

**NEW WAYS OF SHARING:
A RELATIONAL APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING
THE GROUNDWORK FOR SINO-JAPANESE
REPATRIATION**

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Abstract

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A large amount of Chinese cultural relics have been scattered globally through illegal and unethical approaches, including war plunder, illegal excavation, illicit export and burglary, from the war era (1840-1949) to contemporary China (1949-). Chinese-Japanese repatriation is one of the most complicated issues, which contains a broad framework of disputes including a complex historical background, sensitive political relations, a host of legal disputes and a web of ethical dilemmas.

This thesis explores three potential models with relevance for Sino-Japanese repatriation: creating a long-term system of short-term physical access (through international exchange); sharing physical access (through a repatriation agreement that loans the object back to the repatriating nation at regular intervals), sharing digital access (through international digitisation). It argues that these small but significant steps of sharing cultural heritage, particularly in environments with a long history of mistrust such as the Sino-Japanese situation, can create trust and mutual understanding needed to overcome paralysis and lay the ground work for what could be a more open, sustainable process of negotiating repatriation based on reciprocity.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Research context

Repatriation is not a new concept, but has attracted scholarly attention and discussion in a global context since the late twentieth century (Sullivan, Abraham, et al 2000, Conaty 2008, Turnbull and Pickering 2010). It refers to a broad scope of cultural property that left its community/country of origin through war/colonial plunder during a colonialist period and/or illegal approaches such as illicit trafficking and theft. With the rapid development of some economies, the independence of former colonial and other occupation-related countries/communities, and the development of domain of cultural rights, requests for the repatriation of cultural property have been rising rapidly (Atkinson, 2010). Repatriation is not simply a topic within the scope of national culture, but more complicated in that it is integrated within legal, political, ethical and economic issues, as well as matters of international conventions and human rights (Thorleifsen, 2009).

Repatriation can generally be divided into two types, based on the different circumstances of those seeking return: repatriation (from museums/states) to an indigenous community and state-to-state repatriation. In bicultural/multicultural countries that include indigenous communities and settler nations, such as the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, indigenous communities have fought for their rights including the right to cultural identity in the post-colonial world, and thus have requested the repatriation of those sacred objects and ancestral remains that carry spiritual significance (Mihesuah 2000, Hole 2007, Conaty 2008, Cubillo 2010). This kind of repatriation usually happens in settler colonial nation states and refers to the reconstruction of relationships between indigenous groups

and museums.

The claims of repatriation have also been raised between so-called ‘market nations’ including some former colonisers that acquired rich collections worldwide, like the UK, the United States, Japan and EU countries such as France and Switzerland, and ‘source nations’¹ that typically have an illustrious and coveted cultural history such as China, Egypt, Italy and Greece (Dutra, 2004). This kind of repatriation could either refer to cultural property looted by troops during colonial eras, as in the case of France and Egypt or Britain and Nigeria, or to those illicitly exported and stolen or ‘purchased’ through economically exploitive means. In the context of China and Japan, repatriation is an extremely sensitive issue, because it represents not only contested historical problems, but also complicated political relations in the contemporary world, which I will discuss in the next chapter. This thesis mainly focuses on state-to-state repatriation, because of its relevance to the Sino-Japanese situation, but is also inspired by experiences and theories of repatriation to indigenous groups, as a way to acknowledge the hurt over injustices that have occurred.

As a country in which material culture has flourished for almost three millennia, China has become one of the countries which has encountered the most serious losses of cultural relics in the world (Tu, 2012). According to UNESCO’s incomplete statistics, approximately 1.64 million cultural relics, including painting, manuscripts, sculpture, bronze ware, pottery, porcelain and jade, have been acquired and exhibited by more than 200 museums in 47 countries outside China (Xiang, 2007). Beyond that, over 10 million cultural objects are preserved or exhibited by universities, cultural/research institutions and even private

¹ As Murphy stated (1995), China may become a hybrid nation with a booming art market because of the rapid development of its economy.

collectors in the UK, the U.S., France, Japan, Russia and many other countries². A large amount of Chinese cultural relics have been scattered globally through illegal and unethical approaches, including war plunder, illegal excavation, illicit export and burglary, since the mid-19th century (Peng, 2012). From the war era (1840-1949) to contemporary China (1949-) this period witnessed China's evolution of political power and the rapid development of its economics, and thus impelled the formation of a consolidated national consciousness that is commonly identified by Chinese people (Zheng, 2013). Since the political and market reforms led by Deng Xiaoping, the Chinese government and its people have begun to speak out and to rebuild their unique national and cultural identity on the international stage (Liu and Tang, 2013). Seeking repatriation of Chinese cultural relics from the UK, U.S., France, Japan and Russia has become one of the most significant endeavors (Peng, 2012).

Among all these different cultural contexts, China-Japan relations is one of the most complicated issues, and thus prompted me to research Sino-Japanese repatriation within a broad framework of controversial issues including a complex historical background, sensitive political relations, a host of legal disputes and a web of ethical dilemmas. These will be further discussions in the next chapter. In brief, China and Japan are geographical neighbours with a long history of political and cultural interactions with one other. These exchanges actually established a foundation to reach mutual understanding, however, unsolved historical grievances, and opposing attitudes towards colonial and contemporary political issues have led to strained China-Japan relations, and thus made Sino-Japanese repatriation quite sensitive and challenging. Existing cases of Sino-Japanese repatriation usually depend on voluntary donation, diplomatic negotiation, legal action and commercial repurchase (Wang and Zhang, 2009). However, these

² 'How many Chinese cultural treasures 'lost' overseas?', *People's Daily Online*, 30 January 2015, http://en.people.cn/200701/30/eng20070130_346095.html [Accessed 20 October 2016].

approaches are uncertain and lack sustainability. Exploring new ways of sharing cultural heritage as part of Sino-Japanese repatriation is challenging due to the complex political relations and unsolved historical issues between China and Japan, but is also an area of research that is in urgent need of robust and thorough academic enquiry.

This research focuses on the repatriation of cultural relics from Japan to China due to the colonial history when China had been semi-colonised by Japan (Lü, 2013), exploring Sino-Japanese repatriation in the context of China. It aims not to judge the actions of any participants as right or wrong, but to explore how governments, museums and other cultural/research institutions can establish positive and trusting relationships that can lead to Sino-Japanese repatriation.

Inspired by experiences of repatriation between Native American and the U.S., and the Maori and New Zealand, though acknowledging as well the profound differences, this thesis aims to find answers to the research questions by identifying and analysing constructive ways of sharing cultural heritage towards repatriation in which China and Japan are involved. In Chapter 4, I look to international exchange exhibitions as a mode of international collaboration, which has potential to create the kind of mutual trust through communities of practices that might lead to repatriation. In Chapter 5, I discuss an example of repatriation from the Miho Museum in Japan to Shandong Museum in China as a means to explore how private museums might provide initiative that helps break the stalemate in Sino-Japanese repatriation. In Chapter 6, I focus on the International Dunhuang Project to consider the idea of digital repatriation and its role in advancing a constructive and sustainable model of Sino-Japanese repatriation. Each case focuses on different parties, from a private museum and government ministry, to international research institutions to national museums. The research

concerns the respective roles that these participants played and the interaction between them in these cases.

1.2 Research questions

The key research question of this research is: what can be learned from emerging models of Sino-Japanese cultural cooperation that might advance repatriation through the building of constructive and ethical relationships that generate positive outcomes for both sides despite a larger environment of caution amid wider political tensions?

More specifically, the objective of this thesis is to answer the questions as follows:

- How does the complex Sino-Japanese historical and political context impact the dynamics of Sino-Japanese repatriation?
- What contributions have museums, governments, and research institutions made to advance Sino-Japanese repatriation, and what role did each party play?
- What kinds of relationships are most effective to realise repatriation efforts and how are these relationships constructed?
- What can public museums and the government ministries that sit behind them do to build on models of Sino-Japanese repatriation achieved outside the state system?
- How might we understand a ‘win-win’ relationship through the lens of relational ethics and why might this be both an ethical and sustainable approach to Sino-Japanese repatriation?
- How can a ‘win-win’ relationship be defined and achieved in the context of Sino-Japanese repatriation?

1.3 Thesis argument

In accordance with the three existing approaches of Sino-Japanese cultural cooperation mentioned above, this thesis explores potential models with relevance for Sino-Japanese repatriation: creating a long-term system of short-term physical access (through exhibition exchange); sharing physical access (through a repatriation agreement that loans the object back to the repatriating nation at regular intervals); sharing digital access (through international digitisation). It analyses the potential and limitations of these models to move Sino-Japanese repatriation forward.

I argue that these three models together provide potentially productive approaches because they build mutual respect and understanding, provide more opportunities for cross-national negotiation and international collaboration, and ultimately achieve a positive reciprocal relationship through a process of compromise among participants in China and Japan. Moreover, these approaches are significant in that they encourage Chinese and Japanese people to face historical issues together and make common efforts to improve Sino-Japanese relations in an ethical way that benefits both nations. Although tensions and difficulties exist in all of the models under consideration in this thesis, these case studies nonetheless offer a way forward towards breaking the deadlock through building constructive relationships over time. As such, they have the potential to become exemplary to repatriation globally.

The next section places the research topic in a global as well as a specific Chinese-Japanese context, respectively, to generate a clear understanding of Chinese and Japanese definitions of cultural property and repatriation, ethical understandings of repatriation, and what has been accomplished so far to address repatriation in the contemporary situation. Firstly, it defines foundational terms

such as cultural property and repatriation. By constructing the ethical framework of repatriation and understanding a win-win relationship in both Chinese and Japanese contexts, this chapter then briefly introduces repatriation discourse in a global context, as well as the limitations of legislation and the ethical dilemmas that have arisen. This section also reveals current challenges and achievements within the domain of Sino-Japanese repatriation.

1.4 Terminology: cultural property and repatriation

1.4.1 What is cultural property?

In this research, various terms, including cultural property, cultural heritage, cultural relics, return, restitution and repatriation, are frequently used. In order to avoid confusion and establish consistency, it is necessary to clarify these terms within the context of my research. These notions all carry particular meanings in different conditions. Although the terms ‘cultural property’ and ‘cultural relics’ are interchangeable in this thesis, these two terms will be used in different contexts: being applied to the Japanese context, the former is equivalent to the specific Chinese term of ‘cultural relics’; being used widely in the field of international law, ‘cultural property’ is appropriate in both Chinese and Japanese contexts. Cultural heritage will be applied to various contexts in a more generalised way in this research. That does not mean defining them is in vain here, but will give readers a straightforward grasp of how these terms are embedded in specific contexts in this thesis.

‘Cultural property’ is a concept in dispute, gaining long-term global attention academically. Initially, it was officially adopted in the *Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict* in 1954 (1954 Hague Convention). The *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing*

the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property 1970 (1970 UNESCO Convention) provided an official definition as follows:

...The term ‘cultural property’ means property, which, on religious or secular grounds, is specifically designated by each state as being of importance for archaeology, prehistory, history, literature, art or science.

UNESCO’s definition highlights an important characteristic of cultural property: ‘specifically designated by each state’. In other words, there is no one-size-fit-all definition of cultural property, but it depends on ‘the standpoint taken, the aims pursued and the politics followed’ (Stamatoudi, 2011, p. 5). This contingent nature, therefore, results in a wide discussion on whether artifacts are appropriate to the issue of repatriation.

As largely interpreted and applied in an international legal context, many scholars have criticised this definition of cultural heritage as ‘property’ in economic terms. As early as 1992, Prott and O’Keefe argued that cultural property is ‘an especially Western concept and has particular commercial connotations’ (Prott and O’Keefe, 1992, p. 310). Later, Blake (2000) also pointed out that property emphasises the artifacts’ market value, rather than their cultural elements. This scholarship suggests that the term cultural property actually denies the spiritual and cultural nature of the contested objects for the originating community, and emphasises the power of physical ownership by using the word ‘property’.

However, researchers working in the cultural anthropology field have explored a more contemporary understanding of cultural property (Mezey 2007, Skrydstrup 2010, 2012). As Skrydstrup (2010, 2012) indicates, anthropologists have developed a conceptual transition of the notion of cultural property from a simple

‘object-people’ theory of ownership to a more complicated ‘people-object-people’ understanding of social relations. In this view, cultural property no longer refers to the physical ownership of the object, but the relationship built among the object, museum and the public.

Scholars such as Geismar (2008) challenged those voices that attempted to diminish cultural significance and emphasise market/property value. According to her, cultural property does not simply refer to the object, but concerns the constructive relationship surrounding it (Geismar, 2008). By identifying it as the idea of guardianship, indigenous people’s cultural identity has been built up, and the acknowledgement of past wrongs has been achieved through collaboration and consultant between museums and indigenous communities. More recently, Anderson and Geismar (2016, p. 3) have proposed that cultural property is a collective concept, embodying ‘political recognition, cultural memory and identity formation’. Anderson and Geismar (2016) show that cultural property is a complex concept with multiple layers, which not only needs to be considered within the sphere of museum studies but also within the realm of political and social relations.

As a typical Chinese term, ‘cultural relics’ is equal to ‘cultural property’ in the Japanese context. Both embody the historical, cultural and educational significance of the physical cultural inheritance passed on from previous generations, representing national identity and specific cultural characteristics. Beyond that, the latter covers a broader scope in Japan, which comprises both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Here the genealogy of these two terms will be explained respectively and a general understanding in both contexts will be given.

The earliest term used to describe cultural artifacts in China was ‘antiquity (古物)’ in the Southern Dynasties since 5th century (Xiao, 502). After the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, the term ‘cultural relics (文物)’ replaced antiquity, being formally used in the *Law of the People’s Republic of China on Protection of Cultural Relics (LPCR)* in 1987 (He, 2014). According to it, ‘cultural relics’³ includes all of the antiquities, ancient architecture, modern and contemporary historic sites, valuable documents and manuscripts that are of historical, artistic or scientific value⁴ (LPCR, 2015, Article 2). Particular to the Chinese context, compared to the terms ‘antiquity’ and ‘cultural property’, ‘cultural relics’ concerns more the scientific, historical and culture value, but also signifies ethnic and national characteristics, as well as cultural identity and uniqueness (Guo and Gao, 2006). When addressing international repatriation cases, most Chinese scholars equate the concepts of cultural relics and cultural property (Gao, 2009) to reflect global discourse; otherwise, ‘cultural relics’ is more appropriate to the Chinese context.

In the Japanese context, cultural property (文化財) and national treasure (国宝) are two frequently-used terms. Since the enactment of the *Plan for the Preservation of Ancient Artifacts* in 1871, the Japanese government has used the terms ‘antiquity’ and ‘ancient artifacts’ to refer to ancient sites, architecture and monuments, emphasising the historical and research value (Hiroyuki, 2013). In

³ ‘Cultural relics contains: (1) sites of ancient culture, ancient tombs, ancient architectural structures, cave temples, stone carvings and mural paintings that are of historical, artistic or scientific value; (2) important historical sites, material objects and typical buildings of modern and contemporary times related to major historical events, revolutionary movements or famous people that are highly memorable or are of great significance for education or for the preservation of historical data; (3) valuable works of art and handicraft articles dating from various historical periods; (4) important documents as well as manuscripts, books and materials, etc., that are of historical, artistic or scientific value dating from various historical periods; (5) typical material objects reflecting the social system, social production or the life of various nationalities in different historical periods; (6) fossils of paleo vertebrates and paleo anthropoids of scientific value shall be protected by the State in the same way as cultural relics’. For more information, see http://www.pkulaw.cn/fulltext_form.aspx?Gid=252634 [Accessed 20 May 2015].

⁴ According to *The Rating Standards for Cultural Relic Collections (2001)*, cultural relics have been divided into three grades: Grade one, two and three, due to different levels of cultural, historical and scientific value. For more information, see <http://www.lawinfochina.com/display.aspx?lib=law&id=1829&CGid=> [Accessed 20 May 2015].

1929, the Japanese government began to apply the concept of ‘national treasure’, as seen through the *National Treasures Protection Law*, forming a mechanism to protect artifacts with strong cultural significance (He, 2014). Both the terms ‘antiquity’ and ‘national treasure’ demonstrate the intense awareness of the Japanese to the protection of cultural heritage.

