

Authenticity and Immortality in favor of heritage preservation

Mei-ho Chen

Chaoyang University of Technology,
Taiwan (R.O.C.)

Abstract

The objective of this research is to draw attention to the persons in charge of Cultural heritage, at the University and Schools of Fine Arts on the importance of establishing a link between formation in restoration and formation in creation, and not in favor of one of them. We have a philosophic Chinese interpretation of immortality, which would consist of the continuous transmission of certain virtues, as a protection against destruction. This continuity is not assured by the immortality of inanimate object, but comes in the fluid flow of successive generations. We notice that this research is important for adding in evidence to the fact that there is no antagonism between the training of creation and restoration. Instead it is about two branches of the same trunk, and as the subject of our research it raises questions vaster than initially through of the study of the culture of Taiwan helps us to understand better that it carries two characteristics: immigrant's culture and western influence. The artistic expression of Taiwan, is combination of western, Japanese and Chinese styles. Since 2003, The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization hereinafter referred to as UNESCO are considering the deep-seated interdependence between intangible cultural heritage and tangible cultural and natural heritage.

Keywords: authenticity, immortality, intangible heritages, restoration, cultural identity

Introduction

Unchanging does not reside in your walls, but in you, longevity of men, continual men... (Victor Segalen)

Victor Segalen (1878-1919), poet, sinologist and archaeologist, very well expressed in a poem in prose entitled " In ten thousand years " (1912), the attitude of the Chinese towards the past. He wrote, for example, " ...*Unchanging does not reside in your walls, but in you, longevity of men, continual men* ". The Chinese understood that " *nothing motionless escapes teeth starving for ages* ". So, the Chinese choose to neutralize their attitude to give impact of time. In fact, they " transferred the problem. The eternity does not have to live

in the architecture, she has to live in the architect. The passing nature of the monument is as an offering made for the “greediness of time”, and it is at the prize of this sacrifice that the manufacturer ensures the continuity of his spiritual intention”.

Simon LEYS¹ also raises a paradoxical phenomenon to almost all the Confucian, which obliges to understand another semantic conventions and meanings. “Antique indicated an age of mythical gold, that is, in fact, a future utopia, whereas what they called ‘modern practices’ aimed at the inheritance of recent past, that is real past.” We can confirm from it that the attitude of the Chinese towards the past, aims at a creation of future.

It is the reason why we put ourselves in the study of the correlation between the restoration and the creation. Indeed, if the creator takes account the physical structure of the work which he executes, he assures the sustainability of his shape of expression. So, the antagonism is less radical between the subject of the creation and the restoration at certain researchers.

We think the main part to clarify the attitude of the Chinese towards the past is to handle better certain decisions towards the heritages. We suppose that this attitude to time is close to Saint Augustin². “The time, for the consciousness”, he wrote, “it is at first the succession of past, of the present and of the future. Yet the past is not, because it is not anymore; nor the future, because it is not still; as for the present, either it divides in past and a future which are not either there are only one no time without any extend of duration and is thus no more time.

The transmission of the culture decides on the value of heritage

This spirit is similar to that of Japan which shows that it is not the time which decides the value of heritage, but the transmission of the culture. For example, the temple of I-Shih was reconstructed every twenty years to preserve this traditional technique of architecture. From the Europeans point of view of, a temple of twenty years is not patrimonial.

This debate has disappeared since the announcement of convention by UNESCO. The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization hereinafter referred to as UNESCO, meeting in Paris, from 29 September to 17 October 2003 declared their purpose to protect intangible cultural heritage.

Article 2. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly

¹ Simon, L.(1991). *L'humeur, l'honneur, l'horreur, essai sur la culture et la politique chinoises*(The humor, the honor, the horror, the essay on the Chinese culture and the politics). Paris, Robert Laffont.

² Saint Augustin, *Confessions*, XI, 14-15, voir aussi *Du libre arbitre* (See also Of the free will), III, 7, 21. Paris.

recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.

(Retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00006>)

In his essay, Simon Leys tries to expose two parallel phenomena between the spiritual conservation and the material destruction throughout the history of China. Contrary to the situation in Europe build a continuous chain of monuments, in spite of the state of ruins of some. For the Chinese, the memory of past leans on the spirit in the absence of physical representation. We feel everywhere, in spite of this material absence, the presence of the past. According to the observation which he made Simon Leys said, "the past which continues to lead the Chinese life of so many striking, unexpected and subtle manners, thus seems to reside in people rather than in stones. This past is active and physically invisible at the same time spiritually." So, the strange nudity of the Chinese monumental landscape is not only worn by the political chaos. In-depth study is needed to understand it better.

The situation of Taiwan is put in perspective not at all history or policy concerning heritage. What it lacks and in which the western or Japanese experience can be of use to it?

To approach the question of the restoration in Taiwan we have to understand its ideological politics. These politics are subjected to the social and cultural transformation which has occurred in the island since 1980. This phenomenon gave rise to the law on the preservation and the conservation of the cultural heritage in 1982. Nevertheless, the undertaken shares do not represent a fact important for the island; it was necessary to wait for the earthquake of 1999 which caused irreversible destructions for the conservation and restoration to become a recurring subject in the society. At present, the National Center of the preservation, the conservation and the restoration of cultural heritages, created in 1997, prepares, under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture, a program to set up a Central Guide loaded patrimonial affairs. It is not possible to approach the question of the preservation and the conservation of the heritage without having present in mind the development of the cultural society, because the politics underline the decision.

Cultural identity

The book *Taiwan, investigation on an identity*, supervised by Christine Chaigne, Catherine Paix and of Chantal Zheng called on several specialists of Taiwan. Madman-san HUANG wrote the foreword: "Compte-tenu of political constraints, research on Taiwan was muzzled for a long time by the governmental authorities to such a point that the results of the scientific research have proved extremely limited. Since the

abrogation of the martial law in 1987, not only have the Taiwanese politics become more democratic but the scientific world simultaneously liberalized imposing from then on a certain "regionalization".

This is when the research on Taiwan became an ardent topical subject and this is when the number and the quality of the publications increased. However, the international position of Taiwan is still little known and the publications in foreign languages on the island is few, they focus besides on economic and political questions. Less of them are actually talking about the culture or the history, which is regrettable. There was thus a gap to be filled. Especially as, from the end of the XIXth century, Taiwan developed a specific economic and political domain which already made it a country except for within societies of east Asia, deserving to be studied in the scientific plan. Besides, the future of Taiwan is connected to the peace and to the stability in East Asia. That is why it is also necessary to study in depth the political reality of the island to allow the whole world to have a better understanding of Taiwan so that the problems of the latter can be resolved.

Question of identity embarrasses Taiwanese

Those who were interested in the history of the island all know that the identity is a major question which embarrasses the Taiwanese, especially as, in four hundred years of history, Taiwan experimented five political powers in the hands of different nations. "

The period of Song (Dynasty 960-1276) appeared a real worship for forms artistics of the past, particularly in literature. According to the author, this is " a result of a spiritual crisis and represented a new need to define and to assert a cultural Chinese identity ". This phenomenon can explain also the current situation in Taiwan, under the government of president CHEN Shui-bian(2000-2008), which wants to assert the Taiwanese identity by preserving and by protecting cultures of Taiwan. This is what we want to demonstrate throughout this thesis, namely that the stake in identity influences and underlies the activity in favor of the heritage

Immigrant's culture and western influence

The study of the culture of Taiwan helps us to understand better that it carries two characteristics : immigrant's culture and western influence.

Passion for antique is a spiritual refuge for Chinese people. The interest of the Chinese for antiques is confined in a limited domain, such as calligraphy and painting or bronzes.

The imperial collections also guard a political power. So, Chiang Kai-shek tried hard to move the Antiquities imperial collection of Beijing when he withdrew from Taiwan. We can see the sign of an appropriation of the artistic inheritance of the past and the artistic heritage connected to politics. Nevertheless, two important reserves must be made as for the Confucian worship of the past. "

Chinese thought is not a prisoner of his past.

In the old Chinese thought, the worship of past was far from constituting a universally accepted dogma. In fact, during pre-imperial period, the quarrel of the Old and the Modern occupied a considerable part of the philosophic debates of the golden age of the Chinese thought (of the VIth in the IIIth century BC). Towards the end of this period, it was moreover the modern school which took influence, supplying the ideological bases on which was established the first Chinese Empire (the famous decision of the First Emperor to burn all the books and to bury lively the men of letters marked exactly the peak of this movement to obliterate the past). So, we can say that the Chinese thought is not a prisoner of his past.

