

War and revolution as national heritage

'Red Tourism' in China

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Heritage, tourism and national identity: reexamining the triangle

It is now clear that heritage is inextricably intertwined with nation-building, on the one hand, and the development of tourism, on the other. The triangular relations between heritage, tourism and political identity have been nicely summarised by Ashworth (1995), who draws a diagram and brings up three propositions: (1) heritage contributes toward political identity; (2) heritage supports tourism; and (3) heritage tourism contributes toward the individual's appreciation of places and thus political identification; this idea is assumed in the educational and socialisation functions of heritage. These relations are succinctly illustrated in Figure 14.1. Ashworth further points out that each of the apices in the diagram has different sets of links with wider systems of which they are integral parts.

While these three propositions are quite illuminating, we may reverse the relations and raise the questions: How do political identity and/or state ideology affect the perception of heritage? How does tourism contribute to the construction of heritage? And how does the state manipulate the relations among the three to maximise its gains? Indeed, if heritage is a contemporary product that uses the past to serve present needs, we may ask: who is constructing the product, what is selected to be the heritage and for what purposes? We need to be attentive to the social, political and historical contexts in which these relations are established. This is especially the case when it comes to the heritage of conflict, tragedy and violence. There has been significant research on post-conflict heritage, with a particular focus on issues of memorialisation and remembrance (see amongst others Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996; Winter 2007; Logan and Reeves 2008). In such contexts, it is important to be aware of the implications of both the government policies and the economic forces converging to shape the nature of heritage sites.

This chapter will probe into these issues by examining so-called 'Red Tourism' in contemporary China. Originally a loose term referring to the tours that visit the sites related to the wars and revolutions led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), Red Tourism emerged in the late 1990s and gradually gained nationwide popularity through promotion by the state. Promoted in an explicitly nationalistic tone and guided by different patriotic themes, Red Tourism organises trips to historical sites related to the communist revolution or anti-imperialist

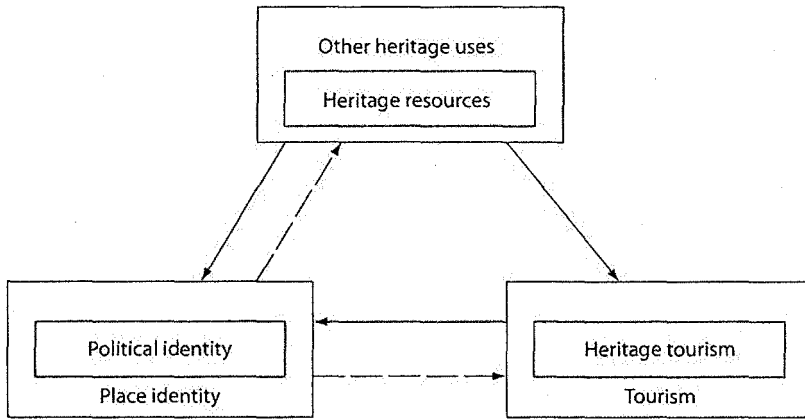


Figure 14.1 Triangular relations between heritage, place identity and tourism (adapted from Ashworth 1995: 69)

wars (such as the War of Resistance against Japan and the Korean War) that are portrayed as 'historico-cultural heritage of patriotic spirits' for the Chinese nation. As the state makes it explicit that the promotion of Red Tourism has multiple goals as it contains political, economic and cultural projects, this chapter argues that Red Tourism should not be seen as merely part of the state's propaganda for patriotic ideology; rather, its development is intertwined with the trend of commodification under the impact of the market economy, as well as with the rise of consumer culture that highlights leisure and pleasure of the rapidly growing numbers of tourists. By commodifying such 'historical heritage' of war and revolution for consumption in the tourist market, the CCP is able to revive memories about the revolutionary past in older generations, while passing them onto the younger generations who have grown up in a relatively affluent society where such memories are fading away. During this process, contradictions, paradoxes and ironies emerge from time to time when the political ideology, economic forces and cultural logics are at odds with each other. In addition, when memories about war and revolution are preserved as 'historico-cultural heritage' of the nation, moral and ethical issues also arise and need to be further examined.

The following discussion is divided into four sections. In the first section, I analyse the meanings attributed to Red Tourism, each of which corresponds to a certain logic that shapes the development of Red Tourism. In the second and third sections, I use Yan'an as a case to illustrate the rise of Red Tourism and to analyse the main tensions and controversies that have emerged from the intertwining of different shaping forces behind the expansion of this kind of tourism. In the concluding section, I explore some ethical issues concerning the reconciliation between the PRC and neighbouring countries such as Japan and Taiwan in the East Asian region.

Seizing the opportunity: Red Tourism at a historical conjuncture

In 2005, the central government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) issued the *Outline of the National Plan for Developing Red Tourism* (referred to hereafter as *Outline*). This plan defines Red Tourism as 'thematic tourist activities that visit historic sites or monuments of the great achievements that the CCP led the people to accomplish during the revolution and war periods; use the revolutionary history, revolutionary deeds (*shiji*) and revolutionary spirits as their contents; and organise and/or receive tourists to remember and learn the past'. In terms of content, Red

Tourism is meant to reflect eight dimensions: (1) the important events during the period of 'New Democratic Revolution' (*xin minzhuzhuyi geming shiqi*); (2) the revolutionary bases of the CCP regime during the Land Revolution Wars; (3) the revolutionary spirits of the Long March; (4) the War of Resistance against Japan under the leadership of the CCP; (5) the important battles and events during the Liberation War; (6) the Patriotic United Front (*aiguo tongyi zhanxian*) formed by all ethnic minorities under the leadership of the CCP; (7) the growing-up experience and great achievements of the old generation of proletariat revolutionaries; and (8) the revolutionary martyrs in all periods of history who sacrificed their lives to struggle for the independence of the nation and for the liberation of the people. As we can see from this laundry list, all of these dimensions are directly or indirectly related to wars and/or revolution. Consequently, armed struggles and military conflicts are recurrent themes at most sites related to Red Tourism.