Promulgated in 1950, and revised in 2004, Japan’s *Law for the Protection of Cultural Property* makes clear that, from a Japanese perspective, ‘cultural property’ is an expansive concept that includes tangible cultural, intangible cultural, folk-culture, monuments, cultural landscapes, historic buildings, preservation technologies and buried culture (Agency of Cultural Affairs, 2004). Since then, Japan has formed a specific system, of not simply protecting Japanese cultural property, but also capturing its social and educational functions (Yamamoto, 2006).

Cultural heritage is another basic term often used in the sphere of repatriation debates. The broad sense of cultural heritage covers all kinds of categories, including tangible, intangible culture and the natural world⁵. Compared with cultural property, cultural heritage implies a rightful guardianship, which refers to ‘a duty to safeguard the inheritance and hand it down to future generations’ (Stamatoudi, 2011, p. 8). It is interesting that there is also a more recent trend of replacing the term cultural property altogether with cultural heritage; this stems from international and legal level debates which suggest that the latter is more accurate in representing cases that have an ambiguous producer but originated from a specific community (Schäublin and Prott, 2016). Researchers who hold

⁵ See official clarification of cultural heritage from UNESCO:
<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/illicit-trafficking-of-cultural-property/unesco-database-of-national-cultural-heritage-laws/frequently-asked-questions/definition-of-the-cultural-heritage/> [Accessed 21 May 2015].

this view see cultural property in an ownership-oriented way, but consider cultural heritage as encompassing the duty of preservation and protection.

Regarding the Chinese and Japanese contexts, cultural heritage and cultural property do not mean exactly the same thing. Generally, cultural heritage is a much broader term, implying protection and inheritance, both on a national and international scale. Scholars such as Zhang and Zhao (2012) agree that cultural heritage emphasises preserving and protecting historical value and cultural continuity more than the term cultural property. In addition, the Chinese understanding of cultural heritage enables the inclusion of intangible cultural heritage such as Confucianism and ethnic traditions (He, 2014). Cultural heritage has been used conventionally both by Chinese and Japanese parties during international communications (He, 2014). In order to avoid confusion and misunderstanding of later discussions in this research, it is important to clarify the similarities and differences of these culturally-specific terms at the beginning, as the thesis not only contains discussions of specific cases in Chinese and Japanese contexts, but also refers to examples in other cultural contexts like the U.S., New Zealand, etc. In sum, I use the term ‘cultural relics’ for the Chinese context and apply the term ‘cultural property’ to the Japanese context. In a Chinese context, I use ‘cultural property’ in reference to the area of international law. I use the term ‘cultural heritage’ extensively in all contexts in this thesis.

1.4.2 What is repatriation?

Repatriation needs further explanation to differentiate it from two other terms, return and restitution, in order to avoid confusion. Particularly because repatriation is a contentious issue, it is critical to identify the subtle differences among these three terms and employ them in a nuanced way that recognises sensitivities.

Return, as the most explicit term, implies a strong political consciousness, which would generally be used in state-to-state repatriation cases with a full transition of physical ownership (Cornu and Renold, 2010). According to the UNESCO *Guidelines for the Use of 'the Standard Form Concerning Request for Return or Restitution* (1986, Article 9, p. 11):

The term 'return' should apply to cases where objects left their countries of origin prior to the crystallization of national and international law on the protection of cultural property. Such transfers of ownership were often made from a colonized territory to the territory of the colonial power or from a territory under foreign occupation.

This definition suggests it is more suitable to use the term return in colonialist cases that do not involve contemporary international legal frameworks. On this basis, scholars have assigned additional political connotations to return. For example, Skrydstrup (2010) notes that it implies a crucial concept of 'territory' in state issues, reflecting the awareness of sovereignty in a postcolonial context. Moreover, as Skrydstrup (2010) indicates, return usually happens voluntarily on the basis of goodwill, and implied the acknowledgement of the cultural and national significance.

Restitution is the term used the most frequently in cases where cultural property has been looted in armed conflicts and obtained through illegal approaches. It has commonly been used in formal international conventions since the late 1960s (Skrydstrup, 2010). For instance, the 1970 UNESCO Convention applied the term restitution to cases of illicitly exported cultural property (Article 13). More specifically, the *Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects*

(1995 UNIDROIT Convention) connected it to stolen cultural objects and those that have ‘been unlawfully excavated or lawfully excavated but unlawfully retained’ (Article 3).

Viewing it from a legal framework, restitution not only refers to the return of an object to its rightful owner, but is also based on an analysis of property rights (Last, 2010). On the other hand, scholars commonly use the term restitution to refer to disputes of looted cultural property during colonial eras as well. In this case, it is, to some extent, similar to return, as both maintain strong political meanings. As Tythacott and Arvanitis (2016) argue, state-to-state restitution implies the changing power structure between participant countries in the postcolonial period.

The most essential concept in this research is the term repatriation. Generally, it can be used to describe both inter-state cases and repatriation to indigenous people within a country and internationally (Stamatoudi, 2011). In this thesis, I use the terms restitution and repatriation interchangeably when they refer to existing examples of restitution. However, compared to restitution, repatriation implies reflections through the lens of ethics, concerning the mutual relationship that has been constructed between the repatriating institution and the community/country of origin.

Initially, discussions of the issue of repatriation began to emerge by 1980s and 1990s; the term ‘repatriation’ has been formally used in the title of the *Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)* in 1990 (Skrydstrup, 2010). ‘Repatriation’ described cases of museums in settler states transferring sacred materials and human remains to indigenous peoples, as well as cases regarding cultural property that have been stolen from countries like Greece

and Rome (Bailkin 2004, Kowalski 2005). For indigenous people, these sacred items and human remains originally belonged to the community, representing their spiritual and religious significance. In this context, Isar (1981, cited in Last, 2010, p. 25) defined repatriation as a moral rather than legal process that applied to:

...objects which have left their countries of origin as a result of colonial situations or an imbalance of power between nations and where, quite obviously, no one would claim for their return on legal grounds of any kind. This claim is quite different. It is a moral claim.

Although this definition is not clear on how this moral claim could be put into practice, it indeed highlights its postcolonial and political essence. From my perspective, repatriation is also an ethical concept that concerns the reestablishment of relationships and the interaction between museums and source or originality communities. It does not simply refer to the return of sacred cultural objects, but also indicates the reconstruction of the complicated relationships among museums, indigenous groups and related collections (Harth, 1999).

To conclude, 'return' contains the strongest political intention regarding multinational cases, which is suitable to apply to the examples with no query of ownership and largely relying on good will in this thesis. Restitution is used in state-to-state cases that refer to illegal approaches of acquisition of cultural property, including war/colonial plunder, illicit trafficking and theft. Hence, I use 'restitution' to analyse the literature and other scholars' discussions as part of the legal perspective. 'Repatriation', in turn, is appropriate to be used for both indigenous and cross-national situations: it carries more cultural and ethnological significance. In this thesis, it is widely used not only in the context of indigenous

culture, but also in the Sino-Japanese context to emphasise ethical and relational thinking on the issue.

1.5 The ethical framework of repatriation: a relationship-building process for win-win

1.5.1 Understanding repatriation as a relationship-building process

Seeing repatriation as a process of building relationship goes to the heart of exploring ethical models of repatriation in this research. By clarifying repatriation as an ethical concept, ‘ethical’ here doesn’t mean to judge right or wrong, but implies a developing relationship-building process, constructed among collections, museums, cultural institutions and the public. To have a comprehensive understanding of the ethical implication of repatriation, it is necessary to explain the ethical framework of this thinking, what kind of relationships will be built and what does this mean to Chinese and Japanese context.

One of the most important theories to this discussion is relational ethics. Concerning the construction of relationship, it has been largely applied to phenomenological research, healthcare professionals, clinical practices, family issues and so on (Finlay 2011, Gangamma, et al 2012, Moore, et al 2014). As Fisher (1999, pp. 5-6) points out, relational ethics derives from ‘relational-based care ethics’ and ‘principle-based justice ethics’: the former concerns a ‘narrative of relationships that extend over time’, while the latter ‘emphasizes the moral agency based on principles of mutual respect, beneficence and fairness’. In other words, relational ethics implies an ethical relationship that can be expanded over the long term, and based on a mutual respect among all parties. Similarly, Finlay (2011), who applied relational ethics to phenomenological research, also indicated that the foundation of building a dialogical relationship between researchers and participants is to cultivate mutual trust, meanwhile respecting each other’s needs.

Therefore, building mutual trust could be regarded as the precondition of forming an ethical relationship.

In addition, this theory also has been applied to research of family therapy and nursing practices, helping to deal with ethical issues in relationships between family members, nurses and patients (Shaw, 2011). According to this research, relational ethics implies the ethical reflection of responsibility and obligation of self and the other, which could encourage self-reflection and mutual understanding between self and the other (Shaw 2011, Moore, et al 2014). These could not only help construct mutual trust, but also build interpersonal and community responsibility and accountability, and thus reinforce the ethical relationship.

Apart from relational ethics, the development of codes of ethics and other theories deriving from museum ethics, also have potential to help structure the ethical framework of repatriation. In 1997, Gary Edson called for scholarly attention to the importance of professional ethics for the museum community (1997), however his work did not necessarily apply to repatriation directly, but provides some inspiration to explore the relationship between museums and indigenous communities through the lens of professional ethics.

The first *Code of Ethics for Museum Workers* proposed by the American Alliance (then Association) of Museums (AAM) in 1925 provided general guidelines for professional practice (AAM, 1925). Updated numerous times over close to a century, the current AAM *Code of Ethics for Museums*, last revised in 2000, introduces more specialised statements relating to museum governance, collections and programs (AAM, 2000). Another fundamental code is the *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*, developed by the International Council of Museums

(ICOM) in 1986. In the latest version published in 2017, the ICOM code of ethics provides basic, universal principles that apply to all museums. The UK's Museum Association (MA) published the original version of its *Code of Ethics for Museums* in 1977, and their most recent update comes into force in 2015 (MA, 2015).

From various updates of museum ethics codes, it is evident that there is a progressive change embedded in the development of codes of ethics. However, codes of ethics themselves do not provide specific solutions, instead, they offer general guidance, specially responding to the specific ethical challenges of the 21st century, including the issue of repatriation (Marstine, et al, 2015). For instance, a clause in the *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums* (2017, p. 41) states the following:

Members of the museum profession should promote the investigation, preservation, and use of information inherent in collections. They should, therefore, refrain from any activity or circumstance that might result in the loss of such academic and scientific data.

This description relating to information management is ambiguous: the clause does not provide a clear account of the responsibility to preserve knowledge or the institution's responsibility to originating communities regarding the repatriation of human remains (Pickering, 2011). To be more specific, it does not answer questions regarding the kind of activity that might or might not result in the loss of academic and scientific data. Moreover, it does not provide details about reburial of ancestral human remains of indigenous communities and whether this can lead to the loss of scientific information. Pickering (2011) also explains that problems may arise because practitioners are accountable to several codes that can

contradict one another. Thus, codes of ethics can provide general support for museum professionals to deal with difficult issues, but additional guidance is needed.

In addition, ethical codes are only one part of ethical discourse. As Janet Marstine (2011) indicates, museum ethics are contingent and shift to embrace social and cultural changes. Museum's professional engagement with ethics, therefore, needs to be responsive to the shifting political, social, technological and economic landscape (Marstine, 2011). Following this argument, she asserts that 'change is needed to address the current and future needs of society' (Marstine, et al, 2015, p. 72). Therefore, it is necessary to think beyond codes of ethics, which my exploration of relational ethics reflects.

Apart from codes, an increasing number of academic endeavours are being made into the field of museum ethics. The social responsibility of institutions is increasingly recognised and conceptualised by museum professionals. Researchers recognise that museum ethics is not just about collections, but also concerns people (Besterman 2008, Marstine 2011). Tristram Besterman (2008, p. 431) defines ethics as 'an expression of social responsibility, which necessarily concerns relationships between people'. Marstine concurs with this view, emphasising 'the value for museums in forging new relationships with communities, built upon participation, mutual understanding, and joint decision-making' (Marstine, et al, 2015, p. 71).

Inspired by these existing studies, I realise that relationship-building is a key concept that has the capacity to play a crucial role in dealing with different issues such as repatriation. From the conviction that objects, collections, museums, cultural institutions, indigenous communities and the public are all inextricably

linked within a relational network responsive to repatriation, I examine aspects of ethics, make an attempt to consolidate museum ethics with relational ethics. On this basis, I explore new ethical approaches that can help build a reciprocal relationship and create mutual understanding between cooperating Chinese and Japanese participants. Ultimately I set a foundation to create a potential win-win situation for institutions involved in the issue of repatriation.

This thesis places emphasis on negotiation and collaboration among all participants, which can help establish a sustainable, cooperative and reciprocal relationship on the basis of mutual respect and understanding among all parties. Cultivating a long-term collaborative relationship could help all participants to connect with each other, building trust, mutual understanding and openness in a long run. It even has the potentiality to stimulate mutual learning via exchange projects for example. What is more, constructing a reciprocal relationship could result in a win-win situation for all parties in repatriation, reducing the tension and conflicts by negotiation and sensible compromise, and thus gaining mutual satisfaction.

The term ‘win-win’ has originally been used in game theories, differentiating from win-lose and lose-lose situations, and refers to a beneficial outcome for all participants (Spangler, 2003). It has been frequently applied to the fields of management and economics, especially in negotiations (Thompson 2010, Sylvester 2015). The idea of win-win relationships has been criticised as an unrealistic result that would ultimately lead to failure by some (Camp 2013, Kenworthy 2017). However, it can also be regarded as a positive outcome of an effective negotiation that all participants are satisfied with the result (Maddux 1995, Arden 2015). In this research, win-win means creating mutual benefit through compromise, resulting in a situation in which everyone gains something

rather than nothing whilst losing something rather than everything, ultimately making it win-win for all.

As Fleming and Gallagher (1999, cited by Anderson, 2012, p. 220) said, ‘the concept of giving back has the merit of being built on a sense of equality and reciprocity’. Bell, Christen and Turin (2013, p. 195) also indicated that, ‘giving and receiving are rarely mono-directional or linear, and have to be thought of as reciprocal and cyclical ongoing processes’. Therefore, in a win-win situation, giving and receiving are tightly connected to each other, which build a positive cycle of relationship between participants.

Inevitably, repatriation is full of conflicts due to different attitudes and requirements of each party, however, what win-win implies here is to make attempts to reduce conflicts and avoid the worst situation: the winner wins all, the loser lose all (Li, 2006). As a complicated and highly sensitive issue, imbalance of power always exists in the process of repatriation, especially in negotiation and cooperation. On the one hand, building mutual trust and understanding between participants is a time-consuming process. For example, win-win relationships often require years of negotiation, as well as a robust long-term plan to ensure both sides effectively implement every step. On the other hand, different kinds of power are embedded in the negotiation/cooperation process. In fact, the power that each side holds in the negotiation process is subject to change.

Lynch (2011) has argued that institutional fear of losing control serves to maintain uneven power distribution, which can easily result in a standoff situation in a negotiation/cooperation process. Seeing museum/institutional practice as a reciprocal process, according to Lynch, can help reduce the conflict and improve the awareness of mutual responsibility and reciprocity for both parties. She asserts,

‘museum and community participants will inevitably be aware that they are ultimately dependent upon and responsible for each other’ (Lynch, 2011, p. 151).

Relational ethics could be an important tool to break such deadlocks by acknowledging and addressing these power imbalances, empowering participants to assert their own voices (Finlay 2011, Haumann 2005, Krüger 2007). Although many challenges remain to address these difficulties, the win-win situation that this research aims to pursue does not simply mean to win the object, but to move beyond the object to construct a sustainable, cooperative and reciprocal relationship among all parties in repatriation.

1.5.2 Chinese and Japanese understanding of relationship

In conceptualising repatriation as an ethical relationship-building process, it is necessary to examine comparatively thinking about relationships from the Chinese and Japanese context. Geert Hofstede’s cultural dimensions theory has proven helpful to many researchers studying relationships within an Asian context and is relevant here as well (Dunning and Kim 2007, Gong and Suzuki 2013). Hofstede proposes a paradigm of five cultural dimensions to analyse behaviours in different cultures in 1988 with Michael Bond: ‘Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism/Collectivism, Masculinity/Femininity, and Long/Short Term Orientation’ and added the sixth dimension of ‘Indulgence versus Restraint’ in 2011 (Hofstede and Bond 1988, Hofstede 2011, pp. 7-8). According to this theory, China and Japan share similar cultural roots and long-term value orientations; collectivism plays a significant role in both Chinese and Japanese societies (Dunning and Kim 2007, Gong and Suzuki 2013). In other words, as opposed to personal gain, Chinese and Japanese people are concerned with the contribution each individual can make to the community and the society of which they are part, paying more attention to the relationship between self and the other,

as well as the long-term impact of their actions.