Antiques as a deposit of all the human values

Secondly, "it is true that Confucius considered the Antique as the deposit of all the human values and considered, from then on, that the mission of a Wise person was not to create the new but only to transmit the inheritance of the Old. In practice, its program was however much less conservative than we could not suppose it was at first sight. The Antique, was indeed lost, which a Wise person had to rediscover and reinvent. The concrete contents of this Antique were strangely fluid. It could not be defined or confined by a determined historic tradition". Seemingly, the Chinese seem to worry little about preserving and protecting the material expressions of their culture. But Victor Segalen thinks that this assertion must be qualified by some reserves.

The love and interest in antiques by Westerners is well-known. According to an observation made by Victor Segalen, it is a question of all kinds of antique objects but also of all their corollaries: The development of archaeology in the activity of collectors and antique dealers, the industry of the counterfeiters; and, in esthetics, all the archaisantes fashions. These corollaries show a deep interest in the age of a work, it's beauty the poetry of the past etc.

To summarize, Simon Leys indicates two fundamental limitations of this phenomenon: " in the first place, this interest for the things of antiquity appeared only relatively late; secondly, it has never aimed that a hardly restricted category of objects. "Simon Leys analyzes the notion of immortality in the Chinese thought in these terms: Simon Leys analyzes the notion " Very early, before even the time of Confucius, the Chinese conceived the notion that he could exist only a single shape of immortality: the one that confers the history. In other words, the survival does not have to look for itself in a numinous nor could not lean on monuments and things - the man survives only in the man, that is, in practice, in the memory of the offspring, with the aid of the written thing ". We have a philosophic Chinese interpretation of immortality there which would consist of the continuous transmission of certain virtues, actions and words as a protection against destruction. To summarize the central thought of Segalen, Simon Leys wrote: " Chinese sustainability does not reside in stones but people. The durability is not what denies the transformation but what informs it. The continuity is not assured by the immortality of inanimate objects, but comes in the fluid of the successive generations " .

Art creation is material before being message.**(Madeleine HOURS).**

The work of art as an object is naturally affected by time. The restorer has a mission to reduce certain mechanisms of deterioration, but we have to accept the loss of authenticity to favor or put the importance on the object itself. The change of the object is indisputable. From this point of view the originality of a restored work of art seems less radical than what we can imagine.

The notion of authenticity is less radical in Chinese than in Westerners. We can even say as that to make copy and copies freehand are a necessary apprenticeship practices to learn Chinese calligraphy. Ségolène Bergeon³ made a comparison between countries of East and countries of West." In the countries of East, the copy excellently realized has value of original: the copy in China in the XVIIIth century of a roller Song du IXe century, with the same paper, the same ink and the same gesture, immortalized by the tradition, is considered as a work Song: the material is Ming, the message is Sung ". It distinguishes this act of "repair", from that of the "restoration" in the western conception.

The "Detached house of Orchids " is beloved by a succession of times in copies and is then burnt on stone and by swindle from these steles. So this work is transmitted through the generations until the time of Song. Then, the Middle Fu, the brilliant calligrapher, illustrates the stylistic models of Wang and the " Detached house of Orchids " knows its most considerable brilliance. Ledderose⁴ L. so summarizes this paradoxical phenomenon: " It seems rather uncomfortably symptomatic whether it is this calligraphy lost of the " Detached house of Orchids " which eventually stands out as the most famous work of all the history of the Chinese calligraphy... What is even more stunning, it is that the " Detached house of orchids ", not only was incensed, but still it became a stylistic model: the calligraphers studied for during centuries without any of them never seeing the original ". In 1965, the famous archaeologist Guo Moruo threw a debate around the copies of Tang and Song, being reflected, he says, a style very posterior than that of. Wang Xizhi, and, thus, this Chinese calligraphy would never have existed !

³Ségolène, B. (1995). *De la restauration d'hier à la conservation déléguée de demain* (Of the restoration of yesterday in the conservation delegated of tomorrow), *Revue Histoire de l'art* (Revised Art history) Paris.