Since the promulgation of the *Outline*, Red Tourism has achieved the status of a proper name and it has become official policy to promote Red Tourism on both central and local levels. The *Outline* attributes four meanings to Red Tourism, each of which, in turn, corresponds to a structural condition that makes Red Tourism possible. The four meanings brought up in the *Outline* indicate that the state is highly aware of the structural opportunity at the present historical conjuncture when the promotion of Red Tourism is considered not only suitable but necessary. It is thus worthwhile to elaborate these four meanings at further length.

The first meaning attributed to Red Tourism is to 'enhance and improve patriotic education in the new era'. It is asserted that China has moved into a new developmental phase of 'socialist modernisation' in which patriotic education needs improvement and innovation. The political goal of indoctrinating nationalist ideology is the most apparent. Ever since 1979 when the CCP under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping decided to adopt the 'reform and openness' policy that ushered in the reform era, China has irreversibly moved towards a capitalist market economy. Although the high officials and the ideological organs of the state apparatus have endeavoured to hold onto the previous socialist ideology on which the party and the nation has been founded by maintaining that the current path being taken is a 'socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics', people have gradually lost their belief in the old-fashioned Marx-Leninist ideology, regarding it as nothing more than political propaganda. A legitimisation crisis emerged as a result of the ideological vacuum, reaching its peak in the Tiananmen incident in the spring of 1989. It is widely held that after the crackdown in 1989, the CCP turned to nationalism as an ideological replacement for Marxism/Socialism, which was gradually losing its grip after ten years of reform. In 1995, the CCP launched the campaign of patriotic education. Although the rhetoric of socialism still appears in official discourse and propaganda, the core of state ideology is clearly moving from Marxism-Leninism to nationalism. It is against this backdrop that Red Tourism emerges as a means to enhance patriotic education.

The second meaning is 'to preserve and utilise historico-cultural heritage of revolution'. The *Outline* asserts that 'historico-cultural heritage of revolution is precious spiritual wealth of the Chinese people' and expresses the hope that, through the development of Red Tourism, such heritage of revolution can be well preserved, managed and utilised to improve 'backward culture' in favour of 'healthy, beneficial culture'. This meaning has to be understood against the background of the trend of 'reviving tradition' that has been observed over the past decade. Since its creation, the CCP has been known for its anti-traditional iconoclasm that aims to transform the old, backward and 'feudalist' China into a new, progressive and modern society under the scientific guidance of Marxism. The notorious Cultural Revolution during 1966-76 embodied the peak of such anti-traditional iconoclasm. In this movement, tradition was evaluated in negative terms and customs and heritage were regarded as residues of feudal society that ought to be destroyed by all means. Numerous cultural relics and historical sites were

ruthlessly demolished with great irrational zeal. After the Cultural Revolution ended in 1976, people began to 'correct' those wrongs committed during the blind craze of revolution. The government officially 'rehabilitated' those who were disgraced and restored their fame, while many elites began to turn back to traditional culture to find their cultural roots in the 1980s. With the arrival of the new wave of globalisation in the 1990s, people began to be more aware of their national identity and they resorted to their cultural tradition to construct a new national identity (see Ai, Chapter 8 in this volume for a detailed discussion about the CCP's changing attitude towards traditional culture).

Parallel to this shift is the global trend of registering 'world heritage'. It has become increasingly common to preserve and register relics for 'heritage' designation at global, national or local levels. As we will see, just like many other historic sites in China, localities related to communist revolutionary history were either left unattended or even destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. Red Tourism gives these localities a chance of rebirth. What is more, the promotion of revolutionary places and objects (whether material or non-material) to the status of 'heritage' also integrates the communist revolution into the nationalist narratives of China.

The third meaning is 'to promote the concerted development of economy and society in the old region of revolution'. Indeed, the economic dimension of Red Tourism can hardly be exaggerated. The rapid economic growth in the past two decades has dramatically enlarged the gaps between urban and rural areas due to uneven development since economic reform; Red Tourism is intended to be a remedy to reduce these gaps. By turning the historic sites into heritage, the government believed that these backward areas can benefit economically through the promotion of tourism. The *Outline* sets as its goal that the growth of red tourists should reach fifteen per cent from 2004 to 2007 and eighteen per cent from 2008 to 2010. It designates twelve 'highlighted areas of Red Tourism' (*zhongdian hongse liuyouqu*), thirty 'selected/refined Red Tourism routes' (*hongse liuyou jingpin xianlu*) and 100 'classical sites of Red Tourism' (*hongse liuyou jingdian jingqu*). The goal is to increase the revenue of Red Tourism to 100 billion RMB and increase the employment directly or indirectly related to the Red Tourism industries to three million jobs. It is explicitly stated that Red Tourism is to 'transform the spiritual heritage of revolution into the wealth of society' (*People's Daily* 2004: 15).