This awareness of collectivism helps integrate theories of relational ethics and museum ethics into the Sino-Japanese context. Relational ethics, as Fisher (1999) clarifies, draws from characteristics of communitarianism, which encourages achieving common good rather than individualistic interest. This understanding not only shares a common ideal with socialism in Chinese society, but is also similar to the basic tenet of ancient Confucianism that continues to profoundly influence both Chinese and Japanese culture. Moreover, as Besterman (2011, p. 924) argues, the museum could become ‘a safe place for peoples of different beliefs and backgrounds to meet and find common ground’.

In addition, Chinese and Japanese perceptions of the concept of relationships also helps demonstrate the relevance of the idea of relationship-building process and the concept of win-win suggested in this research. Macroscopically, the concept underlying the ethical foundation of Chinese understandings of the idea of relationship is ‘He’ (和). Originally, ‘He’ derived from traditional Confucianism, representing the ultimate and idealist goal of a harmonious society (Cheng, 2006). As Confucius said: ‘in practicing the rules of propriety, a natural ease is to be prized’ harmonious attitude in dealing with difficult situations and conflicts in a peaceful way. As Wong (2011, p. 207) explains, ‘harmony requires the mutual adjustment of interests’; it can also cope with the interests of different parties and ‘how they are to be reconciled in case of apparent conflict’. Thus, ‘He’ in China represents a broad awareness of shaping a harmonious relationship via mutual endeavor, and thus avoiding conflicts.

In Japan, contemporary ethics is profoundly influenced by ancient Confucian and Buddhist traditions, but developed in a distinctly Japanese way (Wargo, 1990).

The core of Japanese ethics is the relationship: people live in a relational network, for example, family relations, friendship, working relations, etc. (Carter, 2001). Japanese recognition of these social relationships is defined as the concept of ‘Wa (和)’. Derived from Japanese people’s loyalty towards group, community and nation, ‘Wa’ emphasises group membership (Alston, 1989) and the individual’s contribution to the group over individual interest (Lee, Brett and Park, 2012). Besides, ‘Wa’ also requires Japanese to avoid uncertainty and mitigate risks and conflicts (Gong and Suzuki 2013, Konishi, et al 2009). Scholars have shown that, through ‘Wa’, Japanese people find it easier to work with others by developing a close and informal friendship over time (Alston, 1989).

To summarise, ‘He’ in China and ‘Wa’ in Japan are not exactly the same: the former emphasises on harmonious relationships without conflicts on an individual level, while the latter concerns group loyalty. However, these two concepts both put the process of building close friendship to the fore, attempting to develop mutual trust to actuate further communication and cooperation.

In terms of Sino-Japanese repatriation, what kind of relationships can be constructed, and how can Chinese and Japanese participants communicate and negotiate with each other regarding this sensitive topic? By understanding the culturally specific Chinese and Japanese perceptions of social relations, we can effectively negotiate the differences between them while also building on shared aspects to rethink building relationship in the Sino-Japanese repatriation process.

1.6 Learning from repatriation to indigenous people

1.6.1 Internationalism or nationalism?

As a contested concept that has aroused considerable disputes from different cultural contexts, repatriation has become entangled in a flood of political,

economic, legal, ethical and cultural issues. The leading debate between internationalism and cultural nationalism emerged in the mid-20th century (Klug, 2010). Initially, John Henry Merryman (1986), a proponent of the former, characterized these two different standpoints by comparing the approaches of the 1954 Hague Convention and 1970 UNESCO Convention: ‘the cultural heritage of all mankind’ and ‘national cultural heritage’ (UNESCO, cited by Merryman, 1986). With the increasing awareness of cultural identity, cultural rights and the acknowledgement of past wrongs, Western museums that held rich collections faced more and more requests of repatriation from source country/community.

In a defensive response, eighteen renowned museums with encyclopedic collections joined forces to sign the *Declaration on the Importance and Value of Universal Museums* in 2002 (ICOM News, 2004). In accordance with this declaration, internationalists such as James Cuno and Neil MacGregor claimed that cosmopolitan museums are responsible for common world heritage and caring for the universal significance of those dispersed antiquities in museums (MacGregor 2004, Cuno 2008, Gorman 2011). In opposition, cultural nationalists rejected the concept of ‘universal museum’, regarding it as a colonial vestige which ignores the cultural rights of originating communities who have little access to and no control over contested cultural property held in museums (Podesta 2008, Kaplan 2016).

In an attempt to move beyond the impasse, scholars have introduced some innovative possibilities to the discourse. For example, Briggs (2008) has argued that the precepts of universalism, focusing on physical collections rather than cultural and spiritual implications, create an opportunity for museums to see themselves as steward organisations and source communities as voices empowered to determine if and how objects are publically shared and interpreted.

Curtis (2006), trying to bridge the gap between the two camps, declared that he could understand the publication of the declaration, but encouraged internationalists to reconsider, as rebuilding historical and contemporary connections among objects, museums and indigenous communities via repatriation, he argued, can only strengthen the institution.

The dispute will still exist as long as requests of repatriation are developing. However, by acknowledging these two opposite standpoints could help build a more comprehensive context for Sino-Japanese repatriation. Thus, it could play a positive role for museum directors and researchers to rethink both parties' views and the interaction between museums and repatriation.

1.6.2 The U.S. and Maori models of repatriation

Repatriation claims from indigenous communities primarily concern sacred items that are usually used in religious and/or funerary ceremonies or being reburied; and invaluable ancestral remains that the source community wishes to rebury, such as skeletal remains that had suffered unethical and illegal excavations and transactions (Gulliford 1992, Cubillo 2010). The exhibition of these sacred items and human remains in museums harmed indigenous people significantly, as this ignored, even disrespected the implied spiritual, religious and cultural symbolic meanings behind them (Atkinson, 2010). Therefore, indigenous communities have been pursuing repatriation and reburial of their holy items and ancestral remains for many years.

Cooperative projects in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Harth 1999, Simon 2006, Simpson 2009, Peers 2013) that have empowered indigenous groups to make decisions about the treatment of museum collections for which they are considered source communities are an innovative win/win

approach to repatriation. The system of collaboration with indigenous groups has, to a large extent, reduced indigenous people's worries about how museums treat their irreplaceable ethnic heritage (Harth, 1999), while museums have gained information about tribal history and religious beliefs, thereby avoiding inappropriate representation of sacred items, which might cause spiritual offense (Harth 1999, Conaty 2008). Moreover, it has played an essential role in reviving indigenous culture and healing indigenous people from hurt, being a gesture of reconciliation for wrongs done (Simpson, 1996).

For example, in the U.S., one of the most significant contributions to repatriation is the formulation of the domestic legislation: *NAGPRA* in 1990, requiring the protection and repatriation of sacred objects and human remains that were originally from Native American communities, but collected by American museums (*NAGPRA*, 1990). *NAGPRA* did not mean simply sending questions or making phone calls to tribal offices and agencies (Ruppert, 1997) but instead became the basis for long-lasting museum-indigenous community partnerships (McKeown 1997, Ruppert 1997) characterised by knowledge exchange and shared authority. This legislation is not without limitations, for instance, private museums/stakeholders that are out of the U.S. federal system, as well as international issues regarding the Native Americans repatriation claims are exclusive of *NAGPRA*'s application scope (Kuprecht, 2012). However, this U.S. model is pioneering for it was initiated through legal obligation but developed through relational ethics.

The New Zealand paradigm of repatriation, conversely, emerged directly from relational ethics, as informed by the bicultural ethos of the state. Distinct from indigenous communities in most other settler countries, New Zealand's bicultural policy helped rehabilitate the distinctive identity and social position of the Māori

from the late 1960s onwards (Sibley and Liu, 2004). In negotiating repatriation issues, Māori people took a leadership role (Hole, 2007) to forge partnerships with museums through the Māori concept of shared guardianship. This concept, as Geismar (2008, p. 115) explains, provided ‘key strategies’ that ‘acknowledge both the rights and responsibilities of the museum and other owners in the care of collection’.

This thesis does not examine repatriation to indigenous peoples in depth; however, it recognises and draws from the ongoing conceptual transformation that has emerged from existing experiences, as in the U.S. and New Zealand. Examples from these national contexts show how some museums have learned that a defensive posture towards repatriation based on the fear of losses to their collections is not productive and that repatriation can create a win/win situation where both parties gain. As McCarthy (cited by Tythacott and Arvanitis, 2016, p. 10) suggested, ‘returning is not a threat, but an opportunity to reconsider professional practice and develop partnership’.

To conclude, understanding current practices and relevant theories in terms of indigenous repatriation not only helps form a deeper understanding of the concept of repatriation, revealing its political, legal and ethical connotations, but also carries relevance for research into Sino-Japanese repatriation. Models of repatriation to indigenous communities, founded on relational ethics and that result in a win/win for both parties, inform my analysis of the Sino-Japanese situation, as evident in Chapters 4-6.

1.7 Current achievements of repatriation in China

Researching Sino-Japanese repatriation must be put in the specific China-Japan context, however, because the relationship is complicated, extremely sensitive,

and thus full of challenges. This thesis aims to provide a new way of thinking regarding Sino-Japanese repatriation; but to do that, it is essential to have a general understanding of what traditional approaches the Chinese government, museums, scholars and the public have taken, and what the limitations are.

China has made great efforts towards repatriation, which can date back to at least 1946, after the war period.⁶ The Education Ministry of the Chinese government and scholars have since made a full catalogue of cultural relics that were looted after the Second Sino-Japanese war in 1946, which was republished as the *Catalogue of Cultural Relics Looted from China to Japan from 1894 to 1949* in 2012 (Gu, Xie, et al, 2012). Broadly speaking, current endeavors that the Chinese government, scholars, museums, non-government organisations (NGO) and patriotic collectors have made rely on international conventions, governmental negotiation, signatory bilateral agreements, NGOs' support and commercial repurchase.

So far, repatriation in China largely regards international conventions as a legal basis (Huo, 2016). This approach is effective to restitution of cultural property that was stolen or illicitly exported to other countries after the 1970 UNESCO Convention was ratified, with sufficient evidence chains and support from the Chinese government. For instance, China repatriated from the U.S. six terracotta figurines in 2003, which had been secretly excavated from the tomb of Dou Queen in the West Han dynasty through this means⁷ (China News 2003, Duan 2007). Supported by three different UNESCO conventions, this restitution should also be attributed to the cooperation between the Embassy of China in the U.S.,

⁶ China had been involved in several wars between 1840-1945, including First Opium War (1840-1842); Second Opium War (1856-1860); Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895); Siege of the International Legations (1900-1901); and Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945).

⁷ For more details of the restitution case, see <http://www.chinanews.com/n/2003-06-18/26/315292.html> [Accessed 10 June 2015].

International Criminal Police Organisation (ICPO) and other governmental institutions.

However, simply relying on international conventions is not sufficient in and of itself to negotiate Sino-Japanese repatriation, as they do not apply to cultural relics that had already been displaced before the conventions came into force. As the current director of State Administration of Cultural Heritage, Gu Xiaojie argues, the provisions of the international conventions have little constraining force (particularly when they contradict a nation's own laws) and are not retroactive to solve historical issues (Zhu, 2014). That is to say, cultural relics that were lost before 1970, especially through war plunder, lack legal and conventional support.

To address this issue, Chinese researchers have analysed the limitations from a legal perspective, and proposed new ideas to bolster this legal approach. For instance, Guo and Gao (2006) supported the establishment of an international court of arbitration regarding cultural property, which could help to reinforce the international conventions. Huo (2015), inspired by the restitution case of the six terracotta figures, suggests that the Chinese government and relevant institutions should value and strengthen the cooperation with ICPO.

Other than legal approaches, the government played a crucial role in the diplomatic negotiation process. China has signed bilateral agreements with 18 countries for preventing the illicit export of cultural property and encouraging the restitution (Huo, 2015). Using the United States as an example, China signed the Memorandum with the U.S. in 2009. This agreement mainly concerns 'the imposition of import restrictions on categories of archaeological material from the Paleolithic period through the Tang dynasty and monumental sculpture and wall

art at least 250 years old' (UNESCO 2009, Duan 2007, Zhu 2014). For the repatriation requests referring to stolen or illicitly exported cultural relics that can be subject to the bilateral agreements, this could be regarded as one of the most effective methods⁸ (Ren, 2017). It could not only provide additional legal support for restitution, but could also, to some extent, prevent further criminal acts against cultural property.

Museums in China have also taken the responsibility to display returned cultural treasures, as well as to increase public and scholarly awareness of advocating the repatriation of looted antiquities and preventing the illicit export of cultural relics. Generally, museums in China have focused on two areas regarding the issue of repatriation: designing relevant exhibitions and proposing to establish catalogues of looted Chinese cultural relics. For example, the National Museum of China organised two exhibitions in 1998 and 2012 with the theme of preventing the smuggling of Chinese cultural relics (Cao 2009, National Museum of China 2012). The Fujian Provincial Museum also designed a similar exhibition in 2012 (Fujian Provincial Department of Culture, 2012). However, the aim of these exhibitions is to display the achievement of preventing illicit import and export of antiquities and does not represent the issue of repatriation comprehensively.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in China have claimed repatriation on behalf of Chinese people as well. The most representative NGO is the Fund of Rescuing Lost Cultural Relics Overseas, which was established in 2002 by the China Foundation for the Development of Social Culture, associated with a variety of Chinese scholars and celebrities. It was the first nongovernmental public welfare organisation to provide financial support to recover looted Chinese cultural property (Artron Net, 2006). Another such NGO, the China Association

⁸The interview between Gong Baihua and the journalist, see <http://www.wenwuchina.com/article/201732/293197.html> [Accessed 2 August 2015].

for Compensation Claims against Japan, recently made its first appeal-- to request an inscribed stele from the Japanese royal family in 2014 (China Daily, 2014). This claim signifies the first meaningful request from Chinese nongovernment groups to Japan (China Daily, 2014). Unfortunately, the claim failed through lack of political and legal power, but nonetheless evoked wide scholarly attention to this case. For example, scholars subsequently traced the way the stele was plundered by the Japanese forces and argued for the historical importance of the stele, as the only evidence of the jurisdiction of Bohai State in the Tang dynasty⁹ (Wang 2005, Li 2012).

In addition, private collectors have purchased many Chinese cultural objects from international auctions, then voluntarily donated them to Chinese museums (Tu, 2012). For instance, Chinese-American collectors, Fan Shijing and Deng Fang, bought 31 terracotta figures, which had originally been excavated from the tomb of Emperor Qi in the West Han dynasty, and donated them to the Chinese government in 2006. Later, in 2007, collector He Hongsang purchased a bronze horse head that had originally been plundered from the old Summer Palace and is now exhibited in Macao, China (Tu, 2012). In 2009, Chinese-American collectors, Fan Jirong and Hu Yingying, donated nine pieces of bronze ware, which had been illicitly smuggled since the 1990s, to the Shanghai Museum in China (Xinhua Net, 2009).

A considerable number of Chinese cultural relics have been donated to China through commercial repurchase. Researchers including Wang (2010) have suggested that this commercial strategy is an effective channel to get the physical object back to China in the very short term; other scholars, such as Huo (2015), argue against it, asserting that it stimulates the international art market, and thus

⁹ Being looted in 1908, this stele was made to commemorate and certificate the conferment of the king of Bohai State, a branch of Tang dynasty (618-907) in northeast China from the Tang Empire.

might trigger more illicit trafficking and trade for high profit. One difficulty is that commercial repurchase, to a large extent, relies on private collectors' individual goodwill to donate to museums, and thus lacks sustainability.

1.8 Addressing the knowledge gap

The issue of repatriation in the context of China has already attracted wide attention in the fields of government, academia and the public. Various approaches have also been put into practice and aroused extensive discussions. However, a review of the literature indicates that a knowledge gap still exists, and thus provides opportunities for this research to make a unique contribution to the issue of repatriation.

Numerous Chinese scholars have interpreted the issue of repatriation from a legal perspective (Guo and Gao 2006, Peng 2008). However, this body of work does not address difficulties such as the lack of retroactive effect and the limited executive force of relevant international conventions to distinguish good-faith holders and untraceable provenance of certain objects (Bai and Li, 2012).

