Q7: What do you think is the biggest challenge regarding sustainable conservation in China?

Q8: What do you think is the most crucial element to provide a solution to that challenge(s)?

Actor group B: Local level officials in related heritage management department (provincial, municipal, and district/county level)

Q1: What's your responsibility regarding timber architectural heritage conservation in your region?

Q2: How do you work with the other administrative levels?

Q3: How do you work with heritage professionals?

Q4: What are the most challenging parts of your job?

Q5: How does your responsibility relate to the routine maintenance of the heritage sites?

Q6: What do you think about having other kinds of functions in historic temples? (including tourism development)

Q7: What do you think about having private sectors involved in using and managing national heritage sites?

Q8: Who do you think should be participating in the maintenance of historic timber buildings?

Q9: What's your vision for these heritage sites?

Actor group C: On-site managers of the heritage sites (museum staffs, village heads/responsible person, might overlap with group B and group D)

Q1: What's your responsibility regarding the heritage sites? (note to self: It might not be their full-time job to manage these sites)

Q2: Are you getting a subsidy from the state? Would you mind sharing it? (only to interviewees who are not full-time staff at museums etc.)

Q3: How do you work with the other administrative levels?

Q4: How do you work with heritage professionals?

Q5: What are the most challenging parts of your job?

Q6: How easy is it to gain resources to support the daily maintenance of the sites (expertise, financial, etc.)

Q7: What do you think about having other kinds of functions in historic temples? (including tourism development)

Q8: Who do you think should be participating in the maintenance of historic timber buildings?

Actor group D: Local community

Q1: How important is this site to you?

Q2: What do you do in and around the site throughout the year?

Q3: Do you have free access to the site?

Q4: What do you think about the conservation of the sites?

Q5: What do you wish to be improved?

Q6: What can you do if you want to make a suggestion?

Q7: Who do you think should be responsible for the maintenance of historic timber buildings?

Q8: Would you be willing to volunteer/learn to get involved in the maintenance/management of the sites? To what extent?

Q9: What do you think about having other kinds of functions in historic temples? (including tourism development)

Actor group E: Heritage professionals

Q1: What's your responsibility regarding the conservation of timber architectural heritage sites?

Q2: How do you work with all levels of administration?

Q3: How do you work with the local community?

Q4: What are the biggest challenges regarding your work?

Q5: What's your understanding of sustainable conservation?

Q6: What do you think is the biggest challenge regarding sustainable conservation in China?

Q7: What do you think about having private sectors involved in using and managing national heritage sites?

Q8: What do you think is the role of conservation professionals in the process of sustainable conservation?

Actor group F: Craftsmen and artisans

Q1: Have you been involved in a conservation project?

Q2: What are your specialities?

Q3: Where and how did you learn your skills?

Q4: What do you need to acquire to get involved in a conservation project?

Q5: What do you think should be done to make sure that the craftsmanship is transmitted to the future generation?

Q6: Who do you think should be responsible for the maintenance of historic timber buildings?

Q7: What do you think are the most challenging parts regarding the maintenance of historic timber buildings?

Appendix 15 List of interviews and interview summaries

Interview summaries can be accessed through this link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1TbHOOy7VTXYr9lQF35lELj94yKglzZox?usp=sharing>

| Date | Municipality | Interviewees (anonymised) |
|---------------------------|--------------|---|
| 26/02/2018 | Beijing | Heritage Professional 1 |
| | | Heritage Professional 2 |
| 27/02/2018 | | Heritage Professional 3 |
| 28/02/2018 | | Heritage Professional 4 |
| 06/03/2018 (pilot day) | Changzhi | Local officials 1&2 |
| | | Site manager of CZ Temple 1 |
| | | Site manager of CZ Temple 2 |
| | | Site manager of CZ Temple 1&2 at CZ Temple 3 |
| | | Site manager of CZ Temple 1&2 at CZ Temple 4 |
| 07/03/2018 (pilot day) | Changzhi | Local official 3 |
| | | Caretaker of CZ Temple 5 |
| | | Caretaker of CZ Temple 6 |
| | | Caretaker of CZ Temple 7 |
| | | Caretaker of CZ Temple 8 |
| | | Caretaker of CZ Temple 9 |
| | Changzhi | Caretakers of CZ Temple 10 |
| 08/03/2018 | | Caretaker of CZ Temple 11 |
| | | Caretaker of CZ Temple 12 |
| | | Caretaker of CZ Temple 13 and community officer |
| | Changzhi | Caretaker of CZ Temple 14 |
| 09/03/2018 | | Caretaker of CZ Temple 15 |
| | | Caretakers of CZ Temple 16 |
| | | Caretaker of CZ Temple 17 |
| | | Local official at CZ Temple 18 |
| | | Local official at CZ Temple 19 |
| | Jincheng | Local official at CZ Temple 20 |
| 10/03/2018 | | Caretaker of JC Temple 1 |
| | | Caretaker of JC Temple 2 |
| | Jincheng | Caretaker of JC Temple 3 |
| 11/03/2018 | | Caretaker of JC Temple 4 |
| 12/03/2018 | Jincheng | Local official 4 |
| | | Caretakers of JC Temple 5 |
| | | Caretaker and former carpenter of JC Temple 6 |
| | | Caretaker of JC Temple 7 |
| | | Caretaker of JC Temple 8 |
| | | Caretaker of JC Temple 9 |
| 13/03/2018 | Jincheng | Caretaker of JC Temple 10, Community member 1&2 |
| | | Caretaker of JC Temple 11 |
| | | Caretaker of JC Temple 12 |