The market targeted by Red Tourism is not only national but also international. Just as Maoism became an intellectual fashion in the west during the 1960s and 1970s, so are the revolutionary legends of China now attracting western tourists. As many westerners have a romanticised image of the communist revolution in China, historical events such as the Long March and the Cultural Revolution also draw a considerable number of foreign tourists to the sites to 'experience history'. Although the international market for Red Tourism is not particularly big when compared to the domestic one, its potential should not be underestimated.

Finally, the fourth meaning attributed to Red Tourism is to add new elements to the development of tourism. As it turns out, the promotion of Red Tourism appears at a historical conjuncture where consumerism and tourism are rising in China. As Callahan (2006: 177) has put it, contemporary China is witnessing a 'curious reversal of the Marxist trajectory', moving from a communist party to a socialist state and finally a capitalist, market economy. Due to the rapid economic development in the previous two decades, the lifestyle of ordinary people has been undergoing profound changes as well. Consumption is transforming people's lives, as more and more people have leisure time and spare money to spend (Davis 2000). In 2000, the central government implemented three different week-long holidays known as 'Golden Weeks', each of which was centred on a national holiday.¹ They were primarily intended to 'help expand the domestic tourism market and improve the national standard of living'. Because more and more people in the countryside swarm to big cities to work, the Golden Weeks are also conceived of

as important occasions for family reunions. Travel and tourist activities have thus become a big event during the Golden Weeks. Although the practice of the Golden Weeks has undergone some minor changes in recent years, travel and tourism remain the major activities, while Red Tourism continues to be one of the highlights in the mass media during the Golden Week around National Day.

At an occasion of promoting Red Tourism, Sun Gang, the Deputy Director of the Bureau of Tourism, made it explicit that the meanings of Red Tourism have to be understood in terms of political, cultural and economic engineering (Sun 2005). As we have seen, the state has been quick to seize the historical opportunity to promote Red Tourism to maximise its ideological gain. However, since the political, economic and cultural forces at this juncture have their own logic, there also emerge a good number of tensions, contradictions and paradoxes that need further exploration. This can be seen in the following discussion of Yan'an.

The case of Yan'an: the 'sacred place of revolution'

Among the so-called 'sacred places of revolution' in China, Yan'an can be said to be 'the most sacred' one.² Located in the hinterland of the Shaanxi Province in northwestern China, Yan'an was a small town in the remote Loess Plateau relatively unknown to the outside world until the CCP arrived in 1935. The town was the endpoint of the legendary Long March and was turned into the seat of the communist government from 1935 to 1948. The 'thirteen years of Yan'an' (*yan'an shisan nian*) has been regarded as the most critical phase in the CCP's history because it was during this period that the CCP reorganised itself, accumulated forces and resources and became a fully fledged regime. It was also during this period that Mao Zedong secured his leadership in the party and developed what later became known as 'Maoist thought' (*Mao Zedong sixiang*). Mao's most important theoretical pieces such as *On Praxis*, *On Contradiction* and *On War of Endurance* were all completed during the Yan'an period. It can be said that the Yan'an period laid the foundation for Mao's leadership and eventually enabled him to lead the CCP to victory over Chiang Kai-shek's KMT for control of China.

After the PRC was founded in 1949, Yan'an no longer played a major role on the political stage in China, but its legacy remained central to the CCP's history. Soon after the PRC was established, the Yan'an Museum of Revolution was built in 1950. Although Mao never returned to Yan'an, many central figures of the CCP, most of whom shared the Yan'an experience to varying degrees, did make return trips to the city on various occasions, of which the most notable example is Zhou Enlai's visit in 1973. During the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution, the 'historic sites' in Yan'an were largely destroyed or left abandoned and the old buildings were poorly maintained. After Deng Xiaoping seized power to restore political order, things began to change gradually. In 1981, the Yan'an Museum of Revolution was remodelled and the exhibitions were reorganised to reflect the political situation of the time. For instance, Liu Shaoqi and Peng Dehuai, two CCP leaders during the Yan'an period, were accused of various 'anti-revolutionary crimes' and were repeatedly tortured in struggle sessions (*pidou dahui*) until death during the Cultural Revolution. Under Deng's government, their reputation as 'revolutionary heroes' was restored and positively presented in the museum.

Further changes came in 1996 when the Bureau of Tourism was established by the Yan'an city government. In 1997, Yan'an was promoted to a 'prefecture-level city' (*dijishi*), which expanded its administrative area to include Huangling, where another national symbol, the Mausoleum of the Yellow Emperor (*Huangdi ling*), is located. The Yellow Emperor was a legendary sovereign said to be the common ancestor of the Chinese people. The expansion of the administrative span of Yan'an also reached the Yellow River, another important symbol of

the Chinese nation, as this river has been long regarded as the cradle of Chinese civilisation. With the inclusion of Huangling and the Yellow River, there emerged a new slogan to promote tourism in Yan'an: Two Yellows and Two Sanctities (*lianghuang liangsheng*). 'Two Yellows' refers to the Loess Plateau (known as *Huangtu gaoyuan*, literally 'yellow earth plateau') and the Yellow River, whereas 'two sanctities' refers to the 'national sacred place' (*minzu shengdi*) and the 'revolutionary sacred place' (*geming shengdi*). As both the Loess Plateau and the Yellow River are regarded as the birthplace of the 'five-thousand-year-old' Chinese civilisation, the combination of these 'twos' has integrated Yan'an into the grand narrative of the Chinese nation. The status of Yan'an is elevated to a high ranking in national heritage that can hardly be topped by other places. It is now packaged as the origin of the old Chinese civilisation and the cradle of the Chinese revolution that gave birth to the new Chinese nation.

