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ON THE CONCEPT OF SETTING:
A VIEW BASED ON CHINA'S THEORY AND
PRACTICE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION

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Introduction

Before a discussion of the setting of China's immoveable cultural heritage it is necessary to recognize two features of the setting concept emerging within contemporary conservation of immoveable cultural heritage. The first one is that the understanding of the concept becomes broad increasingly. The second one is that the understanding of the concept contains two parts. Part one is common to all nationalities and countries, and shows the identity and unity of global heritage cultures. Part two is special to individual nationalities or countries, and show the diversity and richness of global heritage cultures.

The setting concept concerning China's immoveable heritage conservation would be an example for illustrating the two features mentioned above.

In this paper I try to provide an overview of the setting concept based on China's theory and practice of cultural heritage conservation. Firstly I propose a conceptual framework for dealing with the setting concept in general sense. Secondly I summarize a number of cultural and historical factors which affect and shape the setting of China's immoveable heritage. Thirdly I clarify different characteristics of the settings corresponding to different categories of China's heritage. Finally I conclude on some issues, some of which would be universal to the world, and the others be special to China himself.

A Conceptual Framework for Approaching to Setting

A conceptual framework for approaching to the setting concept should contain four parts if the approach tries to be complete, systematic and correct.

1 Conceptual Basis: Authenticity

The first need is to find a conceptual basis for the framework. Authenticity is the most important concept for cultural heritage conservation. The setting is one attribute of authenticity (The Venice Charter, 1964). What is worthwhile to pay an attention is the extending of the authenticity concept through the Narra Document (1994), The San Antonio Declaration (1996), the Burra Charter (1999), the Operational Guidelines (2005), etc. The Extending mainly involves the setting of immoveable heritage and is of a sense of integrity. It is therefore better to take the authenticity combined with integrity as the conceptual basis for approaching to the setting, no matter how the authenticity and integrity are viewed by heritage researchers as identical or complementary. Particular speaking the authenticity can be viewed as the foundation stone for understanding and developing the setting concept, the standards for identifying and measuring the setting, and the principles and guidelines for preserving and conserving the setting.

2 Definition: Components and Spatial & Temporary Characteristics

The definition of setting involves two issues. The first one is the separation of the setting from the heritage that the setting belongs, and the second one is a clear identification of the components of setting.

The separating the setting from the heritage is not ease. The transformation from heritage to setting is vague usually, even maybe or maybe not sometimes. That is to say, some of the settings could be viewed as parts of heritage itself if the heritage holds a broad sense, but they couldn't if the heritage holds a narrow sense. It means that the determination of YES or NO depends upon the positioning of heritage value and the planning of the mission of heritage conservation.

The setting can be explained in terms of background or environment and sometimes in terms of surrounding. There is a small but important difference between the surrounding and the background. The former is mainly applied to individual heritage, e.g. monument, building, group of buildings, and focuses on the physical one, e.g. buffer zones. The latter may focus on both the physical and the non-physical. Moreover the background could cover a larger space than the surrounding does. It means that the explanation in terms of background is in broad sense and

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therefore preferable increasingly.

An operational definition of the setting of immoveable heritage should be illustrated by components of setting and relevant spatial and temporary conditions. The setting should be decomposed and characterized at first. Broadly speaking the setting comprises following kinds of elements,

- The Natural and the human (the social, economic, the political, the cultural, etc.);
- The physical and non-physical[1];
- The surroundings and the non-surroundings[2];
- The static and the dynamic;

Furthermore an attention is necessarily paid to the original and subsequent conditions of the components at spatial and temporary levels, as referred to the authenticity and integrity of heritage.

The definition of setting treated in this way would be operational to heritage conservation.

3 Affecting Factor (1): Cultural and Historical Backgrounds

There are two sorts of factor of tremendous impacts on the understanding of setting. The one is the cultural and historical background, and the other is the category of cultural heritage.

It needs firstly to inquire into impacts of the cultural and historical factor. Both the cultural heritage and its setting are the products of the culture and history which is specific to individual nationalities and countries. The culture concerned here is in broad sense, including knowledge, values, life style, tradition and customs, etc. The history is composed of various kinds of events, e.g. political, military, social, economic, cultural, etc. It is thereafter necessary that the understanding and conservation of the setting of a nationality or country should be adapted to the cultural and historical background of the nationality or country.

4 Affecting Factor (2): Categories of Cultural Heritage

It also needs to inquire into impacts of heritage category.

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[1] The word "Non-physical" in this paper means intangible matters

[2] The word "Surrounding" in this paper means that the heritage and its setting can be viewed as a geo-continuum. "Non-surrounding" is special to the place-type heritage and means that some of setting may be far from the heritage and / or some may be inside heritage. In this case the heritage and its setting and they cannot be viewed as a geo-continuum.