In addition, though museums are usually the terminal point of repatriated cultural property, the role that museums can play in the repatriation process has been largely underestimated. Seeing efforts for repatriation as a government role, Chinese scholars have largely regarded museums as institutions on the sidelines and relevant only in their capacity to collect, exhibit and research cultural property after repatriation. Only a few researchers, in particular, Li Huizhu, have considered what museums can do for repatriation. Li (2010), on the one hand, advocates for museums to develop commercial approaches and accept patriotic donations; on the other hand, she also suggests that museum professionals and researchers establish an international database on Chinese cultural property that

has been dispersed overseas.

In this thesis I will show that museums can play an active role in facilitating Sino-Japanese repatriation through relational ethics. Adapting existing practice and theories from indigenous repatriation, with thought and care given to Chinese and Japanese cultural contexts, I will analyse some Sino-Japanese models of sharing heritage as small steps towards repatriation through relationship-building.

I use a case study approach, providing three potentially productive and realistic strategies, including international exchange exhibitions, digital repatriation and the long-term loan to Sino-Japanese repatriation. I will analyse these strategies in regards to their potential to construct an ethical win-win relationship between Chinese and Japanese participants towards repatriation. I do not suggest that the case studies under discussion represent ideal models of repatriation; instead I see them as small, and in some ways, flawed but nonetheless important gestures that demonstrate how new ways of sharing in the Sino-Japanese context can benefit both parties. I argue that such a win/win relationship creates conditions for Chinese and Japanese colleagues to create a healthy and sustainable community of practice, which refers to a reciprocal result that all participants sharing knowledge through cross-cultural interaction (Wenger, et al, 2002). It thus the capacity to negotiate repatriation issues into the future.

1.9 Thesis structure

This thesis will unfold in seven chapters. Chapter 1 generally introduces what this thesis is about, why this topic was chosen and the research context. It gives a clear explanation of research aims, and reveals the controversial and complicated nature of cultural property and repatriation. Besides, this chapter also clarifies the main dispute of repatriation globally, and evaluates existing research and current

approaches of repatriation in the specific Chinese-Japanese context. Chapter 2 explains the complexity of the China-Japan relations by examining the historical background, the transition from modern Chinese society to contemporary China in the colonial era, and the development of cultural diplomacy, which makes China-Japan relations and the issue of Sino-Japanese repatriation distinct from others. This chapter helps in justifying the importance and necessity of this research. Chapter 3 is the methodology chapter, which shapes a theoretical framework that combines cross-cultural approach, post-colonial theory and the theory of relational ethics, analysing how these theories impact the data gathering and analysing process of this research. This chapter also elaborates research methods, including semi-structured interview, pilot testing and case studies, explaining reasons why these methods and relevant cases were chosen.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 each analyse a different approach towards Sino-Japanese repatriation. Chapter 4 examines Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions as a way of sharing physical access to cultural heritage. It demonstrates that exchange exhibitions are as an effective form to develop cooperative relationship through communities of practice between Chinese and Japanese principal/municipal museums. I assert that such exchange exhibitions not only encourage more opportunities to foster knowledge and capacity building for the museums involved, but also help to build mutual understanding through cooperation and negotiation among Chinese and Japanese museums, museum professional and the publics, which is the foundation of Sino-Japanese repatriation. Chapter 5 analyses the case of the Miho Museum which concerns the relatively successful repatriation case of stolen cultural property, providing a model of sharing physical access to certain cultural objects through the strategy of long-term loan between participants in repatriation. Regarding the cooperation between the Chinese governmental institutions and the Japanese private museum, this model is referential for private

museum to undertake Sino-Japanese repatriation with the government. The idea of digital repatriation is discussed in Chapter 6. Studying the specific case of the International Dunhuang Project, this section provides an effective and feasible model of international digitisation in manuscripts and archives within an international cooperative network where international research institutions, libraries and museums all share digital access to the cultural property. Last but not least, the final chapter concludes with the significance and limitations of the three new ways of sharing, and then proposes more questions for further discussion.

Chapter Two

The Sino-Japanese relationship and its impacts upon Sino-Japanese repatriation

In the introductory chapter, I explained why I chose the China-Japan context to discuss repatriation. In this chapter, I will examine the particularity and complexity of this context and how it impacts upon Sino-Japanese repatriation. Understanding this in more detail will help clarify the significance and necessity of this research.

Historical relations between China and Japan have played an essential role in the development of the contemporary Sino-Japanese relationship. On the one hand, as geographical neighbours, China and Japan have had continuous economic and cultural exchanges for two millennia. These communications have enhanced the recognition of both cultures, and thus contributed towards a foundation of mutual understanding between China and Japan. On the other hand, unsolved historical problems, contemporary disputes over history and territory, and opposing attitudes towards colonial history have led to strained China-Japan relations, and have caused challenges and difficulties to Sino-Japanese repatriation.

The first section of this chapter introduces the historical background between China and Japan, including the interactive relationship constructed during ancient times and the hostility in the modern period (1840-1949). By understanding this, the next section can explore in more detail complicated contemporary Sino-Japanese relations in politics, economics and culture, mapping the interaction among these three areas. Building on this context, the third part

analyses how and to what extent Sino-Japanese relations impact Sino-Japanese repatriation. The conclusion illustrates both the potentiality and challenges that these relations have brought to Sino-Japanese repatriation.

2.1 The complex historical background between China and Japan

2.1.1 Interactive ancient Sino-Japanese relations

In order to have a full understanding of Sino-Japanese relations, it is key to introduce the historical background between these two countries from their earliest encounters. Although some Chinese and Japanese scholars place different emphasis on certain points of the study of ancient Chinese-Japanese exchanges¹⁰, academics have reached a common understanding that Chinese and Japanese cultures have interacted with each other frequently and continuously through economic and cultural communications (Tian, 1987). To be more specific, exchanges between ancient China and Japan vary due to the transition of political powers, the development of technology and social conditions in different historical periods. All these connections generated a profound and mutual understanding between both cultures in ancient China and Japan.

As early as 57 AD in the Eastern Han dynasty, ancient China and Japan, as geographical neighbours, had already contacted each other officially (Tian, 1987). The proximate location of the two countries has largely facilitated their frequent communication. Since the 6th century, China and Japan did not only have continuous commercial trade, but also sent ambassadors to undertake religious and cultural exchanges on Buddhism, architecture, sculpture and poetry (Wang,

¹⁰ Since 2002, Chinese, South Korean and Japanese scholars have engaged in a joint research project on the common history of East Asian countries (Bu, 2015). As part of this project, Chinese and Japanese scholars discussed their different views on certain historical events. For example, regarding Sino-Japanese relations in Ming dynasty, Chinese scholars focused on the damage that Japanese pirates brought to Chinese people who lived in coastal regions, as well as the territorial security of the Ming dynasty; while some Japanese scholars emphasised the intercommunication between Japan and Southeast Asian countries, as well as the positive influence that Japanese pirates had on the development of Japanese economics (Wang 2010, The Paper 2015).

2014). During the Sui and Tang dynasties (581-907), the official relationship between China and Japan¹¹ reached a peak, and the two countries formed an intimate friendship with each other (Zhang and Guo, 2006). Under these circumstances, ancient Chinese Confucianism and Buddhism considerably influenced ancient Japanese culture.

Later, during the Song and Yuan dynasty (960-1368), non-governmental exchanges became more mainstream due to the development of the shipbuilding industry and the invention of the compass, which facilitated maritime transport (Wu, 2014). Chinese silk, tea and spices, as well as Japanese swords and paper fans became the most popular commodities in Chinese-Japanese trade (Wu, 2014). In addition, Japanese monks played a significant role by communicating with Chinese monks, spreading Chinese religious classics, Confucian literature, architecture and art to ancient Japan (Yang, 2011). During this period, ancient China and Japan upheld their friendship through continuous economic, cultural and religious exchanges. The official connection helped expand international trade during the early Ming dynasty (1401-1523); however, this was discontinued after seclusion orders¹² that the Japanese and Chinese authorities conducted in succession to maintain their political power in the Ming and Qing dynasty (1368-1840) (Tian, 1987). Although official connections ceased, small-scale commercial transactions and merchant ships continued to trade in this period (Tian 1987, Wu 2014).

As this brief sketch demonstrates, ancient China and Japan had continuous official

¹¹ Here refers to the ancient China and Japan, especially the territory of ancient China was not unified as it is today. Both of the countries themselves had gone through great tumult, experiencing regime changes at different stages.

¹² For further information in terms of the seclusion orders that Japanese authority conducted, see *the History of Japan*, edited by the Institute of Japanese Culture Studies, Zhejiang University (China) from 2000 to 2003. For Chinese seclusion policy in Ming and Qing dynasty, see Xü, Mingde, *The external exchange and border control during the Ming and Qing dynasty* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang University Press, 2006), and Xia, Quan, 'A study of the Chinese seclusion policy in Qing dynasty', *Studies in Qing History*, no.4 (2002), pp. 122-124.

and unofficial communication including political, economic and cultural exchanges from at least the 6th century until the early 19th century. The connections between China and Japan never stopped, and continued to foster interactive Sino-Japanese relations in many fields. As Yang Dongliang (2011, p. 105) indicates, ‘the ancient Sino-Japanese relationship cannot be characterised simply as either a friendship or a rivalry as it had taken on different forms: amicable friendship, collaborative relations and hostility between each other.’ The interaction between ancient Chinese and Japanese culture, religion and philosophy was shaped through these frequent communications. By understanding this long history of ancient Sino-Japanese exchanges, it is easier to appreciate the similar cultural roots that China and Japan share, which help reinforce ancient Chinese-Japanese relations on the basis of mutual understanding.

2.1.2 Hostile China-Japan relations during the colonial war period

At the end of the Qing dynasty, things began to change. From the First Opium War in 1840 to the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, China frequently experienced invasions due to Western imperialist ambitions (Lü, 2013). Japan, which westernised itself since the mid-19th century through the Meiji Restoration, learning from Western industrial and military experiences, and pursuing colonial control towards other East Asian countries afterwards, became one of those countries (Miller, 2004). It violently invaded China during the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), the Siege of the International Legations (1900) and the Second Sino-Japanese War¹³ (1931-1945) (Li, 2005). The Second Sino-Japanese War, especially, dragged modern China into a colonial context,

¹³ Controversially, there are two perspectives on the starting point of the Second Sino-Japanese War: one believes that the war started from the Marco Polo Bridge Incident (also known as resistance at Lugou Bridge) on 7 July, 1937, which marks the start of China’s full-scale war of resistance against Japanese aggression; while the other view considers the Mukden Incident (or Manchurian Incident), which happened on 18 September, 1931 when the Japanese first invaded the Manchuria as the beginning of regional war of resistance (Liu 1987, Zhang 2006, Cheng 2010). Since 2017, the Chinese government officially uses ‘Fourteen-Year War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression’ in history textbook (Hernándezjan 2017, Hxnews 2017).

transforming it from a feudal society into what Chinese political figures and historians commonly refer to as a ‘semi-colonial and semi-feudal society’ under Japanese and other foreign invasions (Mao 1939, Chen 1996, Gong 2013). In this colonial context, Chinese-Japanese relations gradually became hostile.

‘Semi-colonial and semi-feudal’ is a specific term describing the nature of modern Chinese society from 1840 to 1949. Though the phrase was legitimised by Mao Zedong, the first chairman of the People’s Republic of China, ‘semi-colonial and semi-feudal’ was first introduced by Lenin who pointed out that ‘the objective condition of modern China is a backward, agricultural and semi-feudal country’ (Lenin, 1912). As Lenin asserts, semi-colonial countries were those that were ‘formally independent politically, but in fact, were enmeshed in the net of financial and diplomatic dependence’ (Lenin, 1916). After the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921, Chinese democrat Cai Hesen (1980a, 1980b) developed Lenin’s idea and further discussed these two terms respectively in the context of modern China in 1922. Cai agreed that, since the Opium War, foreign colonialists had controlled Chinese politics and the economy (Cai, 1980a). However the Chinese government still existed in one form or another, meaning China was semi-independent (Li, 1996). In the 1930s, Marxist historians such as Lü Zhenyu began to combine the two terms and use ‘semi-feudal and semi-colonial’ to describe modern Chinese society in the 1840-1949 period as an important stage of Chinese history (Lü 2000, Chen 1996).

Mao Zedong (1939) systematically conceptualised the term in his work *The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party*, which describes a semi-capitalist economy and a semi-independent government under the control of foreign colonialists (Chen 1996). Although some scholars argue that ‘semi-colonial and semi-feudal’ is a general term unable to capture the complexity

of modern Chinese society (Li 2002, Ni 2008), today many scholars in China support the concept of ‘semi-colonial and semi-feudal society’ as a fundamental theory indicative of the modern history of China between 1840 and 1949.

In fact, China and Japan maintained a superficial relationship of peace after the First Sino-Japanese war until the first decade of the 20th century (Reynolds, 1998). Japan had begun to transform itself from a feudal country to a modernised industrial country after the significant Meiji Restoration¹⁴ (from 1864 to about 1880) (Beasley 1972). After the first Sino-Japanese war, many Chinese scholars and officials acknowledged the positive impact of Japanese westernisation (Yang 2009, Liu and Du 2012). The Chinese government thus rescinded its policy of seclusion, sending a large number of Chinese students to Japan who brought information on Western technologies, social and political systems as well as Western literature back to China (Li and Wang 1996, Li 2005). This trend of sending students to Japan opened a new world to the isolated Chinese people in the early 20th century, fostering numerous initiatives to develop Chinese society (Ji, 2015).

However, relations became decidedly hostile after the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War. During this period, Chinese people and society suffered terrific damage from the Japanese troops’ atrocities. Here, I use the loss of cultural property as an example, as it relates closely to the issue of Sino-Japanese repatriation. Since 1946, Chinese scholars and the Chinese Department of Education have made efforts to calculate the number of cultural relics looted by the Japanese since the beginning of the First Sino-Japanese war (Meng and Yu, 1995). For example, one of the most significant works published is the *Catalogue*

¹⁴ Since the mid-19th century, Japan not only suffered domestic revolts against the Tokugawa government, but also faced external invasions from countries like the U.S., UK, The Netherlands and France after the Opium War, being forced to sign various unfair treaties. Under these circumstances, the Japanese government conducted revolutions in many areas, and thus transformed itself from a feudal society to an imperialist entity. This is called the Meiji Restoration (Beasley 1972, Wang 1994, Song 2006).

of Cultural Relics Looted from China to Japan from 1894 to 1949, which was reprinted by the Palace Museum in 2012. This catalogue records 15,245 cultural relics that were stolen by the Japanese, including a large number of oracle bones, jades, bronzes, pottery, ceramics, silks, paintings, sculpture and ancient manuscripts and books (Gu, Xie, et al, 2012). However, the total number of looted objects is estimated to be far more than that. The editor of the catalogue, Xie Chensheng, indicates that, apart from those relics included in the catalogue, the Japanese troops destroyed around 741 ancient sites, around 15,000 paintings, 16,000 ancient artefacts, and three million ancient books from 1894 to 1949 (Zhang, 2012). Though the Second Sino-Japanese War ended in 1945, contested historical issues and historical memories that Chinese and Japanese people hold have significantly impacted the development of contemporary Sino-Japanese relations.

In this section I have discussed the complex historical background and the changing Sino-Japanese relationship in the ancient and modern eras, which is essential to understanding contemporary Sino-Japanese relations. The next section will analyse the sensitivities of contemporary China-Japan relations, including main factors that impact this bilateral relationship, as well as existing approaches to improving it.

2.2 Contemporary relations between China and Japan

2.2.1 Changing contemporary Sino-Japanese relation

The contemporary Sino-Japanese relationship is one of the most important bilateral relations in East Asia. Based on the long history of political, economic and cultural exchange between China and Japan, the contemporary Chinese-Japanese relationship is highly interdependent, but inevitably fierce conflicts have erupted in many fields. Hence, the relationship between both

countries remains extremely complex (Men, 2016). To be more specific, Wu Huaizhong (2015, p. 13) has summarised four characteristics of contemporary Sino-Japanese relations in the 21st century:

- ‘Harmony in diversity, which refers to the unstable political relations and different diplomatic strategies;
- Sustained conflict, without a complete break, especially in the field of military security;
- Reciprocity in terms of an interdependent economic relationship;
- Continuous but not intimate cultural and social communications.’