In 2004, the central government launched three 'No.1 Projects' (*yihao gongcheng*) to renovate museums and historic sites in three places: Shaoshan, Jinggangshan and Yan'an.³ The No.1 Project in Yan'an included two parts: one was the building of a new Museum of Revolution and the other was to renovate thirteen historic sites in the Yan'an area. The new museum alone cost over 570 million RMB (approximately 83.5 million USD) and was opened in August 2009 to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the PRC's birth (Figure 14.2). Expanded to a size three times as large as the old museum, the new museum is 29,853 square metres in area and displays over 2,000 artefacts. The regular exhibition in the newly opened museum is divided into six sections, each with different themes in a sequential order: the endpoint of the Long March; the centre of political leadership for the War of Resistance against Japan; the model area for the new democratic experiment; the origin of the Yan'an spirit; the establishment of the leadership of Maoist thought; and the starting point of seizing nationwide victory. The recurrent themes throughout the six sections are military actions and armed struggles; the two wars being highlighted are the War of Resistance against Japan (*kangri zhanzheng*, shorthand as *kangzhan*) and

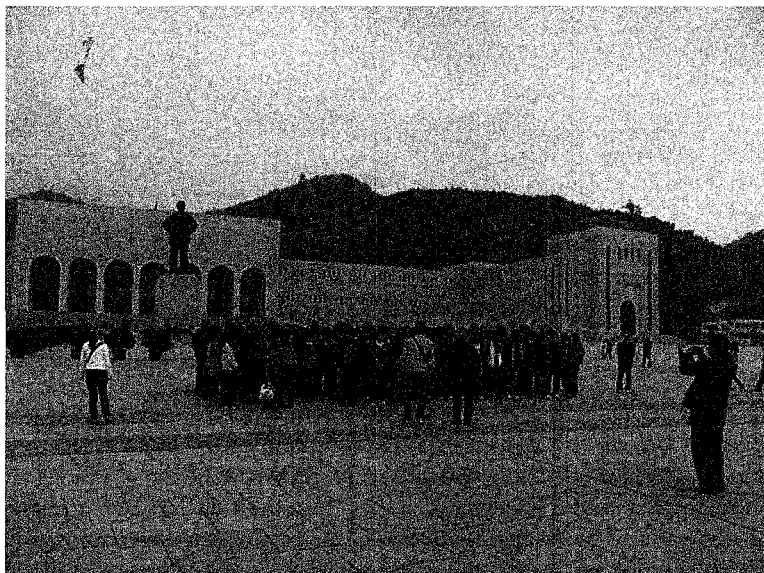


Figure 14.2 The spacious plaza in front of the newly built Yan'an Museum of Revolution. In a typical scene of *danwei lüyou*, a tour group organised by a work unit from Henan takes group pictures in front of a huge Mao statue (Photo H. Wang)



Figure 14.3 Visitors to the Yan'an Museum of Revolution show great interest in viewing weapons (Photo H. Wang)

the Liberation War (against the KMT). The two wars are interpreted in explicitly nationalistic tones, in which the CCP is depicted as the sole leader of China's national liberation and redemption. Weapons, descriptions of battlegrounds and fighting scenes are the displays that constantly attract the largest audiences (Figure 14.3).

As for the historic sites, they are concentrated in a few areas such as Fenghuangshan, Yangjialing, Wangjiaping and Zaoyuan, all of which are located either in or around the city centre and thus can be accessed rather easily. What can be seen in these various places, however, turns out to be rather monotonous. Most of them are *yaodong*, a special kind of dugout used as abode commonly seen in northwestern China (particularly in the Loess Plateau area), in which leaders of the CCP used to stay. These dugouts have been renovated and refurbished to reflect the 'genuine' life of CCP leaders during the Yan'an period (Figures 14.4 and 14.5).

In the past, Yan'an was regarded as a sacred place clothed with a mysterious aura due to its remoteness. As it was rather difficult to go to Yan'an, only those who were privileged could be granted the somewhat exceptional chance to visit the city. They were either invited as guests, or organised to go there for political learning (*zhengzhi xuexi*). With the rapid expansion of infrastructure such as highways, railroads and air transportation in recent years, it is now rather easy to go to Yan'an. The highway connecting Xi'an, Huangling (where the Mausoleum of the Yellow Emperor is located) and Yan'an is particularly noteworthy. As one of the oldest capitals in Chinese history, Xi'an is the largest city in Shaanxi Province and famous for its abundance in historic relics such as terracotta soldiers and horses from the Qin Dynasty, a registered World Heritage site that attracts hundreds of thousands of tourists to Xi'an from both inside and outside China. The construction of the highway helps to bring a good proportion of tourists to Yan'an after their tours in Xi'an. Many travel agents provide group tours that combine Xi'an, Huangling and Yan'an in a package. There is also a train named 'Red Tourism Express' that runs directly from Beijing to Yan'an with only one stop at Xi'an. The train has been well used