⁴ Ledderose L. (1979). *Mi Fu and the Classical Tradition of Chinese Calligraphy*, Paris: PUP. p 20.

Chinese tradition is not allowed imprison by the real existence of things.

Let us return to Simon LEYS who invites us to think about the following problem: " the vital force, the almost unlimited capacity of metamorphosis and adaptation of which the Chinese tradition gave evidence for about three thousand five hundred years result maybe from what this tradition was never allowed take in the trap of things, where it would have risked to petrify and to die ". This following the example of the writer Lu Xun who saw the past of China as an invisible, immaterial ghost, an indestructible shadow. At the time of Ming, a man of letters described a curious garden called Wuyou, that is "Jardin-qui-n'existe-pas"(garden doesn't exist). This text aims at explaining a comparison: "Which difference there is, indeed, between a famous garden which does not exist any more and this garden which has never existed, because both, after all, will exist for the offspring only by the same means of the written matter ". Proof which the Chinese tradition is not allowed imprison by the real existence of things.

F.W. Mote, in the study which was made on Suzhou, gives a sort of conclusion about the attitude of the Chinese towards past. The European civilization tends to assimilate the presence of the antiquity to that of authentically ancient material objects such as the Roman Forum, Angkor Wat, etc. China has a completely different conception. Mote so comments on it: " China had another conception of the way of realizing a monumental fulfillment; it had another conception of the way of carrying out a monument which lasts ". And still: " China would not have been obsessed by its past. On the contrary, it studied its past, it drew from it, it used it to conceive and feed its present of a way which has an equivalent in no other civilization. But its old cities such as Suzhou, were released from time as purely material objects. They deposit of past in a very particular sense: they embodied or suggested associations the value of which lay somewhere else. Their past was a past of words, and not stones * China has preserved the vastest and the longest documentation of the past that exists in the world. It constantly revised this past such as it was protected by the papers, and it made its act on the present. But it did not build an Acropolis, it did not protect Roman Forum. And nevertheless, neither materials nor techniques were lacking to him: but it is characteristic that the monuments provide.

In Antiquity there are underground hidden arched graves and, for the later imperial period, bridges. These vaults and these bridges had another shape of utility; but it was not necessary to appeal to these methods when it was a question of conceiving a public building which durably to show human fulfillments.

Chinese civilization did not accommodate its history in buildings.

And: " Chinese civilization did not accommodate its history in buildings.* Even its grandest palaces and his urban sets attempted above all only to throw a certain vision; they distribute a space much more than they contain constructions - these last ones moreover often appear as elements adventitious and divested of durability. The civilization quibbles, seems, has never considered that it's history was violated or despoiled when its ancient memorials collapsed or were burned: they just had to be replaced or repaired function again.

In brief, we can say that the real past of Suzhou is a past of the spirit, * its immortal moments are moments of the human experience. The only really durable embodiments of eternal human moments are their literary * embodiments and it quotes the concrete example of the Bridge of the Maples of Suzhou: " in all the psycho-historic material which is associated to the Bridge of Maples, bridge as object is without big importance... No single poem does not refer to its physical presence. This bridge, as idea, appeared in the consciousness of all the Chinese. Nevertheless, the reality which it presented for them was less that of the stones of its arc than that of immortal associations which were attached to him - these eternal moments embodied in their words.* The material object is completely secondary. Whoever would like to reach the immortality in the mind of men will try less to build a big stony monument than to cultivate his human talents so as to be able to express himself by immortal words, or at least be the object of an allusion in the immortal work of a poet or of an essayist ".

For example, the Lay garden Yuan of Wufeng Maison is a spiritual place for the well-read man. Numerous poems of Taiwan were inspired by this place. Through these poems are illustrated the memory, the dream and the imagination of ancestors; mental images are reflected on the representations of the wall and give him a symbolic value which transcends its material dimension.