In general speaking immovable heritage can be classified in different sense, e.g. the man-made and the natural-artificial mixed in terms of structural and constructed elements, the static and the dynamic in terms of heritage function, monuments, buildings and sites in terms of heritage figures. It is sure that the setting of one heritage category would be more or less different from the others, not only in contents of components but also in spatial and temporary conditions.

Three conclusions could be drawn from the conceptual framework mentioned above.

- The conceptual basis and the definition can be beneficial to ensure the identity and unity of the understandings of setting;
- The two factors can be beneficial to ensure the richness and diversity of the understandings of setting;
- The researchers who study on the setting of his own country should seize both issues and find the universal and local significance of the understanding of setting.

The Cultural and Historical Background of China's Setting

The cultural and historical background can be further characterized into four factors according to different impacts on producing and shaping China's heritage and related setting. Among them the two sorts are cultural and the other twos are historical.

Cultural Factor : The Conception of Unity of Heaven and human (　　　)

The relationship between heaven and human beings is the basic and permanent theme of Chinese culture of the most importance no matter what standpoint every school holds. The main-stream conception is Unity of Heaven and Human even though different explanations by different schools exist. The Heaven occurs in Chinese literature with five meanings (summarized by Fung Yu-lan, a famous Chinese philosopher):

- A material or physical one, namely Sky;
- A ruling or presiding one, namely Supreme Emperor;
- A fatalistic one, namely Fate;
- A naturalistic one, namely Nature;
- An ethical one, namely the highest and primordial principles of the universe.

The conception of the relationship between Heaven and

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human beings, especially the Unity of Heaven and Human, is of a dominating influence on ancient Chinese thinking of universal order, social order, values, etc., and further on buildings, engineering, and other artificial works and their related setting at that time. This is why that in ancient China:

- Setup of national capitals and imperial palaces is symmetric referring to a central line;
- Tombs, especially imperial tombs, are paid a great attention;
- Religious temples and academies of classic learning (SHU YUAN   ) are chosen to locate at mountains and by watersides;
- Ancient scholars and officers disappointed at political and social issues seek to be hermits and seclude in wooded mountains;
- And so on.

Cultural Factor   : The Conception of Feng Shui

The conception of Feng Shui (   ) is an important derivation from Unity of Heaven and Human, and especially developed to focus on the relationships of man-made work with its physical environment and seek a harmony between the work and its environment, which should be beneficial to the wishes and activities of persons who live or work, and / or have a ceremony or entertainment there. The conception of Feng Shui is synthesized with the conceptions of "Yin Yang" (   ), "Tai Ji" (   ) and "Wu Xing" (five elements,   ). Feng Shui is a main tool for ancient China's architectures and engineering of different scales and different functions, e.g. living and public houses, palaces, temples, tombs, town planning, even the engineering of water conservancy and the military engineering. Taking the housing building as an example, Feng Shui is usually applied to decide its natural and social landscape (neighboring condition at least), location, structure and architectural features, materials and substances, the placement and style of implements, colors and decorating schemes, contents and locations of garden and artworks, paths, and other outside and inside features. It is obvious that Feng Shui can cover the full contents of the setting of China's immoveable heritage.

Historical Factor   : Activities and Events

Activities and events in China's history decide various categories of heritage. They results in the richness and uniqueness of China's heritage categories. The categories include:

- Palaces, gardens and civil residences, which aims on living activities, and integrate local geo-environmental condition, functions, and unique

cultural-oriented, order-oriented , values-oriented and aesthetic-oriented consideration;
- Religious buildings, monuments and tombs, which are usually the products of events and activities, and mixed by the features of individual culture, or a mixture of inter-cultures, e.g. homeland culture and foreign culture;
- Large-scale engineering, which are the products of great events, and aim at prominent functions, e.g. Great Wall for military function, Dujiangyan Irrigation System (   ) for water-conservancy, Giant Canal for economic & transport function, etc. they also combine considerations of geo-environmental condition, culture and values;
- Cultural landscapes, which are the products of long term human activities in ancient China, characterized by a mixture of unique natural landscape, unite life and production style, and special cultural, religious and / or aesthetic wishes;
- Community areas, e.g. capitals, cities and towns, villages, which are the products of social, economic, political and cultural activities and great events, and can be classified in terms of spatial scales and functions.
- And etc.

It is obvious that the activities and events in China's history drive to produce various categories of heritage, and also produce the setting corresponding to each heritage category.