Figure 14.4 A typical exterior view of *yaodong*. Here a group of tourists takes pictures in front of a *yaodong* in which Mao Zedong used to live (Photo T. Ou)



Figure 14.5 A typical interior display in *yaodong*. A tourist leans forward from the neighbouring dugout to take pictures with his mobile phone (Photo H. Wang)

and has brought even more tourists to Yan'an. Combined together, these factors have contributed to the rapid growth of tourism in Yan'an. In 1990, there were 260,000 tourists to Yan'an and revenues from tourist industries were 47 million RMB. In 2000, tourists exceeded two million and revenues were over 320 million RMB. After 2005, the numbers have soared, reaching 10.24 million tourists and 5.38 billion RMB in revenue in 2009.⁴

Commercialisation and consumption: industries and tourists

To attract as many visitors as possible, the central government implemented a free-admission policy for all public museums, memorial halls and the 'demonstrational bases for patriotic education' in 2008. This ironically has lowered the incentive for tour guides to bring their groups to these places. In the past, the tour guides would receive a certain amount of commission per capita from the ticket revenues. But since the admission is now free, they can no longer benefit from bringing their groups to these places.

On the other hand, other profit-making opportunities have emerged for the government-run museums and nearby businesses. One of the most common scenes at Red Tourism sites is a booth renting the uniform of the Eighth Route Army (*balujun*).⁵ It is an extraordinarily popular practice by the tourists to take pictures in this uniform. Sometimes they put on the uniform and mimic the famous figures in historic sites, trying to make the scene as 'authentic' as possible. For instance, many tourists mimic Chairman Mao in the Conference Hall to reproduce the scene at the Seventh National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (Figures 14.6 and 14.7). In addition to wearing the uniform of the Eighth Route Army, there are other ways to experience the revolution and war, such as singing the songs, eating the meals and listening to the stories of the Eighth Route Army, as well as buying the souvenirs related to the Eighth Route Army – all of which, of course, cost money to varying extents.

There are other industries devoted to the commercialisation of war experiences, the simulation theatre 'Revisiting the Battle of Defending Yan'an' (*Menghui Yan'an Baowei Zhan*) being one of them. This play recaptures the scene of the battle in 1947 when the CCP fought to defend Yan'an against an attack by the KMT. The play takes place in an open-air theatre in a valley where live ammunition is used for real effects (Figure 14.8). As the theatre uses the slogan

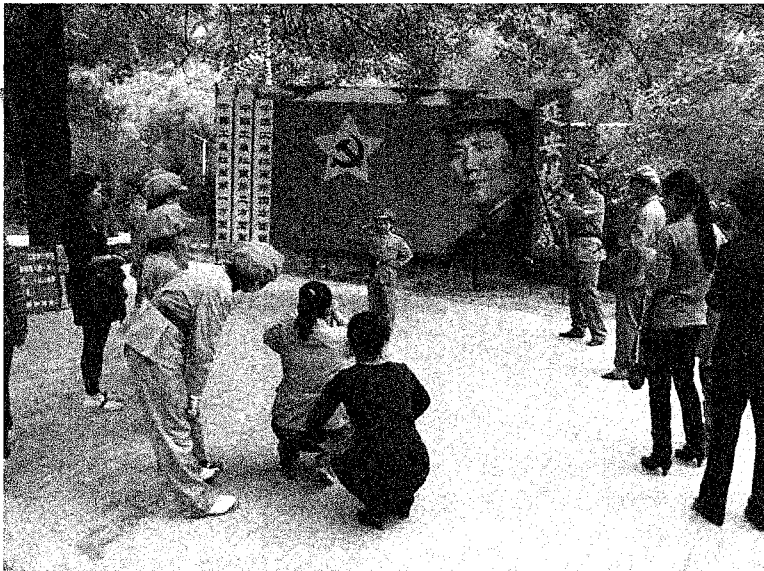


Figure 14.6 Taking pictures in the Eighth Route Army uniform is a popular practice observed at many sites of Red Tourism. The background in this photograph is an enlarged picture of young Mao Zedong, based on the original taken by American journalist Edgar Snow during the Yan'an period (Photo H. Wang)



Figure 14.7 A tourist poses to mimic Mao Zedong delivering a speech at the Seventh National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, at which Mao's leadership of the CCP was firmly established. The stage and setting have been restored to reflect the original scene in 1945 (Photo H. Wang)



Figure 14.8 Tourists enthusiastically watch a live-ammunition performance of the simulation theatre 'Revisiting the Battle of Defending Yan'an'. One tourist has his picture taken with the performance in the background (Photo H. Wang)

'Experiencing War, New Tourism' to appeal to the tourists, the advertisement on the ticket reads:

Have you experienced firsthand the gunfire and smoke of war? The 'War of Defending Yan'an' uses live ammunition in a performance at the real site, faithfully representing the scene of the battle to defend Yan'an in 1947. It enables those tourists who can never experience war in their lifetime to participate and experience war firsthand. ... Everybody can retrieve the long-lost passion of revolution.