| | | |
|------------|----------|---|
| | | Site manager of JC Temple 13 |
| 14/03/2018 | Jincheng | Caretaker of JC Temple 14 |
| | | Caretaker of JC Temple 15 |
| 15/03/2018 | Jincheng | Local official 5 |
| | | Caretaker of JC Temple 16 |
| | | Site manager of JC Temple 17 |
| | | Caretaker of JC Temple 18 |
| | | Caretaker of JC Temple 19 |
| 16/03/2018 | Jincheng | Local official 6 |
| | | Caretaker of JC Temple 20 |
| | | Caretaker of JC Temple 21 |
| | | Caretaker of JC Temple 22 |
| 17/03/2018 | Changzhi | Dragon Raising-head Festival in Longwang Temple in Dongyi Village (community members, volunteers, caretaker, visitors) |
| 18/03/2018 | Changzhi | Dragon Raising-head Festival in Longwang Temple in Dongyi Village (community members, volunteers, caretaker, visitors) |
| 19/03/2018 | Changzhi | Dragon Raising-head Festival in Longwang Temple in Dongyi Village (community members, volunteers, caretaker, visitors) |
| 20/03/2018 | Changzhi | Caretaker of CZ Temple 21 |
| 21/03/2018 | Yuncheng | Local officials 7&8 |
| | | Site manager of YC Temple 1 |
| | | YC Temple 2 (Municipal-level officials, county-level officials, onsite manager, project design company, construction company, supervision company (inspection)) |
| 22/03/2018 | Yuncheng | Caretaker of YC Temple 3, LO9 |
| | | Caretaker of YC Temple 4 |
| | | Caretaker and nun at YC Temple 5 |
| 23/03/2018 | Yuncheng | Local official 10 |
| | | Caretaker of YC Temple 6 |
| | | Caretaker of YC Temple 7 |
| | | Caretaker of YC Temple 8 |
| | | Caretaker and tour guide of YC Temple 9 |
| | | Caretaker of YC Temple 10 |
| 24/03/2018 | Jincheng | Site managers of JC Temple 23 |
| 08/09/2018 | Beijing | Heritage Professional 5 |
| 10/09/2018 | Beijing | Heritage Professional 6 |
| 11/09/2018 | Beijing | State official 1 |
| 12/09/2018 | Beijing | Heritage Professional 7 |
| 14/09/2018 | Beijing | Provincial official 1 |
| 17/09/2018 | Taiyuan | Heritage Professional 8 |
| 18/09/2018 | Taiyuan | Provincial official 2 |
| | | Provincial official 3 |
| | | Provincial official 4 |

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Tam, L. 2013d. Desk and stool from the school period inside the stage of Baiyu Temple.

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Tam, L. 2013f. Frame of the added ceiling from the school period in the stage of Baiyu Temple.

Tam, L. 2013g. Jiaodi Baiyu Temple, seen from the hill on the opposite side.

Tam, L. 2013h. Jiaodi Village and agricultural field seen from Baiyu Temple.

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Tam, L. 2018f. Elevation of the main hall from the corridor towards the temple ground of Guangrenwang Temple.

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Tam, L. 2018h. Historic village gate of Dongyi Village.

Tam, L. 2018i. Information panel about the natural setting of Guangrenwang Temple with Zhongtiao Mountain in view.

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Tam, L. 2018k. Introduction space with a section of the main hall and timeline display at Guangrenwang Temple.

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Tam, L. 2018n. The Kangzhuang parade during the Longtaitou festival in Dongyi Village.

Tam, L. 2018o. Limited view of the main hall's roof from the entrance staircase in post make-over Guangrenwang Temple.

Tam, L. 2018p. Limited view of the main hall's roof from the entrance staircase of Guangrenwang Temple.

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Tam, L. 2018r. Main hall of Jiwang Temple (1023-1032 CE), Wanrong County, Yuncheng Municipality.

Tam, L. 2018s. New entrance with flights of steps towards the ticket office at the southeast corner of the museum at Guangrenwang Temple.

Tam, L. 2018t. Offering table and the dragon puppet, day 1 of Longtaitou Festival of Dongyi Longwang Temple.

Tam, L. 2018u. The pair of steles from 1212, recording Donghaishen Ci's reconstruction, Baiyu Temple.

Tam, L. 2018v. Parade to invite the Dragon King, day 1 of the Longtaitou Festival at Dongyi Longwang Temple.

Tam, L. 2018w. The parade to send off the Dragon King at the Longwang Temple temple fair.

Tam, L. 2018x. Plaque with names of donors and participants of the Project at Guangrenwang Temple.

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