Historical Factor   : Evolution and Change

China's heritage is also suffered from ancient China's historical process and shaped into some evolutions and changes. The shaping can be summarized through four ways:

- Be conserved, namely both preservation and development. Cases include major temples and monuments, e.g. Temple and Ceremony of Confucius (   ) and Kong Family mansion (   ) in Qufu, Potala Palace (   ) in Lhasa, Buddhist and Taoist temples at Mount Emei (   ), Mount Jiuhua (   ), Mount Wudang (   ), Mount Taishan (   ) and Mount Wutai (   ), etc.
- Be destroyed and abandoned. Many cases occurred in ancient capitals and towns, particularly in Luoyang (   ), Kaifeng (   )
- Be damaged and destroyed but restored and reconstructed. Cases include ancient famous buildings, e.g. Yueyanglou (   ), Tenwangge (   ), Huanghelou (   ), etc.

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- Be destroyed but rebuilt else. Particular cases are Beijing rebuilt in Jin Dynasty (　　), Yuan Dynasty (　　), Ming Dynasty (　　) and Qing Dynasty (　　), and Xi'an rebuilt in Qin Dynasty (　　), Han Dynasty (　　), and Tang Dynasty (　　)

It is obvious that the heritage and related setting can be shaped in different degree corresponding to different kinds of historical process.

Characterizing the Setting of China's Immoveable Heritage

It needs firstly to classify China's immoveable heritage so that the characterization of setting could be systematic, complete, distinct and correct. The classification can be made as following:

- **Type** : Monuments and buildings, termed Point-Type, e.g. Giant Goose Pagoda (　　) in Xi'an, Yuankongshi (　　　a timber-structured temple built on the wall of precipice) in Shanxi Province, etc.
- **Type** : Archeological heritage sites, termed Place-Type, e.g. Mausoleum of the Qin Dynasty (　　　), Caves of Dunhuang (　　　), Yuan Ming Yuan Park (Garden of Perfect Brightness, 　　), etc.
- **Type** : Mixed heritage, cultural landscapes, historic cities and villages, termed Area-Type, e.g. Wuyishan (　　), Lushan (　　), ancient city Ping Yao (　　), ancient villages Xidi (　　) and Hongcun (　　), etc.
- **Type** : Mega-Heritage, termed Region-Type, e.g. Great Wall, Giant Canal, Silk Route.

The reasons of the classification can be explained. Monuments and buildings can be viewed as point-type and usually known as basic entities of heritage family. They are either static or living. The characteristics of their setting are also belong to other members of the heritage family. Type is place-type and Type is area-type. They both contain the characteristics of Type and further have new characteristics relating to "place" and "area". Some of Type could include Type and therefore the characteristics of Type could be founded there. What is worthwhile paid an attention is a major difference between Type and Type . The former is static and the latter is living usually. It means that more new characteristics of setting could be held by Type . Type – Mega-Heritage –owns a large scale of space and time, has a number of themes of value and function, contains a series of heritage. The setting of Type

contains the characteristics of Type , Type and Type , and further has new characteristics relating to "region". The classification seems to be an onion-like pattern. It would be beneficial to make a logic for the characterization of the setting of China's heritage.

Characterizing the Setting of Type

Type is the basic sort of immovable heritage. The understanding of the setting of Type seems mature. However it has not been defined clearly yet and needs re-clarification in terms of authenticity. The setting is recognized as an attribute of authenticity, see "location and setting" (<Operational Guidelines for Implementation of World Heritage Convention>, 2005). It seems to be a physical surrounding here. A proper approach to the setting could be suggested to follow authenticity explained in the new version of <Operational Guideline> (2005). Total attributes of authenticity include: form and design; materials and substance; use and functions; traditions, techniques and management system; location and setting; languages and other forms of intangible heritage; spirit and feeling; and other internal and external factors. Thus a good and broad-sense understanding of the setting should refer to each attribute and in terms of Chinese cultural and historical background. A complete setting of Type should contains:

- Natural surrounding in terms of Feng Shui, referring to and ;
- Human or social surrounding (neighborhood at least) in terms of Feng Shui, referring to and ;
- Evolution and change of surroundings, referring to and ;
- Heritage owners, owning family, and / or local communities concerned to heritage use; referring to , , , and ;
- Non-physical components, e.g. traditions, art folks, management systems concerned, referring to
- Non-surroundings, e.g. stolen and leaked-out moveable heritage that used to be collected in monuments and buildings, referring to .