As we have seen, 'experiencing war firsthand' has become a commodity to be sold to those who, born in a peaceful age, do not have a chance to experience war and revolution. There has also been a plan to construct a theme park of the Long March, in which one can experience the 'authentic' life of the Long March. The Bureau of Tourism plans to invest 85 million RMB to construct (or renovate) the open-air theatre 'Revisiting the Battle of Defending Yan'an'. The plan includes inviting internationally renowned Chinese artists such as Zhang Yimou and Chen Weiya to be the directors of the theatre.⁶

One of the major purposes of promoting Red Tourism is to help economic development in the 'old revolutionary areas' (*geming laoqu*). It is perhaps the strongest incentive for local governments to promote Red Tourism in their areas. However, this does not apply to the case of Yan'an. Up to the 1980s, Yan'an had been considered a remote countryside in the hinterland of northwestern China, associated with the image of poverty and backwardness. However, with the development of the coal-mining and oil industries in the 1990s, Yan'an suddenly became one of the richest areas in the Shaanxi Province. Since the economic gains could be easily obtained from coal mining and oil industries, the city government and local people were not particularly enthusiastic about developing Red Tourism.⁷ Nevertheless, even under such circumstances, Red Tourism has been well developed in Yan'an, for at least three reasons. The first is Yan'an's irreplaceable status in the history of the communist revolution. Even if the local government is not too enthusiastic, the central government has put tremendous emphasis on Yan'an in promoting Red Tourism. The second reason is about the abundance of 'revolutionary resources'. As a local scholar proudly put it, 'we have too many red resources. There is no other place [in the country] that can beat us. Thus our Red Tourism can fare rather well even if we do not put one hundred per cent effort into developing it'.⁸ Following this, the third reason is authenticity. Since Yan'an has been regarded as such a sacred place of revolution in the communist revolution, many people want to come here to see and experience its 'authentic' atmosphere.

Once constructed or manufactured, heritages are subject to different and sometimes conflicting interpretations (Howard 2003). The meanings of heritage are neither given nor fixed; rather, they are always subject to (re)interpretations, negotiations or even contestations, depending on the sociopolitical contexts in which they are situated. This can also be observed in Yan'an. To ensure that the revolutionary heritage is presented and interpreted 'properly', the officials put considerable efforts into producing standardised interpretation. All the interpreters at the Museum of Revolution and all other historic sites have to pass an extremely harsh examination before they can get their jobs. There are texts of official interpretation for each spot; would-be interpreters have to memorise all the texts (which amount to nearly 10,000 words) perfectly without making any mistakes—even a single mistake is enough to fail the exam. During the guided tour, the interpreters spend most of their time reciting the standardised interpretations, having relatively few interactions with the visitors. When queried by visitors, they often ignore the queries or simply provide cursory, sometimes inaccurate, answers because of the lack of sufficient knowledge to handle the questions.⁹

There are, however, peddlers and shops around these sites selling materials that do not fit well into the official mode of the glorious narrative of revolutionary history. For instance, one of the best selling items in souvenir stalls and neighbouring shops is the video set of the Cultural Revolution. From the official point of view, the Cultural Revolution is an uncomfortable part of the PRC's history that the government wants to conceal rather than reveal. The very act of selling materials related to the Cultural Revolution in these places is considered as not only a challenge to the official narrative of the nation, but also, in some extreme cases, a 'blaspheme' to the sacredness of revolution. As Liu Xiaobo has put it, '[i]n Communist China, there is no word more sacred or richer in righteous indignation and moral force than "revolution"' (Liu 1994: 309). Revolution and war are often endowed with sacred meanings and moral auras, especially when it comes to the sacrifice of countless lives. It is truly an irony to see people trying to make money from the legacies of the anti-capitalist revolutionary past. However, a more serious problem is that, when these revolutionary legacies are commercialised, their interpretations can no longer be controlled by the state. As a result, orthodox narratives are challenged by popular, heterodox ones fabricated by businesspersons in the private sector.

Visitors to the revolutionary sites in Yan'an can be classified into various sorts using different criteria. We can distinguish between two types of visitors based on the source of their travel money: those who travel on public funds (either in part or in whole) and those who travel without public funding. This distinction is meaningful in that it marks the differences of the motivation of tourists as well as the way through which they come to Yan'an. The former type, usually known as '*danwei liuyou*', is usually large tour groups organised by work units (*danwei*). Many of them are organised with explicit goals of 'political learning' (*zhengzhi xuexi*), and since the travel expenses are covered in part (or in whole) by the work unit, they are sometimes known as 'publicly-funded tourism' (*gongfei liuyou*). This is one of the major constituents of Red Tourism. During my interviews, some of the respondents remarked that not many people would be interested in 'political learning' in their leisure time because they have had enough ideological propaganda. However, if the travel is covered or subsidised by their work units, they will be glad to participate in it since it is considered a good bargain (if not a 'free lunch'). In addition, to those who do not earn enough wage income to engage in leisure consumption – or, to put it in Veblen's (1912) famous phrase, those who have not yet joined the 'leisure class' – it is difficult to accept the idea of spending their own money on tours. However, if it is not their own pocket money, they will find the tours more acceptable.