According to Wu’s analysis, the complexity of contemporary Sino-Japanese relations reflects in particular on the changing political attitudes and diplomatic strategies, conflicts around territory and military issues, and continuous economic and cultural cooperation. The ideal relationship that both China and Japan seek is a harmonious and balanced situation, however, mutual competition in the areas of politics and military is inevitable, which makes the Sino-Japanese relationship unstable. By acknowledging that moments of great political tension can negatively impact collaborations in the cultural domain, nevertheless, economic and cultural relations are relatively productive and sustainable, which can potentially impact the Sino-Japanese relationship by encouraging more opportunities for further collaborations based on common interests.

I now take a step back to explore how contemporary Chinese-Japanese relations have changed from the end of the Second Sino-Japanese War. Generally speaking, Sino-Japanese relations during the Cold War period (1947-1991) were strongly influenced by changing international strategic patterns and the transition of

international political environment¹⁵ (Zhu, 2014). In other words, the transformation of the international status of China, Japan, the U.S, and the Soviet Union in this period altered the political relations between China and Japan (Vogel, 2002). Moreover, the rising power of China on the international stage, as well as the restoration of China's legal seat in the United Nations in 1971, compelled Japan to change its diplomatic policies towards China (Song and Tian, 2010) towards engagement. These factors established the foundation of the normalisation of Chinese-Japanese diplomatic relations in the 1970s.

In 1972, China and Japan signed the first official diplomatic treaty between the two countries since the war: the *Joint Communiqué of the Government of Japan and the Government of the People's Republic of China* (Wu, 2015). This joint communiqué marked the formal normalisation of Chinese-Japanese diplomatic relations after the Second World War. The endorsement of the *Sino-Japanese Peace and Friendship Treaty* in 1978 moved official Sino-Japanese relations a step further towards a 'honeymoon period', attempting to seek an equal and mutually beneficial bilateral relationship (Song and Tian 2010, Jiang 2014). However, from the mid-1990s to the present, the Sino-Japanese relationship has become fragile and has deteriorated as a result of disputes over historical and economic issues, such as the ownership of Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, the Japanese Prime Minister's official visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, which honours 14 Class-A war criminals in the Second Sino-Japanese War, as well as the slump in the Japanese and the rise in the Chinese economies (Meng 2012, He 2013).

In the 21st century, Sino-Japanese relations are precarious and characterised by ups and downs. This period has been regarded as 'the end of the post-war period

¹⁵ For further information on how the international political environment impacted Sino-Japanese relations, see Chung, Chien-peng, *Contentious Integration: Post-Cold War Japan-China Relations in the Asia-Pacific* (London: Routledge, 2014); Tanaka Akihiko, *Japan-China Relations 1945-1990* (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1991); Song Zhiyong and Tian Qingli, *日本近现代对华关系史(Japan's Relations with China in Modern Times)* (Beijing: World Affairs Press, 2010).

in Japan' and 'a period of anxiety and distrust' between China and Japan (Mori, 2013, p. 7). From 2001 to 2006, the Sino-Japanese relationship froze and was upset by the Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro's official visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, as mentioned above (Cui, 2001). After Prime Minister Abe Shinzo's visit to China in 2006, however, Abe proposed the idea of constructing 'a strategic relationship of mutual benefit' with China (Iida, 2009, p. 127). From 2006 to 2011, this period witnessed an improvement of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relation: both China and Japan achieved a consensus that cooperation is of the essence in all fields to gain reciprocity (Lee, 2012).

One symbol of this thaw is the increasing number of diplomatic visits¹⁶ between Chinese and Japanese authorities between 2007 and 2009, and the ratification of the *China-Japan Joint Statement on All-round Promotion of Strategic Relationship of Mutual Benefit*¹⁷ during former Chinese President Hu Jintao's 2008 'spring-warming trip' to Japan (Zhang, 2013). Unfortunately Sino-Japanese relations froze again in 2012 over conflict concerning the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands (Zhang, 2013). This volatile relationship negatively impacts the scale and depth of economic and cultural collaboration between China and Japan again. For instance, the controversy around the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in 2012 and the subsequent deterioration of Sino-Japanese political relations directly led to the suspension of government-led economic and trade cooperation

¹⁶ It includes 'the ice-melting trip' to Japan by Wen Jiabao, the former Premier of China, in 2007; 'the spring-welcoming trip' to China by Fukuda Yasuo, the former Japanese Prime Minister on 27 December, 2007; Chinese former President Hu Jintao's 'spring-warming trip' to Japan in May, 2008, the former Minister of Finance of Japan Aso Taro's official visit to China in April, 2009, and the former Prime Minister of Japan Hatoyama Yukio's state visit to China in October, 2009 (Zhang, 2013).

¹⁷ Chinese government officially regards this statement as the fourth joint statement between China and Japan, which plays a profoundly role on reconstructing a mutually beneficial Sino-Japanese relations 'in the areas of trade, investment, information and communication technology, finance, food and product safety, Intellectual Property Right (IPR) protection, business environment, agriculture, forestry and aquaculture, transport and tourism, water resources, and medical and health care'. The other three documents are the *China-Japan Joint Statement* signed on 29 September 1972, the *China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship* released on 12 August 1978, and the *China-Japan Joint Declaration* issued on 26 November 1998. For more details of the statement, see the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (2008), https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/2649_665393/t458431.shtml [Accessed 3 September 2016].

(Jiang, 2016). In addition, capital investments and bilateral trade between China and Japan have consistently shrunk since mid-2012, compared to development trends in 2011 (Jiang 2016, Zhang 2015). Nevertheless, I acknowledge that Japanese popular culture, to a certain degree, impacts China now. For example, among the young generation in China, Japanese fashions, food, music and anime are on trend; tourism to Japan from China is also growing, however, the quantity of Japanese tourists to China is declining (Narenqimuge, 2016).

More recently, in 2017, the 45th anniversary of the normalisation of Sino-Japanese relation brought signs of a possible reconciliation between China and Japan, especially in terms of economic development. One example is the Japanese government's positive attitude¹⁸ towards joining the multilateral economic cooperative framework of the Belt and Road Initiative that the Chinese government proposed in 2013, which provides more opportunities to improve Sino-Japanese relationship now (Sun, 2018).

2.2.2 Factors that have made Sino-Japanese relations complicated and volatile

- *Disputes over territory and history make bilateral relations unstable*

Looking at the trajectory of contemporary Sino-Japanese relations, it is apparent that disputes over territory and history¹⁹ between China and Japan, such as the overlapping claims of the ownership of Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea and different perspectives on the Japanese Prime Minister's official visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, continue to trouble potential bilateral collaboration (Smith, 2010). This research does not analyse details of these politically sensitive issues in terms of international relations, but aims to emphasise the impact of these disputes

¹⁸ Since Abe Shinzo emphasised the importance of developing Japanese economy in 2017, Japanese government began to encourage more economic collaborations with China (Sun, 2018).

¹⁹ For more details regarding these highly sensitive issues, see Paul Smith, 'China-Japan Relations and the Future Geopolitics of East Asia', *Asian Affairs*, no. 4(2010), pp. 230-256.

on Sino-Japanese cultural cooperation.

The reappearance of these disputes is a potential catalyst for further deterioration of Sino-Japanese relations. For example, China's foreign policy on Japan emphasises the U.S-Japan Alliance (Zhao, 2009). In response, Japan has adopted 'a mixed strategy that involves both positive engagement and realistic balancing to hedge against the potential threats that China may pose in the future' (Mochizuki, 2007, p. 739). Such policies evoke the larger position of mutual constraint between China and Japan not only in the international political sphere but also in the cultural domain.

Most Chinese and Japanese academics agree that these controversial issues are fundamental factors creating tensions in the Sino-Japanese relationship. For instance, Lü Yaodong (2014) locates them directly at the core of the mistrust. Furthermore, Mori Kazuko (2013) classifies the main Chinese-Japanese disputes into three distinct but intertwined layers of value, power and interests: the primary level unsettles historical problems that relate to the colonial context; the second level embodies regional and global issues of political power; the third layer includes disputes related to the countries' natural and territorial resources.

Recently, scholars have proposed adopting a more pragmatic and long-term approach to deal with these controversies, 'putting aside existing disputes' and seeking 'closer cooperation between China and Japan in all fields' (Tsunekawa 2009, Chung 2012, Hu 2014). Yet it is still necessary to understand the sensitivities underpinning these disputes and the reasons why they continue to strain the contemporary Sino-Japanese context. Apart from the competition on the international political stage and conflicts around economic interests, the opposing attitude that China and Japan adopt in the face of historical disputes is another

issue that impacts their relations.

- *Different historical memories and opposing attitudes towards historical issues*

Historical problems between China and Japan comprise a series of issues that relate to ‘the legacy of history and differing interpretations of events which happened when China was at war with Japan from 1931 to 1945’ (Chung, 2016, p. 8). These different interpretations reflect the conflicting Chinese and Japanese perceptions of unsettled historical issues. For the Chinese, Japanese colonial invasions brought terrible damage to Chinese society, its people and culture, and thus China holds the position that it is owed a formal apology by Japan. However, the Japanese government maintains a cautious attitude towards the history of aggression against China (Betzler and Austin, 1997). Acknowledging the increasingly important role that China holds both in East Asia and the international community, Japanese diplomacy attempts to alleviate the tensions without touching on controversial historical issues. It does this through policies that, on the one hand, soberly without bluster, attempt to mitigate Chinese domination in the East Asian political arena and, on the other hand, seek prosperity in the global economic market by including China as a main partner (Inoguchi 2014, Kokubun 2017). As Zhao (2016, p. 339) asserts, however, these efforts do not erode the main obstacle, ‘Japan’s difficulty in accurately remembering the past and China’s difficulty in forgetting it’.

Many Chinese researchers, informed by strong national sentiments, insist that Japan should change its evasive attitude to repent for historical grievances (Lü 2014, Wang, Yi, et al 2015) while some scholars²⁰ from outside the Sino-Japanese context have criticised China’s refusal to take into account the

²⁰ Regarding this point, the critique also includes an dispute of ‘anti-Japanese education’ that remains between Chinese and Japanese politicians and researchers: the Chinese side rejects to equal the patriotic education in China to the specific ‘anti-Japanese education’; while the Japanese side regards it as one of the main factors that aggravates Chinese people’s national sentiment towards Japan (Kondo and Wu 2011, Gustafsson 2015).

peaceful efforts that Japan had made in the post-war period (Gustafsson, 2015). Increasingly, voices from within the Sino-Japanese sphere have begun to note that China and Japan's different historical memories play an essential role in the shaping of both nations' understanding of the colonial history (Bu 2011, Liu 2013). Liu Jincai (2013, p. 63) sums up these differences:

The Chinese perception is based on cultural/ideological influences and the inheritance of ancient China to Japan, as well as the over-fifty-year long colonial invasions and China's unhealed wounds from this painful history; the Japanese perception, however, is focused on their contributions in areas of culture, philosophy, science to modern China, sharing experiences and providing financial aid as post-war compensation after the normalisation of Sino-Japanese relations.

Chinese scholars such as Liu have made attempts to understand Japanese interpretations of history, in order to encourage a mutual understanding of the colonial past. Moreover, some Japanese scholars have reflected on the past and, to a certain extent, have faced the historical problems as insisted on by the Chinese. Researchers such as Onuma Yasuaki (2007) agree that Sino-Japanese contradictions in the context of historical disputes derive predominantly from different experiences of war and opposing political standpoints. He also asserts that this difference is the reason why Chinese and Japanese people struggle to achieve consensus on historical memories (Onuma 2002). Another viewpoint is represented by the Japanese philosopher, Takahashi Tetsuya, who acknowledges that Japan should reflect on its colonial behaviour during the war period, taking the responsibility to rebuild the relationship between post-war China and Japan (Meng 2006, Takahashi 2008).

It is promising that many Chinese and Japanese scholars have taken on self-reflective approaches to their research and explore the post-war historical disputes in such a productive way. These approaches have inspired new discussions among Chinese and Japanese historians and provided new scholarship regarding the complicated historical period and unsettled historical issues. This trend demonstrates that studies with a cross-cultural lens have the potential to break deadlocks in discourse and practice as they propose a starting point of generating mutual understanding and exploring common ground.

To conclude, the differing attitudes of China and Japan in the contemporary world are at least as much a direct result of political and territorial conflicts, as well as different experiences and memories of war (Zhu 2007, Liu 2009). According to current trends in Sino-Japanese relations, incidents related to these complex factors have the potential to lead to the deterioration of Sino-Japanese relations; at the same time, it is important to note that China and Japan have managed to sustain collaborations with one another in economic and cultural fields, despite these difficulties. Being both competitive and collaborative in nature, the relationship between China and Japan forms a complicated and highly sensitive context, bringing both challenges and opportunities to the issue of Sino-Japanese repatriation.

2.3 How the Sino-Japanese relationship impacts Sino-Japanese repatriation

With regards to the research topic of this thesis, the instability and sensitivity of Sino-Japanese political, historical and cultural relations have a strong influence on the development of Sino-Japanese repatriation. Distrust creates obstacles for the development of Sino-Japanese repatriation; yet, on the contrary, common interests in the cultural field provide opportunities for Sino-Japanese collaboration.

Repatriation processes are deeply embedded in the sensitivities of governmental relationships and the historical provenance of cultural property. This has prompted a cautious attitude by cultural institutions, which tend to prioritise less risky collaborative projects between Chinese and Japanese museums. Nevertheless, despite the sometimes hostile and competitive relationship, the continuous cultural exchanges between ancient China and Japan provide common cultural and spiritual roots that form a foundation for mutual understanding. Cultural activities that facilitate cross-cultural communication and knowledge exchange, such as international exhibitions, have the potential not only to facilitate cross-institutional collaboration, but also to shape the wider contemporary Sino-Japanese relationship in return.

- *The deterioration of the Sino-Japanese relation creates distrust that negatively influences repatriation*

Within the context of cultural exchange, mutual mistrust between China and Japan is reflected in two ways: on the Chinese side, there is increasing social pressure towards resolving repatriation claims; and fears of losing collections from the Japanese side. This mistrust both shapes and is shaped by public opinion. Cui Shiguang (2011), who analysed the changing curve of Chinese and Japanese public opinion from 1990s to 2010s, points out that the favorable impressions between Chinese and Japanese people decreases when the Sino-Japanese relations become tense, and vice-versa. In fact, with the intention of measuring public opinion on diplomacy between Japan and the world, the Japanese government has conducted governmental public opinion surveys since 1975. The surveys form an opportunity for the Japanese government to better understand the public's view on diplomacy and modify relevant policies accordingly (Tang, 2012). According to the survey²¹, in 2001 48.5% of Japanese respondents thought that the current

²¹ For more information, see <https://survey.gov-online.go.jp/index-gai.html> [Accessed 10 September 2016].

relationship between Japan and China was not amicable, a number that dramatically increased to 79.8% in 2017. Similarly, 48.1% of respondents felt unfamiliar with China in 2001, but this increased to 78.5% in 2017 (Cabinet Office, 2017).

In China, the equivalent of the Japanese survey is the Japan-China Annual Joint Opinion Poll²², an unofficial survey conducted by the Genron NPO in Japan and China International Publishing Group since 2005 (Zhang, 2016). In 2017 results showed that 66.8% of Chinese people held a negative impression of Japan, with 64.2% agreeing that the current Sino-Japanese relationship is poor (Zhu, 2017). These numbers reflect a sharp decline of perceptions of amicability between the Chinese and Japanese publics, and also represent the mistrust that continues to colour the Chinese and Japanese relationship.

Social media plays an important role in impacting mutual impressions and aggravating social pressures on both sides. Both Chinese and Japanese researchers acknowledge that social media in both countries causes ‘a snowballing effect’ by reporting negative incidents while controversies are developing, and considerably aggravating ‘a mutual decline in image’ in China and Japan (Cui 2011, Kokubun 2017, p. 1). Accordingly, as one of the most important communicative tools for museums to interact with a wide audience more creatively, and for the audience to make their voices heard by museums (Marakos, 2014), social media, in the domain of repatriation, negatively impacts progress.

- *Strained Sino-Japanese relations lead to cautious cross-institutional collaboration*

²² For more information, see http://www.beijing-tokyo.com/node_7229771.htm [Accessed 13 September 2016]; http://www.genron-npo.net/en/opinion_polls/archives/5379.html [Accessed 13 September 2016].