Characterizing the Setting of Type

Type can be described typically as an archaeological site of ruined monuments, tombs buildings, etc. Two features are worthwhile to focus here, i.e. Place and Ruins, comparing to Type . It means that the setting of Type contains new characteristics besides those of Type . These can be drawn and summarized as follows:

- Natural and human landscape in terms of Feng Shui, e.g. Ruins of Primary Capital of Yuan Dynasty (　　　), referring to and ;
- Local communities concerned to land use of the sites,

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referring to , , , and ;
- Non-surroundings, e.g. decomposing or disintegrating immoveable heritage within the sites, then transferring abroad, referring to ,

Characterizing the Setting of Type

Type   can be described typically as an area integrated with heritage of various kinds and owns its original and subsequent functions. Three features are worthwhile to focus here: Area, Group of Heritage, and Living. Some of the features, i.e. "Group of Heritage" and "Living" are new comparing to Type . It means that the setting of Type contains new characteristics besides those of Type and Type . These can be drawn and summarized as follows:
- A larger-scale natural and human (namely social) landscape within and outside of the heritage area, e.g. the Sacred Road of Ming Tombs is matched to the contour line of surrounding mountain peaks, referring to and ;
- Evolution and change of the landscapes, referring to   and ;
- Native communities concerned to heritage use, and local communities and / or periphery communities concerned to land use, referring to , , , and ;
- Non-physical components. A series of intangible heritage concerned the Type , e.g. folk arts, traditions, management systems, etc., referring to   and ;
- Non-surroundings.   . The heritage outside would have a cultural and spiritual link with the heritage area and could be viewed as a component of the setting, e.g. Imperial Tombs of Ming and Qing Dynasties (   ); . The dissemination of intangible heritage into the areas far from the heritage. Referring to

Characterizing the Setting of Type

Type   , namely mega-heritage, can be described typically as a region centered by a giant heritage of trans-province scale and mixed and integrated by various heritage types (Type , Type   and Type), e.g. Great Wall, Giant Canal, Silk Route, Yellow River. A number of features of Type   are worthwhile to focus: Spatial Scale of Trans-Province, Time Scale of More Than 1000 Years, a central subject and multiple sub-subjects, and a central function and multiple sub-functions. This mixture and integration would make the new value and significances emerging from the heritage of Type , Type   and Type within the Type   since they have a link with the mega-heritage. The situation can provide new characteristics

of the set of Type   besides those of Type , Type   and Type . These can be drawn and summarized as follows:
- The physical setting of a mega-heritage could contain Type , Type   and Type   beside natural and social landscape in general, referring to ,   and
- The non-physical setting of the mega-heritage could contain all kinds of intangible heritage, referring to   and ;
- Evolution and change of the setting could resulted by many interactions happening within a mega-heritage, e.g. heritage to heritage, sub-setting to sub-setting, function to function, etc., referring to , , , , and ;
- Social communities would compromise on issues of heritage conservation and use and land use, referring to , ,   and

Conclusions

A number of conclusions can be drawn based on the above discussion of the understanding of the setting concept in terms of China's theory and practice of immoveable heritage conservation. Some of them may be common to the world, and the others may be special to China herself.

1 Common to the World
- The definition of setting is usually vague. The separationbetween an immoveable cultural property and its setting depends on the positioning of heritage value and the planning of the mission of heritage conservation.
- A complete understanding of the setting should be based on the concepts of authenticity and integrity, and should comprise all elements, i.e. the natural and the social, the physical and the non-physical, the static and the living, the surroundings and the non-surroundings.
- A classification of heritage pattern, i.e. the point-type, the place-type, the area-type and the region-type, could be beneficial to seize the logic of the understanding of setting.

2 Special to China
- The setting (physical and non-physical) of heritage is the product of Chinese culture and history. The physical setting (natural & artificial) is mainly affected by the conception of Unity of Heaven and Human, especially by the conception of Feng Shui.
- The non-surroundings of setting should be paid a attention. A lot of non-surrounding comes from heritage leakage by stolen, decomposition and disintegration.

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This is a serious threat against China's contemporary heritage conservation.

- The mega-heritage is a great advantage of China's heritage resources. Prior to conserve mega-heritage is the optimum way of conserving China's heritage and related setting.

Abstract

This paper contains four parts. In Part 1 a discusses involves the significance of the setting concept within Chinese historical culture (the conception of unifying nature and humanity, its derivative FENGSHUI, a term not only physical landscape sense but also the cultural and spirit sense, etc), its particularity comparing to European culture, and its stress suffered from China's economic and cultural modernization and globalization. In Part 2 an attempt delivers to inquire into the understandings based on different kind of China's immovable heritage (i.e., static and living, buildings and sites, individual and serial), generalize the characteristics of setting (e.g., natural and man-made, physical and non-physical, strict sense and extended sense, etc), and establish the conceptual structure of settings (components and their relationships, narrow sense and broad sense). Part 3 provides an analysis and evaluation of approaches to the setting in China's conservation of cultural heritage, e.g. restoration, remove, reconstruction, rehabilitation, adaptation, etc. Part 4 presents a prospect of China's understandings and approaches on the global term, especially focusing on its universal significance and shortcomings.