At present, this house is in a pathetic state, in ruin, and permanently covered. It is the extreme case of restoration in question to Taiwan. Prisoner of materials, this house was not able to exist. In consequence, the article of the law on conservation and restoration changed so that the employment of new materials become possible in the act of restoration. On the other hand, the training in restoration is in the process of development. Five institutions have been created since 1999 to form the restorers of historic objects and ancient monuments. We still insist on the purpose of this research: to introduce into art colleges a program on the prevention, the curative aspects and the scientific research which a restorer has to follow collectively in the artistic program. This is because in our sense an abstract, scientific technical training does not hinder creativity. If the creator takes into account the physical structure of the work which he executes, we repeat, he assures the *p erennit e* of his shape of expression. So, the schools of creation and the schools of restoration meet to create cultural patrimonies in aid of the future generation.

Influence of West is very present in Taiwanese art

An outline on the history of the restoration allows us to understand that from the very beginning the artist-creator often exercises the work of restorer. What demonstrates that is both professions are neither opposing, nor so taken away one of the other one. Because the influence of the West is very present in the art of Taiwan, we think making a reminder of the profession by the restoration and by the creation in West as a point of reference for Taiwan who is on the way of the development of restorers.

* C'est Simon Leys (1973) qui souligne. (It is Simon Leys who underlines) *CF Rice University Study*, vol. 59, n  4

In an educational perspective, we are sensitive to the current problems raised by the academic forming in creation. Indeed, students were naïve in mind in the social misery after their training, because a big educational error of the academy was to give a false idea of the genius which would be without link with the real life of the community. Nevertheless, this harmful tradition of " art for art " remains still alive at académistes.

We make slogan of Bauhaus because it appears to us to apply to the mural as it represents a shape in equivalence with this spirit.

Bauhaus aspires to the fact that the artistic creation in general constitutes a unity, in the fact that the fusion of all the craft disciplines ends in a new architectural art of which they would be an integral part. Finally, Bauhaus gave for purpose to realize the unitarian object of art - the big construction - which would abolish the limits between the architectural art and the ornamental art.

No antagonism between creation and restoration

In the course of the evolution of our work, we noticed that this research is important for putting in evidence the fact that there is no antagonism between training of creation and restoration but that it is about two branches which live on the same trunk, and as the subject of our research reveals vaster than it appears to it. The application of this comment drives two types of thought in favor of the relation between the domain of restoration and that of creation. The one is a dynamic process of type retroactive diachronique where the other one is a process of type anticipatoire: it requires among others the stocking of information (on concepts, materials, techniques, etc.) with the aim of a possible restoration.

Island as a mosaic of plural culture

Art being reflection of society, artistic evolution is connected to Taiwan in social facts. In the point of view of historic reality, Taiwan is dependent on a cultural specificity which is made by an aboriginal substratum (15th century), the Portuguese, the Dutchman(Dutch) (1624-1662), Chinese at the time of dynasty MING with the arrival of Cheng-Kung CHENG (1662-1683), at the time of the dynasty QING (1682-1893), the Japanese (1895-1945), then again the Chinese with the KMT (1945-1995) and the PDP (1995 to now). Thus making the island a mosaic of plural culture.

So we understand better why on the island western influences are not unimportant and that Japanese styles are omnipresent. By examining four stages of artistic evolution in Taiwan, we can understand how and why this research is indispensable because the western influence is omnipresent. The artistic expression for Taiwan, is due to western, Japanese and Chinese styles.

The idea of restoration becomes thus complex there. When it is a question of making decisions for acts of

restoration, Taiwanese politics is dependent on cultural practices and on different cultural conceptions. What are the causes of failing in the organization of the patrimony? The study of the culture of Taiwan can amount in two characters: the character of immigrant which represents the regionalization and the character of the influence of the West.

Conclusions

This essay discussed how to preserve our cultural assets with authenticity and immortality. Compared with Western concepts, Chinese tend to preserve conception and not material. A prisoner of materials, our heritage was not able to exist. Since 2003, UNESCO declare Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization hereinafter referred to as UNESCO, meeting in Paris, from 29 September to 17 October 2003, at its 32nd session, considering the deep-seated interdependence between the intangible cultural heritage and the tangible cultural and natural heritage. For the purposes of this Convention, Article 2 Definitions of the “intangible cultural heritage” means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.” Since then, questions about authenticity and immortality in favor of heritage preservation are not based for conservation in the chain of material like Western cultures for tangible heritage but simultaneously conserve the transmission of intangible cultural heritage.

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