Contingent governmental relationships, bilateral competition to sustain power and interest, and contradicting attitudes towards historical disputes negatively influence the collaboration between Chinese and Japanese museums, cultural and research institutions. Both Chinese and Japanese cultural institutions act in cautious ways at times when the Sino-Japanese relationship deteriorates. Museums in both countries are inclined to adopt risk-averse strategies to maintain cultural exchange activities. This has limited the freedom of museum staff in both countries to choose themes, exhibition content and various types of collaborative activities.

Ancient Chinese culture is one of the most typical themes that museums and cultural institutions in the two countries select for the cross-institutional collaborative projects, as it is not particularly risky to negotiate (Lu and Han, 2011). China and Japan have long shared similar cultural roots and intimate connections (Betzler and Austin, 1997). These roots are at the heart of the common love of and ancient influence from ancient Chinese culture. By building on this shared identity, as discussed in Chapter 4, Chinese and Japanese museums have strategised to strengthen their relationship by avoiding political sensitivities.

In terms of Sino-Japanese repatriation, conflicts and differing perspectives are still inevitable, however, in the collaborative process between Chinese and Japanese partners. To facilitate inter-institutional collaboration and reduce the mistrust that has strained Sino-Japanese discourse concerning potential repatriation processes, digital repatriation via international digitisation projects of dispersed collections, as I consider in Chapter 6, has proven a particularly productive model that establishes an international research network (Basu, 2013), and involves other parties to act as intermediaries between Chinese and Japanese institutions. By sharing digital access to contested cultural property, this approach helps parties to

move beyond the polarised positions of ownership and loss and also provides ways to unite fragments dispersed around the world, which might never otherwise be seen or understood holistically. The international network moreover builds trust between Chinese and Japanese contributors within the international network under the support of the third parties.

- Continuous cultural collaborations set the foundation of mutual understanding for Sino-Japanese repatriation

Many scholars have recognised common efforts by researchers from both countries as sustainable approaches to understand Chinese and Japanese culture in a more comprehensive way (Cui 2011, Hu 2014, Zhu 2014, Men 2016). Cultural collaboration has been regarded as one of the most effective approaches to change persistent negative impressions between China and Japan (Cui, 2003). One of the most influential endeavors is a joint research project²³ that East Asian historians and scholars in China, South Korea and Japan coedit modern East Asia history since 2002 (Babicz 2009, Bu 2015). The aim is ‘to seek common ground in historical knowledge’ in Eastern Asia (Bu, 2015, p. 126). It is acknowledged that researchers from China, South Korea and Japan all held different perspectives at the start and could hardly reach consensus on some highly controversial issues (Babicz, 2009). This project has, nonetheless, encouraged dialogue among researchers from the three countries and generated mutual understanding of the modern history of Eastern Asia (Bu, 2015).

Another example of cultural collaboration is exchange exhibitions between Chinese and Japanese museums. Different from international loan exhibitions, exchange exhibitions refer to Chinese exhibitions sent out to Japan, and in return,

²³ Research outcomes of this joint research project have been published respectively in China, South Korea and Japan, for instance, *A History to Open the Future: Modern East Asian History and Regional Reconciliation*, published in China, 2005, the same version called *A History which Opens up the Future: Modern and Contemporary History of Three East Asian Countries*, published in South Korea and Japan, 2005. *A Modern History of East Asia Beyond the Boundaries*, published in China, 2013.

Japanese exhibitions sent out to China. As an effective approach, exchange exhibitions can help facilitate the mutual learning process between museum professionals in both countries, deepening mutual respect and trust.

2.4 Potentialities for further Sino-Japanese repatriation

According to Xinhua Net (2017b), both China and Japan have recently sent positive signals that suggest both countries intend to improve the current political and diplomatic relationship. This trend became especially clear in 2017, when the Chinese Prime Minister, Xi Jingpi, and the Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, restarted official conversations in the friendly atmosphere of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit (Xinhua Net, 2017b). This promising move forward has been regarded as a turning point in the restoration of a ‘mutually beneficial strategic relationship’ between China and Japan. Both China and Japan reached a consensus on promoting bilateral cooperation in political, economic and cultural areas (Xinhua Net, 2017b). This sign of reconciliation has not only improved the political relations between China and Japan, but will play a positive role in creating opportunities for further cultural and economic communications.

In fact, both Chinese and Japanese scholars have emphasised the significance of unofficial cultural communication to mitigate the tension between China and Japan (Lei, 2006). Compared to political policies and diplomatic strategies, unofficial cultural cooperation has the freedom to develop in informal ways, such as art fairs, art festivals, cultural years and so on (Zhang, 2016). As opposed to economic and financial trade, culturally collaborative projects are less utilitarian and are better placed to avoid conflicts of interest. As such, such initiatives play an indispensable role in building a comprehensive, mutual understanding between both cultures (Wang, 2003). In addition, unofficial cultural communication has been recognised by Chinese scholars as one of the most effective ways to

eliminate cross-cultural misunderstanding, to reconcile contradictions, and improve the relationship between two countries that share similar cultural roots and have a common love of ancient Chinese culture (Wang 2003, Cui 2011).

Given this background, it is imperative to consider the potential of improved Sino-Japanese political and diplomatic relations and the subsequent increase of opportunities to collaborate. As I will show in this thesis, collaborative cultural projects between Chinese and Japanese cultural institutions offer a chance to reduce divergences, and enhance the mutual understanding and respect from both sides ultimately constructing a reciprocal relationship between both countries and moving the issue of Sino-Japanese repatriation forward.

With a better understanding of the complexities of Sino-Japanese relations and how these relations impact policy and practice towards Sino-Japanese repatriation, the next chapter introduces the methodology of this research. It not only focuses on research methods adopted in this research, but is concerned with the philosophical standpoint and the way in which data was collected and analysed. It attempts to answer questions about the theoretical framework of this research, the research methods that were chosen and why, and the three specific cases at the heart of this research.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Previous chapters have discussed research aims and questions, exploring the historical and cultural background between China and Japan, as well as the complex Sino-Japanese relationship. This chapter focuses on the methodology and methods adopted in this research. It firstly constructs a theoretical framework shaped by a cross-cultural research methodology, post-colonial theory and the theory of relational ethics, which underpins this thesis. It also sets out the ethical considerations that arose as part of the nature of cross-cultural research, and explains details of the research process.

This methodology chapter explains both the intellectual and practical journey of the research process. As Mills (2014) points out, a methodology says something about the researcher's thinking on the research design and the rationale for choosing certain research methods to answer the research questions. If research methods tell the researcher how to gather research data, methodology refers to the theoretical foundation that the researcher applies to process the research (Zeegers and Barron, 2015). In other words, research methodology not only focuses on specific methods, but is also concerned with the philosophical viewpoint of the researcher, the rationale for conducting the research, as well as the collection and analysis of data with the chosen methods.

Designing a well-organised methodology was a key part of this research. On the one hand, the process of deciding on the methodology helps the researcher construct a distinct cognition of the wider research field, thereby creating a

systematic research plan by adopting appropriate research methods. On the other hand, it helps to increase the researcher's awareness of relative ethical principles and establish a closer and reciprocal link between the researcher's understanding and informants' actual frame of reference (Evans, 2007). Accordingly, the researcher can develop a general framework of theories which are linked with each other (Punch, 2005).

Similarly, in the data analysis process, the researcher is able to reference most steps and details in a well-structured methodology and to establish criteria from the theoretical framework by which to evaluate the data. By following the methodology, the researcher can effectively identify and unpack patterns from within large volumes of collected data and researched phenomena; these patterns, in turn, provide the key to elucidating the research argument. A robust methodology guides the researcher to answer the research question and can be adjusted and modified with new data resources.

As a Chinese researcher studying the issue of Sino-Japanese repatriation and conducting fieldwork in both China and Japan, I take on a cross-cultural lens to translate a set of theories that originate outside of China and Japan to this Sino-Japanese context. The cross-cultural research methodology plays an overarching role in the theoretical framework of this research, which helps integrate post-colonial theory and the theory of relational ethics into the Sino-Japanese context. The nature of cross-cultural qualitative research also aids me, as the researcher, in situating myself and developing a sophisticated awareness of cultural sensitivities. Being well-informed on the cultural contexts in which I undertake the research is essential to building mutual trust with informants during the research design and data gathering process.

The issue of repatriation and the historically sensitive Sino-Japanese context provide a complicated framework for this research project. First of all, the topic itself is characterised by complexity and controversy, such as disputes over unclear provenance of cultural property. Moreover, unsolved historical issues regarding the semi-colonial period, and inconstant political and economic relations between China and Japan in the contemporary world create a cautious atmosphere for practitioners, academics and policymakers to discuss this topic. Under these circumstances, post-colonial theories set a theoretical foundation to help the researcher understand the complexity of this Sino-Japanese context, especially the dynamic power structure embedded within this relationship.

Unlike research concerned with diplomatic, legal and commercial approaches to address repatriation (Peng 2008, Gao 2009, Tu 2012), this project explores the role played by museums and cultural institutions in terms of cultural collaboration through the lens of relational ethics, as defined below. Relational ethics has attracted little attention in China so far, but has the potential to illuminate the ethical impact of social relationships between participants over time, particularly in environments with a long history of mistrust. Hence, I have adopted relational ethics to shape a holistic perception of the repatriation process in this specific context.

This chapter is divided into two main sections: the theoretical framework and the research methods. The first half of this chapter interprets the philosophical structure of the research: it first analyses the overarching cross-cultural research methodology that is applied to the research, as well as the ethical considerations that emerge as part of the cross-cultural context; it then indicates how post-colonial theory and theory of relational ethics influence the research respectively, which to a large extent impact the researcher's understanding of the

whole research context, especially the complex dynamic of Sino-Japanese relations, and the relational thinking concerning repatriation. The second part briefly introduces the definition of qualitative research and why this research is qualitative, and then explains the chosen research methods, including semi-structured interviews and case study research. It also indicates the specificity of each case and unpacks how the researcher collected and analysed data.

3.2 Theoretical framework

This section aims to establish an interrelated theoretical framework (Figure 3.1) constructed by a cluster of influential theories that has guided the research process. Figure 3.1 shows three areas that profoundly underpin the theoretical framework. The cross-cultural research methodology plays an overarching role in designing and conducting the research, and is therefore situated at the base of the figure. The research methodology inspires a comparison of the cultural variation between Chinese and Japanese cultures in terms of repatriation. Within this cross-cultural lens, it also embeds various concepts that originate primarily outside of China and Japan, such as post-colonial theory and relational ethics. This context makes the research culturally appropriate to the specific Sino-Japanese context. It also provides necessary ethical guidance to undertake such research both in China and Japan, enhancing my awareness of political and cultural sensitivities and enabling me to adequately negotiate potential ethical complexities arising either in the fieldwork or as part of the writing process.

As part of this framework, postcolonial theory and the theory of relational ethics are two dominant theoretical principles. Post-colonial theory, on the left in the figure, plays an important role in considering the complex historical and political relations between China and Japan, from the colonial past to the present. It also provides an alternative perspective for this study to explore how sensitive

Sino-Japanese relations can be rebuilt and reshaped in the future. The right side of the figure illustrates how relational ethics have a considerable influence on the research. Understanding the specific Chinese/Japanese concepts of relationship through the lens of relational ethics introduces a relational perspective on repatriation specific to the Sino-Japanese context. These three sections work together to establish a theoretical structure that shapes the unique contribution of this research and illuminates new ways of sharing cultural heritage through the selected case studies. This theoretical framework has the potential to move the issue of Sino-Japanese repatriation forward, which is represented by the overlapping part at the centre of Figure 3.1.

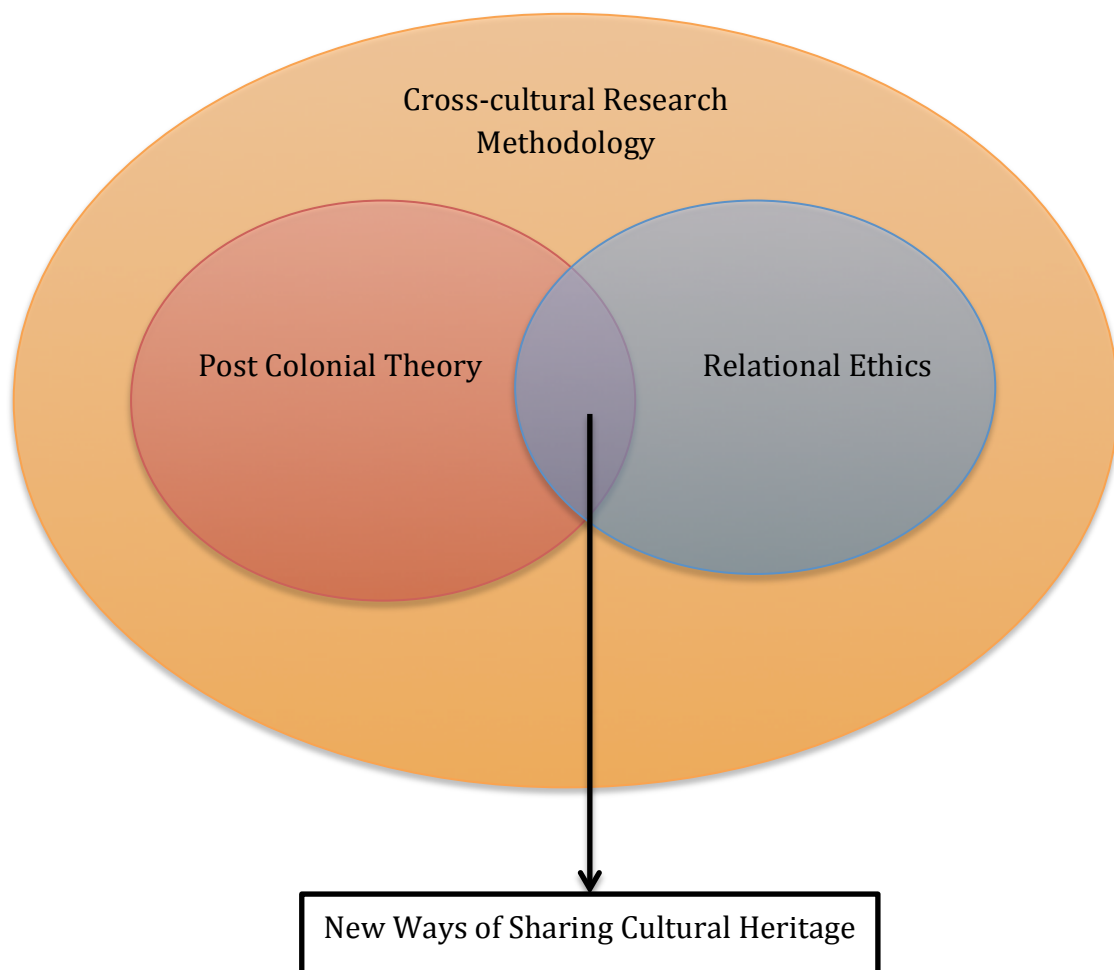


Figure 3.1. Theoretical structure of the research

3.2.1 Applying cross-cultural research methodology to the research

This section sets out how this research adopts cross-cultural approaches by reviewing both the theoretical and practical dimensions of this approach. Firstly, this section explains how the cross-cultural research methodology that I adopted impacts the process of building the theoretical framework, which informs my understanding of post-colonial theory and relational ethics. Secondly, I discuss how the cross-cultural research methodology helped me situate myself in the research process and closely consider of the importance of research ethics in the practical stage of the research. Doing so allowed me to attend to the nuances between the two cultures, being reflective and culturally sensitive whilst acknowledging my Chinese identity.

Generally speaking, cross-cultural research concerns one research topic that is relevant and applicable across cultures, with the aim to ‘establish comparability or equivalence at each stage of the research process’ (Buil, Chernatony and Martínez, 2012, p. 224). This type of research embeds both the similarities and the uniqueness of the cultures selected simultaneously, to reveal cultural variation and general characteristics to other cultures (Ilesanmi, 2009). There are many fields, such as international marketing, psychology and cultural anthropology, which have already adopted cross-cultural research methodologies to conduct comparative research (Kreps 2003, Liamputtong 2008, Ilesanmi 2009, Buil, Chernatony and Martínez 2012). Pertinent to the cross-cultural research methodology is that the researcher must thoroughly understand ‘the social, familial, cultural, religious, historical and political backgrounds’ of relevance to the larger cross-cultural context (Jackson and Mead, 2003, p. 24). Therefore, obtaining necessary information from both Chinese and Japanese perspectives is crucial in creating situated knowledge of the complicated Sino-Japanese context

and its influence on these projects. In this research, it is thus crucial for me to grapple with the complex historical background of the relationship between China and Japan, as well as the sensitivities to political and historical issues that remain unsettled in the present, through a comprehensive understanding of different view of points from Chinese, Japanese and Western scholars.