The second type of visitors is those who travel without public funding. Instead of seeing Red Tourism as merely a 'free lunch', these visitors are willing to pay for the travel expenses with their own pocket money; moreover, they 'volunteer', so to speak, to visit these revolutionary sites rather than being passively sent by their work units. In this sense, we may assume that visitors from this category have stronger motivations to participate in Red Tourism. This point is confirmed by my field interviews. Most of the visitors of this type express at least a certain degree of interest in seeing these revolutionary sites in person; otherwise they would not have spent extra time and money to visit Yan'an.¹⁰ In terms of organisation, we can distinguish two sub-types in this category. The first sub-type also comes in tour groups, but they are organised not by work units but by private travel agents. These groups are usually smaller than those of *danwei liuyou* and many of them come from outside Yan'an or even outside Shaanxi province. As mentioned above, many travel agents provide group tours that combine Xi'an, Huangling and Yan'an in a package; participants either join this kind of group in their hometowns, or they go to Xi'an on their own and join the local tours in Xi'an. The second sub-type is individual tourists. Not belonging to any group, they come to Yan'an on their own, either by car or by public transportation. Most of them are from the vicinity or neighbouring provinces such as

Ningxia or Gansu, but a good number of them are from much farther places such as Beijing, Shanghai or Guangdong. As mentioned above, the construction of infrastructure has made Yan'an rather easy to access; one can go there rather conveniently by train, bus, airplane or car. Something noteworthy is that, with the rapid growth of car ownership in China, 'self-driving tourism' (*zijiayou*) has become quite fashionable in recent years. It has also contributed significantly to the growth of tourists in Yan'an.

The proportions of the first and the second types of tourists vary with both time and area. In the early years, the majority of the participants in Red Tourism came as part of *danwei liyou*. For those revolutionary sites that were less well known to the public, visitors were mainly groups organised by schools or work units. In the recent years, however, the second type of tourists – namely, those who travel without public funding – has increased significantly, now accounting for over half of the participants in Red Tourism.¹¹

As mentioned above, compared with those 'free riders' in the first type of public-funded tourism, people in the second category tend to show stronger motivations in joining Red Tourism because they make extra efforts to come to the place at their own expense. However, one should not underestimate the enthusiasm of the tourists of the first type. Most of the work units that organise Red Tourism are, in one way or another, related to the public sector, state-run businesses, or party organs; consequently, participants in Red Tourism organised by work units are more attuned to official ideology and their motivations for 'political learning' may be stronger than ordinary people. Indeed, during my participant observations on these sites, people from '*danwei liyou*' usually showed great interest in displays, exhibitions or interpreter's interpretations; they also commented, expressly and loudly, on displayed objects or interpretations.

The responses of the visitors also vary significantly with age. One of the common scenes in these sites is elders, alone or accompanied by their family members, visiting the sites in memory of the 'good old days'. Having lived through the revolutionary era, these elders can be said to be the most pious participants in what can be called 'red pilgrimages' to the 'sacred place of revolution'. Nostalgia is the best term to characterise the mood of these tourists.

To those who did not live through the revolutionary era, there is another kind of nostalgia. In the postmodern era, people can be nostalgic about a past that they have never experienced before; or, to put it in David Lowenthal's (1985) words, the past is a foreign country that possesses exotic charms to attract tourists of the present. Nostalgia of this kind is often combined with commercialisation and consumption. While cultural and tourist industries turn the past into heritage through commodification, tourists as consumers are ready to consume these commodities to fulfil their nostalgic wants and/or desires for self-identity. Many tourists in Yan'an, regardless of their gender or age, are eager to experience war and revolution by putting on the uniform of the Eighth Route Army, posing to mimic great CCP leaders, or watching the live-ammunition shows. Despite the fact that one has to pay extra fees ranging from one to some seventy RMB in order to participate in these activities, to many tourists of the younger generation, the problem with commodification – which, to them, implies variety – is not 'too much' but 'not enough'. Some youngsters whom I interviewed expressed dissatisfactions with the displays at these historic sites because they found them monotonous and boring. However, if the displays in these sites had been more interactive, some interviewees said, they would have been more interested in participating. Some even said that they wished for the site to be turned into a theme park, because otherwise it would not be attractive to youngsters. As noted above, officials are ready to respond to such demands: they are planning to build a theme park and to make the displays more 'interactive' at these historic sites. As the asceticism of revolution has now been replaced by the economic driving force of consumerism (Latham *et al.* 2006: 1), Red Tourism also turns hardship of the past into exotic joys and pleasures of the present to be

consumed in the market. Through consumption, people may challenge or even reverse the orthodox narrative of war and revolution in creative ways; however, they do not seem to have overthrown the category of the nation as a whole.

Conclusion

In conclusion, let us re-examine the triangular relations among heritage, tourism and political identity in Figure 14.1. First, we find that it is the shift in nation-building ideology and political identity that contributes to the construction of war and revolution as heritage in the first place. On the other hand, as war and revolution are now being institutionalised as historico-cultural heritage, they have become an integral part of political identity.

Second, regarding the relationship between political identity and tourism, it is the shift of nation-building ideology that initiates the promotion of a particular form of tourism. In addition, tourism can contribute positively to political identity as suggested by Ashworth and other authors. However, commercialisation and consumerism in tourism may also destabilise political ideology that the state originally intends to preach, as the 'orthodox' narrative of revolutionary history may be countered by the 'heterodox' ones generated in the private sector.

Third, tourism and heritage are also mutually supportive. While Red Tourism legitimises Yan'an to be a part of the 'spiritual-cultural' heritage of China, the heritage in Yan'an also contributes to the development of tourism. By allying itself with Huangling, Yan'an is able to register itself as one of the most essential heritages that symbolises the birth of the old (Chinese civilisation) and the new (Chinese nation). Such an alliance, in turn, helps to attract more tourists to Yan'an.