In order to build a theoretical framework that underpins the entire research, a cross-cultural research methodology allows me to make comparisons between Chinese and Japanese usages of related concepts regarding repatriation. In addition, this approach encourages researchers to adopt various theories, in this case post-colonial theory and relational ethics, and to consider how these theories can be integrated into the Sino-Japanese context. To adapt this theoretical structure to the specific Sino-Japanese context, it is crucial to identify common ground between Chinese and Japanese cultures through a cross-cultural angle that influences each stage of the research, for instance, by clarifying the cultural differences between interpretations of various Chinese and Japanese concepts, such as cultural relics and cultural property, and establish the distinctions between Chinese and Japanese ancient philosophical beliefs. The cross-cultural perspective, in turn, informs my understanding of appropriating post-colonial theory and relational ethics to shape the relational thinking of Sino-Japanese repatriation.

3.2.2 Ethical issues in this cross-cultural research

In order to respond to ethical challenges that might be encountered before and during the fieldwork, I designed a number of effective strategies. The cross-cultural strategies I employ, such as being self-reflective, developing an awareness of political sensitivities in advance of the fieldwork, building open and reliable connections with informants by providing them a clear explanation of the research aim prior to the formal interview, and using a skilled translator for

interviews with Japanese speakers (as I am not proficient in the language), helped me to appreciate and respect the cultural complexities of the context and mitigate unconscious bias.

- Situating myself as a researcher

Shaping an understanding of ‘situating’ is a key ethical issue in this cross-cultural research. It is essential for researchers conducting this type of research to take their own position into consideration from the very beginning of the research design stage (Vannini and Gladue, 2008). In fact, the role played by the researcher can profoundly impact the direction of the further research, especially the ways in which he/she explains the topic in the research context and the data producing process. As Roni Berger (2015, p. 220) indicates,

Researchers need to increasingly focus on self-knowledge and sensitivity; better understand the role of the self in the creation of knowledge; carefully self monitor the impact of their biases, beliefs, and personal experiences on their research; and maintain the balance between the personal and the universal.

As a Chinese researcher, it was vital for me to acknowledge that my Chinese identity could unconsciously lead me to take on a subjective position. I realised from the very beginning of the research that, because of my Chinese identity, particular challenges could indeed arise: for instance, cautious attitudes from both Chinese and Japanese informants, fears from Japanese informants that the research would take on a strong nationalist approach, and my own unconscious biases of Chinese and Japanese informants’ attitudes towards each other. In order to reduce the tensions between target informants and myself, and overcome these challenges, it was critical for me to make efforts to conduct self-reflective practice

to reduce unconscious biases.

As Sino-Japanese relations are highly sensitive and markedly complex, it is difficult for both Chinese and Japanese partners to discuss their viewpoints towards the other regarding the issue of repatriation freely, especially to me, a Chinese researcher. Under these circumstances, the researcher needs to understand the dynamic relationship of power between participants from different cultures (Smith 1999, Goulding, Steels and McGarty 2016). I therefore strengthened my awareness of political and cultural sensitivities prior to contacting target informants by developing a comprehensive understanding of the power structures embedded within the Sino-Japanese context. Situating myself in a third country, the United Kingdom, and looking at the issue from both the Chinese and Japanese sides also aided this holistic approach to my researcher position. In addition, my awareness towards these research sensitivities led me to take on an ethical obligation not to judge or dismiss either Chinese or Japanese informants' opinions arbitrarily.

Being self-reflective refers to the ability to revisit and re-examine various aspects throughout the research process (Ackerly and True, 2008). Before undertaking this cross-cultural research, I read about unconscious bias, carefully re-examined my position towards Japanese participants and renegotiated my understanding of Sino-Japanese relations. I undertook various self-reflective practices in advance of the fieldwork. For example, I participated in UK training courses such as research philosophy and critical thinking which inspired me to revisit unconscious assumptions and reconsider the issue and the specific Sino-Japanese context critically. Rather than simply focusing on the Chinese side, I also read relevant literature written by both Japanese and Western scholars, such as the Masafumi Iida's *China's Shift: Global Strategy of the Rising Power*, Mike Mochizuki's

Japan's *Shifting Strategy towards the rise of China*, Richard Bush's *China-Japan Tensions, 1995-2006*, Paul Smith's *China-Japan Relations and the Future Geopolitics of East Asia*. This literature helped me to construct a deeper and fuller map of the Sino-Japanese context.

- *Building mutual trust with informants*

In *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Clifford Christians (2005, pp. 144-145) provide four basic moral principles that apply to ethical research: 'informed consent', 'opposition to deception', 'privacy and confidentiality', and 'accuracy'. Accordingly, they indicate that the researcher should create mutual respect and trust with the informants, and avoid deception and ambiguous representations (Christians, 2005). As Linda Finlay (2011) points out, trust between the researcher and participants can be built by respecting each other's needs, which empowers participants to share their feelings straightforward and openly, as well as the researcher sharing their own agenda with transparency. In this research, I also attempted to establish a trustworthy relationship with both Chinese and Japanese informants before conducting interviews, which played a crucial role in reducing potential concerns and facilitating the interviews.

Some additional groundwork was undertaken before contacting target informants participating in this research. The primary step was to contact Chinese and Japanese informants through a trusted researcher in my personal network. An introduction thus helps put the interviewee at ease to discuss sensitive topic with a researcher that they are not familiar with. Designing a clear consent form and information sheet in advance is another important point. By providing these necessary documents, the researcher takes the responsibility to explain the research and the consent form to every participant, ensuring that all participants

are well-informed and understand the research when signing the form and before the interview starts. This consent process itself aims to ‘preserve and advance the autonomy of individuals with respect to research participation’ (Jonas, 2012, p. 1). Ultimately, consent moves some way to ensuring that informants understand the research they are involved in, and protects their right for the interview to be conducted under the condition of transparency and sincerity (Christians, 2005).

All informants involved in this research were museum professionals, academics and administrators; I did not interview any vulnerable individuals. In respect to interviewees’ rights, I requested permission to record their voices before commencing each interview. I also offered to protect the confidentiality of each interviewee who requested this through a question on the consent form, as politically sensitive issues would be discussed in the interview process. With regard to highly sensitive topics in the Sino-Japanese context, some interviewees were concerned about the influence of participating in this research to their career. Therefore, providing confidentiality, such as labeling these interviewees with code names that only refer to their positions in various fields without losing anonymity, to the extent possible, mitigated their concerns. These preparations helped diminish informants’ concerns about how I would use the collected data, and gradually built their confidence in talking about their experiences freely. It was my hope that these strategies could to some extent reduce misunderstanding and avoids causing offense or discomfort, which might impact the robustness of the data collected during the fieldwork or the effectiveness of the analysis.

Ensuring that the researcher will understand clearly divergent or unexpected points of view, and transcribe information accurately is an essential principle as well (Christians, 2005). This is another ethical consideration that should be taken into account in terms of collecting and analysing data in this cross-cultural

research. Language has been widely discussed as one of the most essential aspects to consider in any research that involves diverse language speakers (Irvine, Roberts and Bradbury-Jones, 2008). As Liamputtong (2008, p. 8) points out, unfamiliarity with the language that the informants speak is a common difficulty in undertaking cross-cultural research; hence it is often necessary to use a translator to ‘overcome linguistic and cultural barriers’. The role of the translator is that of a ‘cultural broker’ who not only translates oral communication but, more importantly, helps the researcher to understand particular nuances of expressions and concepts that convey cultural connotations (Hennink 2008, Gustafsson, Norström and Fioretos 2013). Therefore, as Liamputtong (2008) indicates, the researcher needs to develop an open communication with the translator to help her/him understand the whole research including the research questions, the complicated context and the research process before her/his formal participation in the research.

For this research, I collaborated with two translators across three cultures for: one translated between English and Japanese during the interviews conducted with the Japanese museum staff; the other translator assisted in translating the Japanese responses from the transcriptions into Chinese. By using two translators in the interviews, I was able to avoid misunderstandings that could emerge because of the language barriers inherent to cross-cultural environments. At the stage of transcription, I maintained frequent communication with the translator who translated Japanese into Chinese, making sure that together we captured the nuance of the language and adopted the appropriate usage of certain concepts and terms. For example, we differentiated between the implications of the terms ‘return’ and ‘restitution’ as questions arose when Japanese informants and I discussed relevant examples of repatriation.

3.2.3 Understanding post-colonial theory in the Sino-Japanese context

Given cross-cultural research plays an overarching role in the theoretical framework, the approach also informs my understanding of post-colonial theories from a Sino-Japanese perspective. It is difficult to define post-colonialism, as it is not a narrowly defined term that focuses exclusively on colonisation and its aftermath. Rather, the term is informed by wide-ranging theories and discourses formed through global debate and shaped by Western scholars, as well as authors in Africa (Lester, 2002), Latin America (Trigo, 2002) South Asia (Watt and Mann, 2011) and in bordering disciplines (Legg, 2007). Originally, post-colonialism attracted scholarly attention in the field of literary studies in the last half of the twentieth century, and spread to other areas such as anthropology, political science, philosophy, history and the history of art soon afterwards (Jazzel, 2013). There are many debates on how to define post-colonialism, for example, some regard ‘post-’ to define the period after colonisation, while others argue that post-colonial doesn’t indicate the end of colonisation, but that post-colonial discourse is tightly linked to the colonial era as well as the contemporary world (McClintock 1992, McLeod 2000, Özkazanç-Pan 2011, Sarmento 2011).

Although debates are ongoing, post-colonialists Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin have given post-colonialism a research scope that is ‘to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonisation to the present day’ (1995, p. xv). More recently, Hiddleston (2014, p. 1) summarised the term as below:

It is a broad and constantly changing movement. ... It has developed rapidly, ... [which] can generally be understood as the multiple political, economic, cultural and philosophical responses to colonialism from its inauguration to the present day, and is somewhat broad and sprawling in

scope.

If we regard post-colonialism as a movement, then post-colonial theory is one significant outcome, and one that is very impactful (Ashcroft, et al, 2000). As a group of theories, post-colonialism has attempted to analyse, interpret and explore relative social, political, economic, historical and cultural phenomena, which refer to colonialism and imperialism, establishing binary discourses ‘between West and non-West, traditional and modern, natural and cultural’ (Özkazanç-Pan 2011, Nalbantoglu and Wong, 1997, p. 8, Gregory, Johnston, et al, 2009, p. 561). Japan is not geographically situated in the West, but ‘positions itself as an associate member of the West’ (Huntington, 1993, p. 45). The Meiji Restoration, from 1868 to about 1880, westernised Japan from a feudal society to an imperialist entity (Beasley, 1972). After the renovation, as John Miller (2004) indicates, Japanese colonial invasions to China transformed the country into a westernised imperialist power to Chinese people. Understanding post-colonial theories thus became the starting point of this research due to the specific Sino-Japanese context and the research topic of repatriation.

Post-colonial theory has been regarded as ‘one of the most powerful means of re-examining the historical past and re-configuring our contemporary worldwide cultural concerns’ (Ashcroft, et al 2002, p. 219). Nash (2002) agrees that it combines various critical understanding of historical issues that refer to colonial experiences in the past, as well as the long-lasting impacts today.

In short, two fundamental post-colonial theories have played a leading role in helping me develop a comprehensive perspective on the complicated Sino-Japanese context. Michel Foucault’s theory of power (1976) guided my understanding of asymmetries in the relationship between China and Japan during

the war era and the Sino-Japanese power dynamic emerging in the present. Homi Bhabha's concept of cultural hybridity (1994) and his understanding of cultural difference inspired me to rethink the stereotypes underpinning antagonistic Sino-Japanese relations. I perceived that Bhabha's theory could help me to understand the ways that my case studies challenge fixed impressions on both sides, and provide opportunities for mutual engagement that can ultimately generate a community of practice on the basis of shared cultural roots between China and Japan.

- *Michel Foucault's theory of power*

Interestingly, Foucault himself did not mention the term post-colonialism in his work, but, indeed, had acknowledged the significance of the colonial context to power relationships (Legg, 2007). Many other post-colonialists researchers have referenced his ideas and it has been applied to many cultural contexts and further postcolonial research (Driver 1992, Dean 1999, Lester 2001, 2002, Gregory 2004). According to Foucault's reconfiguration of power, power can only have effects within society (Foucault, 1982). The power he describes is micro and dispersed, representing 'the multiplicity of force relations' which is immanent in a net-like organisation (Foucault, 1978, p. 93). Without power relations, the society and social interactions within the society will not exist (Bălan, 2010).

Scholars have long found Foucault's ideas useful to analyse the unequal distribution of power between Western colonial hegemony and ethnic groups or nations that were colonised (Escobar 1984, DuBois 1991, Powell 2013). Foucault's theory of power can also be employed to interpret the complexity of China's semi-colonial situation²⁴ in the war period from 1840 to 1945. Before the

²⁴ China as a nation was never officially declared a colony: on the one hand, Japanese powers established the Japanese Manchu government in northeast China, which was under colonial control from 1932 to 1945 (Xü, 2002); on the other hand, the Chinese government still existed in southwest China and the country had a semi-capitalist economy and semi-independent freedom (Li 1996, Lü 2000, Mao 2003).

first Japanese invasion to China in 1894, China's earlier semi-colonial history can be dated back to the First and the Second Opium War (1840-1842, 1856-1860). During this era, the British Empire and France conducted imperialist invasions of China; as a result, Hong Kong was been under the colonial control of the British Empire from 1842, marking the starting point of China's semi-colonial history (Gong, 1990). Soon afterwards, the period from 1894 to 1945 witnessed Japanese imperialist and colonialist aggression towards East Asia (Lü, 2013). Although not all parts of China were fully colonised by Japanese troops in the Second World War, it is undeniable that China suffered from Japanese colonialism in this period (Childs and Williams, 1997). At the time, encountering aggression from Japanese troops, China could not defend itself, particularly as it was not unified but in the midst of civil strife as well (Xü, 2002). This painful colonial past forms a particular sensitivity for Chinese people when discussing this semi-colonial history, and it considerably influences their perspectives towards Japan. In this sense, it is appropriate to apply post-colonial theory to the Sino-Japanese context in this research.

As Foucault (1978, p. 95) indicates, power 'bring about redistribution, realignments, homogenizations, serial arrangements of the force relations' in the power framework. Translating his idea to the Sino-Japanese context helps recognise that power is distributed, rather than fixed, and can be redistributed, shaping my understanding of the past and present power dynamics within the Sino-Japanese relationship. Despite these historical asymmetries of power, it is important to acknowledge that power has been redistributed between China and Japan in the current post-colonial context because of the rising economic and political power of China (Wu 2009, Wu 2016). With Chinese people's increasing awareness of the impact of their own voice, they have begun to challenge their historically colonised position by asserting their unique cultural and national

identity (Guo and Gao, 2006) and ‘freely represent themselves as equal members of a political community’ (Levi and Dean, 2003, p. 11).

The shifting power dynamics have had both positive and negative impacts on the collaboration between these two countries in the political, economic and cultural fields. This has inspired me to understand the dynamic power structure between China and Japan on a macro scale. This perspective has also led me to reconsider the fixed political standpoints that some Chinese and Japanese participants hold, as well as the complex power relations within selected case studies during the process of data analysis. Specifically, it has encouraged me to recognise and explore how power acts and is distributed among Chinese, Japanese and other participants within processes of collaboration and negotiation in cross-institutional collaborative projects.

- *Homi Bhabha’s understanding of ‘hybridity’ and cultural difference*

Another principle derived from postcolonial theory that I have found useful in my analysis is Homi Bhabha’s theory of ‘cultural hybridity’, which has shed light on a philosophical understanding of the post-colonial theory through the Sino-Japanese perspective. In this research, I firstly explain why post-colonial theory is appropriate to apply to the Sino-Japanese context, identifying the ‘hybridisation’ of Japanese culture; a term that refers to the coexistence of westernisation and ancient China’s cultural influence. I then draw upon Bhabha’s unique interpretation of culture’s ambiguous hybridity in the colonial discourse and his understanding of negotiable cultural identity, to recognise the significance of what Chinese and Japanese cultures have in common. Recognising both difference and similarities provides theoretical support for the later analysis of the three cases in the thesis.