Although the PRC has experienced economic reform for three decades, it is yet to say farewell to revolution. Instead, revolution is deliberately preserved, commercialised and marketised. Red Tourism should not be seen as mere state propaganda that intends to indoctrinate nationalistic or patriotic ideologies to the people; rather, it is also a process in which people consume the places and memories of war and revolution. We have observed that, although the state has been quick to grasp structural opportunities to maximise its ideological gains, commercialisation and consumerism may undermine the state's orthodox narratives of nationalism, thus opening up a new space in which national identities can be further contested. In addition to the criticism of 'blaspheming the sacred' discussed in the previous section, there are some other controversies that can go deeper than nationalist discourse itself. These bring us to the final point concerning the moral and ethical issues of Red Tourism.

When memories about war and revolution are preserved as 'historico-cultural heritage' of the nation, there emerge moral controversies and ethical implications concerning value-conflicts and regional reconciliation. In Europe, war memorials established in the aftermath of World War I tended to be full of nationalistic messages. However, after World War II, which witnessed the overwhelmingly destructive forces of the most irrational brutality ever seen in human history, war memorials are inclined to shy away from carrying explicit nationalistic messages; rather, they are mostly memorised in apolitical terms and are dedicated to universalistic, humanistic, or personal values.¹² However, such is not the case as observed in Red Tourism in China. By portraying the Nationalist government (KMT) and Japan as 'negative others', these displays and exhibitions in revolutionary sites and museums hardly contribute to the reconciliation between China and its neighbours such as Taiwan and Japan. While Europe is said to be moving from a national to a post-national epoch, a vast part of Asia seems to be still limping on nationalist legs. Heritage is indeed a contemporary product that uses the past to serve the present needs. Once institutionalised as heritage, spectres of the past are still haunting the present and will keep shaping the development of our future.

Notes

- 1 Namely, the Spring Festival, the Labour Day and the National Day, respectively.
- 2 In a narrow sense, the term 'the sacred place of revolution' refers only to Yan'an. In the broad sense, however, it can be used to refer to other places that are considered significantly related to the communist revolution.
- 3 Shaoshan is the hometown of Mao Zedong, while Jingshan, also known as the 'cradle of revolution', is the starting point of the Long March. Together with Yan'an, these places can be said to be the 'top three' among all the sites of Red Tourism. This explains why the central government has chosen them as the places to conduct its 'No.1 Projects'.
- 4 See http://news.cnwest.com/content/2009-08/24/content_2337960.htm; *Yan'an Tourism Newsletter*, 2nd Issue, 2010. These statistics provided by officials are somewhat suspicious because it remains unclear how they are collected or estimated. Nonetheless, we can see a general trend of rapid growth of Red Tourism in recent years.
- 5 The Eighth Route Army was the numbered name assigned to the Red Army of the CCP by the ruling KMT government in 1937 when the two parties cooperated to fight the second Sino-Japanese War.
- 6 *Yan'an Tourism Newsletter*, 2nd Issue, 2010.
- 7 The 2008 global financial crisis, along with the recent price fluctuation of oil, also give stronger incentives to the local government to develop Red Tourism. In 2009, a new head of the Bureau of Tourism was appointed in order to promote Red Tourism in more aggressive terms.
- 8 Interview, 9 October 2009.
- 9 For this reason, the interpreters are criticised for being incompetent and ignorant of revolutionary history, as their knowledge about these historic sites goes barely beyond the official interpretations that they are forced to recite over and over again.
- 10 There are, of course, exceptions. Some tourists from the vicinity did not show great interest in the revolutionary sites themselves; they came simply because they had no other places to go during the holidays.
- 11 It is difficult to obtain the exact statistics of the makeup of the participants in Red Tourism. According to a report, in 2006, 43.9 per cent of participants in Red Tourism are on their own expense, 33.7 per cent on public funding, and 19.9 per cent are partly on private expense and partly on public funding. In 2008, the percentage on private expense increased to 62.34 per cent (Tian 2009). However, the source of these statistics is not mentioned in this report. In the *Yan'an Tourism Newsletter*, it is mentioned that the ratio of individual travellers to group tours is 3:1 (No. 33, 2009), and that self-driving and individual travellers account for 66 per cent of the visitors to Yan'an (No. 9, 2010). Such statistics may be biased to some extent because they were obtained through surveys during the major national holidays such as 1st May or 1st October, in which individual travellers increase significantly. During the non-holiday periods, however, group tours organised by schools, governments and work units are more likely to constitute the majority of visitors. Nonetheless, from different statistics, we can observe the trend that the second type of visitors is increasing to outnumber the first type of visitors.
- 12 World War I, also known as the Great War, had a profound impact on the emergence of what George L. Mosse (1990) calls 'the Myth of War Experience' and 'the Cult of Fallen Soldiers' that helped to uphold nationalist ideology at the time. As a matter of fact, what is observed in contemporary China is not unlike the myth and cult prevailing in Europe during the interwar period. However, both George L. Mosse and Jay Winter (1995) note that after World War II, the practice of mourning and commemoration in Europe has changed significantly, partly because the impacts of World War II were so profound and unprecedented that they changed people's perception of war.

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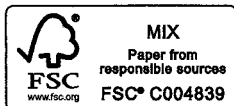
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