In his work *Orientalism*, Edward Said (1978) situates ‘the Occident’ and ‘the Orient’ in opposition (Said, 1978, p. 5). The former refers to imperialist power and Western civilisation, while the latter represents inferior and undeveloped cultures (Said 1993, O’Hagan 2002). However, Bhabha recognises that the relationship between the West and the non-West, the former coloniser and the colonial, was not simply dialectic (Bhabha, 1994). In this sense, he deconstructs the binary opposition between the West and the non-West/ the superior and the inferior (Jackson 2008, Dar 2014). Applying this idea to the Sino-Japanese context, the hybridisation of Japanese culture indicates the coexisting influence of Western and ancient Chinese culture, which allows me to place Japan, a geographically non-Western country, in the framework of post-colonial theory.

As an Asian country, feudal Japan had encountered imperial aggressions from Western countries such as the U.S., UK, The Netherlands and France after the Second Opium War, and was forced to sign unfair treaties (Wang, 1994). From 1864 to about 1880, the Meiji government began to learn from the West, importing Western systems in various areas of politics, military, economy and education to Japan. As a result, Japan achieved the modernisation and westernisation of its society (Sumikawa, 1999). Being profoundly impacted by the West, Japan regarded itself as ‘an associate member of the West’ (Huntington, 1993, p. 45). As John Miller (2004, p. 69) comments, Japan ‘has been an outlier, a country ‘in’ but in many ways not ‘of’ Asia’. Embedding this interpretation to this research allows me to apply post-colonial theory as an important component of the theoretical framework of this research.

Bhabha’s interpretation of cultural hybridity and the negotiable nature of cultural identity underpins my characterisation of Sino-Japanese relations not through a notion of conflict that is essentialist and frozen but instead as a contingent and

multi-layered dynamic in which both parties play an active role. Bhabha's theory helps deconstruct the boundaries between Chinese and Japanese culture, and recognise the significance of what they have in common.

By placing this research in the post-colonial framework, Bhabha's theory of 'hybridity' illustrates the significance of seeking common ground between the Chinese and Japanese cultures, regarding it as a 'liminal space' to generate a community of practice that involves both sides, to negotiate cultural identities and represent cultural difference within it, which productively encourages mutual engagement and enhances mutual understanding.

Bhabha (1994, p. 5, p. 159) proposes the concept of 'hybridity' in his book *The Location of Culture* as follows:

The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. ... This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy.

Hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal.

According to Bhabha's interpretation, hybridity refers to an uncertain and ambivalent situation through the interplay between cultures in colonial discourse. This in-between state emerges when the cultural boundary is blurred. Accordingly

cultural identity can be clarified in the liminal space (Bhabha 1994, Moles 2007, Moosavinia and Hosseini, 2017). Therefore, hybridisation has the potential to deconstruct the binary relationship and move beyond it, ultimately creating new possibilities and interactions (Meredith 1998, Sayegh 2008).

Bhabha also firmly contests stereotypes of cultural identities, which he defines as a 'form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 66). By illustrating the ineffectiveness of preconceived expressions, Bhabha attempts to prevent the use of 'fixed' knowledge. Instead, he points out the negotiable nature of cultural identities, clarifying that cultural difference can be represented through the interplay the coloniser and colonised have with one another (Bhabha 1994, Kang 2014). Bhabha's concept of 'cultural difference' refers to the two-way (or multi-way) recognition of shifting and changeable cultural identities, which can be produced through frequent exchange and interaction of cultural collaborative performances (Graves 1998, Pilhofer 2011). Other scholars such as Rhodes and Westwood (2007) also indicate the mutability of the colonial discourse, denying pre-given knowledge but developing it through interaction.

Embedding Bhabha's theory in the research, I explore new ways of sharing cultural heritage that has the potential to generate new knowledge and establish a trustworthy and reciprocal relationship between Chinese and Japanese parties. My analysis of the case studies draws on Bhabha's theory to demonstrate that Sino-Japanese sharing of heritage and cross-cultural collaborations are small but important steps towards new approaches to the repatriation dilemma. Misunderstanding and existing pre-knowledge or stereotypes of both cultures can be challenged via continuous cultural cooperation and communication. These new

ways of sharing heritage have the potential to deepen mutual understanding, fostering a more sustainable cross-cultural relationship between Chinese and Japanese stakeholders.

3.2.4 Relational ethics underpins Chinese and Japanese understanding of relationship

In the introductory chapter, I explained the theory of relational ethics, explaining the reason why adopting this theory is valuable to the research and its relation to the idea of a win-win relationship. This is one of the core concepts of the research and I draw from it to explore how both the Chinese and Japanese understand and enact relationships within the context of my case studies. Seeing the Sino-Japanese repatriation process through the lens of relational ethics encourages me to reflect and reconsider responsibilities and obligations on both sides, especially in the analysis of the cooperation, communication and process of negotiation part of the cross-cultural projects that both Chinese and Japanese sides are involved in. Moreover, relational ethics also provided theoretical support for guiding my communication and building trustworthy relationship with Chinese and Japanese informants during the fieldwork in the cross-cultural context.

The theory of relational ethics is a key concept that influences the evaluation and analysis of the data collected for this research. Derived from relational ethics, an ethical relationship prioritises balancing the responsibility and obligation of both parties in the relation, which is established on the basis of mutual respect, trust and fairness (Fisher, 1999). This long-term relationship is also sustainable and develops through collaborative efforts over time (Finlay, 2011). Connecting relational ethics with the Chinese and Japanese understanding of the social relationship between people also helps integrate the idea of ethical relationship into the Sino-Japanese context.

As explained in Chapter 1, relational ethics has most often been applied to the caring professions, such as nursing and psychotherapy (Shaw 2011, Gangamma, et al 2012, Schmidt, et al 2016). In these contexts, relational ethics reveals the dynamic between patients, nurses, clinicians and therapists, particularly as applied to ethical concerns of communication and care (Moore, et al 2014). Relational ethics emphasises the interpersonal interaction within a relationship: the balance of giving and taking, responsibility and obligation, contribution and return on investment to the self and other (Hargrave, et al 1991, Shaw 2011, Schmidt, et al 2016). The theory promotes building ethical relationships on the basis of trust, respect, justice and accountability, so they can be sustainable over time (Gilligan 1983, Gangamma, et al 2012,). As Ducommun-Nagy (2002) points out, relational ethics highlights the significance of being accountable to others in our actions, ultimately impacting the relationship-building process.

Taking the Sino-Japanese context into consideration, the principles of relational ethics have the feasibility to play a leading role within the Chinese and Japanese ethical understanding of the social relationship between people. The terms He (和) in Chinese and Wa (和) in Japanese, both signifying harmony, help the researcher to understand Chinese and Japanese behaviours in cross-cultural collaboration, which has shaped the ethical and relational understanding of Sino-Japanese repatriation. Together, these terms imply a similar recognition of building reconcilable and reciprocal relations between people, which is also a component of the data analysis of the heritage sharing projects at the center of this thesis.

The idea of maintaining a harmonious interpersonal relationship, important in both the Chinese and Japanese context, shares its roots with Confucianism, the ancient philosophy that has profoundly influenced both Chinese and Japanese

culture (Haghirian, 2010). Katsue Akiba Reynolds (2000, pp. 9-10) has argued that Chinese and Japanese cultures represent harmony-based Asian cultures, which traditionally have ‘placed great value on avoiding open expression of disagreement and conflict’. Although this description oversimplifies East Asian culture, it does capture a particular ideal in social relations of Chinese and Japanese society--that is to develop consensus without fierce conflicts, achieve reciprocity and maintain stabilisation.

For Chinese people, He (or harmony) has been regarded as the ultimate and ideal state of interpersonal communication for more than two millennia (Dong and Wu, 2008). Chinese perspectives on the concept of harmony originate from ancient Confucianism²⁵. According to Confucius, to achieve He/harmony is to uphold friendly interpersonal relations with other people on the basis of respecting the other’s voice, guarding the value of harmony by reaching consensus through fair communication and exchange (Cheng, 2006). Put into practice, the concept of He/harmony refers to cooperation and reciprocity through cooperation, as Li, Zhu and Li (2006) indicate. Chinese He/harmony does not equal simple and uncritical acceptance, but refers to the efforts that Chinese attempt to make in order to eliminate conflict, and to transform opposition into a harmonious friendship through communication and negotiation. Young (1994, p. 45) explains this as below:

The active pursuit of harmony ultimately aims towards a unity of differences, a synthesis of divergences, a confluence of contrast. It is an attempt to engross all while offending none. It is a unity in diversity that is both

²⁵ He/Harmony (和) is a very broad concept that derives from Confucianism in ancient China. Exploring relations between people is one of the most important parts of ancient Confucianism. Traditional relations that Confucianism describes, such as the relationship between parents and the child, the emperor and his subjects, have been criticised as feudal thoughts that are too hierarchical. However, this Confucian concept has played a crucial role in shaping Chinese people’s national identity (Cheng, 2006). This research did not have scope to interpret He/Harmony comprehensively, but focuses on how this concept has impacted Chinese people’s understanding of interpersonal relationships and social relations.

dynamic and complex, one that works by way of mutual accommodation and adjustment.

Therefore, Chinese people pursue He/harmony in terms of interpersonal communication, aiming at forming mutual respect towards cultural difference, achieving reciprocal outcomes and cultivating trustworthiness for both sides (Wang, 2008).

Sharing similar cultural roots with Chinese culture, Japanese culture has also been profoundly influenced by ancient Confucianism (Betzler and Austin, 1997). Ancient Confucian values have played an essential role in Japanese society, especially in terms of the Japanese understanding of interpersonal harmony and relational hierarchy (Zhang, Lin, Nonaka, et al, 2005). Profoundly influenced by the traditional Confucian values, the Japanese term Wa (和) represents loyalty and harmony. These basic principles are also embedded in the heart of the Japanese indigenous religion of Shintoism (Haghirian, 2010). Wa (和) impacts Japanese people's daily behaviours and many features of the Japanese society (Evason, 2016). To be more specific, loyalty refers to fidelity to the nation, the organisation and the family (Alston, 1989), while harmony refers to 'a non-conflicting or non-argumentative' environment, which is described by Nakane (1970, cited by Onodera, 2004, p. 124). For the Japanese, a harmonious relationship results in reciprocity, avoids risks and conflicts, and maintains stability (Gong and Suzuki, 2013).

The similarities of Chinese and Japanese interpretations of harmony become evident: both emphasise interpersonal relationships; both are inclined to evade oppositions and conflicts; and both have the final goal of achieving reciprocity. In my work the theory of relational ethics, taking into account Chinese and Japanese

perceptions of harmonious relationships, becomes a cornerstone in examining the ethical or win/win relationships towards repatriation that can be built through sharing of cultural heritage between Chinese and Japanese people.

With regards to this research, the theory of relational ethics, as developed by researchers on care, is rooted in Anglo-American culture, while a cross-cultural lens asks how this might be appropriately understood in the Sino-Japanese context. As part of the Sino-Japanese context, it is crucial to take into account different notions of relationship and analyse how the theory of relational ethics can be embedded into the Sino-Japanese understanding of relationship. The theory of relational ethics encourages a relational view of repatriation, as a relationship-building process. As a researcher, I explore how Chinese and Japanese participants recognise and construct the internal relationship in the collaboration and negotiation processes, as well as how this relationship helps move the Sino-Japanese repatriation forward.

During the fieldwork, the adoption of the theory of relational ethics into the Sino-Japanese context helped me reconsider the relationship between selected Chinese and Japanese interviewees, and myself. I have already discussed details of ethical considerations in a previous section on research ethics; however, relational ethics also plays an important role in the data collecting process. As Finlay (2011) argues, relational ethics can be applied to balance the research relationship in different research stages. Guided by relational ethics, I recognise the significance of my responsibility to build a relationship of mutual trust during the fieldwork. The theory also sets the foundation for me to understand Chinese and Japanese informants' ethical concerns and respect their needs throughout the research process.

3.3 Qualitative research

The quantitative and qualitative are two sides of scientific research. Whilst one relies on surveys and statistical analysis, the other relies on human experiences and understanding (Stake, 2010). According to Robert Stake, a traditional definition of qualitative research is that ‘if researchers choose to gather experiential data more than measurements, they call their research qualitative’ (Stake, 2010, p. 19). Furthermore, Atkinson, Coffey and Delamont (2001) understand qualitative research as a general term containing the four dimensions of discipline, research method, topic and substance, and voices and texts in the research areas of ethnography, anthropology, culture and so on. Compared to quantitative research, qualitative research is more subjective and flexible. Qualitative research that explores social phenomena and human practices is contingent and varied, rather than constant (Gelo, Braakmann, et al, 2008).

Qualitative research also depends on methods such as observation, interviews and experiments to gain first-hand research data and to understand the nature and characteristics of certain social phenomena, human conditions and experiences as well. Boeije, Mills and Birks argue that the purpose of qualitative research is to study the inner world of informants and collect valid data by themes in a particular cultural and social context (Boeije 2009, Mills and Birks 2014). Qualitative data can include contexts, conversations, discourses and narrative materials (Jackson, Drummond, et al, 2007).

My research focuses on the role played by museums and cultural/research institutions in existing Sino-Japanese cultural cooperative projects. It is also concerned with the relationship-building process between the Chinese and Japanese participants within the chosen cases, which could ultimately have a long-term impact on Sino-Japanese repatriation. Quantitative research methods

are not relevant to my research questions as they would not yield data to help me analyse the relation-building process and participants' behaviours in the chosen cultural collaborative projects. Moreover, as the information I sought is, to a large extent, subjective and framed by personal experiences, especially within the sensitive Sino-Japanese context, answers depended on informants' own understanding of a certain question and could not be captured in a standardised format. The data needed to address my research question could only be acquired through direct observation, interviews or other qualitative research methods that convey the inner, authentic feelings and points of view of my sources deeply and comprehensively.

3.4 Research methods

Qualitative research focuses on the interpretation and understanding of social phenomena, which sees informants as key data sources (Evans, 2007). The most important methods to conduct qualitative research and collect qualitative data are undertaking interviews, observation and case study research. Interviewing is a method that usually allows one-to-one discussions between an interviewer and a respondent. Communicating with interviewees directly is helpful because it accommodates more specific, sensitive and complicated research questions. The method of case study research is suitable to gain a deeper understanding of contextual dynamic social processes (Evans, 2007).

The research structure and the construction of the theoretical framework of this research together impact the design of research methods. In this research, various research methods have been adopted to collect and analyse data in the stage of fieldwork. The most important two methods are semi-structured interviewing and case study research, which will be discussed respectively.

3.4.1 Semi-structured interview

Based on the different theoretical positions, research structures and the type of questions that researchers plan to ask, interviews could be classified as one of three types: structured interview, semi-structured interview and unstructured interview (Smith 1995, Wilson 2014). The method of semi-structured interviewing is especially suitable where an issue is controversial (Smith, 1995). In order to collect data and discuss the sensitive theme of Sino-Japanese repatriation with Chinese and Japanese interviewees, I adopt semi-structured interviews as one of the main research methods, asking interviewees open-ended questions. This form creates a confidential and prudent atmosphere that encourages respondents to share their opinions and personal feelings comfortably.

Open-ended questions prepared in advance of a semi-structured interview can create more space for interviewees to express their points of view (Galletta and Cross, 2013). As part of this research, both Chinese and Japanese participants hold cautious attitudes when they know the interview topic concerns the sensitive issue of Sino-Japanese repatriation, especially at the beginning of the interview. Therefore, asking a few general, open-ended questions make for a good start. An example of such a question is: what do you think of current international collaboration in terms of the protection of cultural heritage? General questions can help avoid simple answers like yes or no, but help reduce interviewees' cautiousness and facilitate the interview.

The semi-structured interview is designed to collect data on informants' particular experiences and personal feelings relating to the research topic (Morris, 2015). By conducting semi-structured interviews, the researcher can obtain an impression and in-depth comprehension of the informant's unique 'thoughts, reflections, motives, experiences, memories, understandings, interpretations and perceptions

of the topic' (Morris, 2015, p. 5). As part of this research, all Chinese and Japanese interviewees either have direct working experience, obtained as part of relevant culturally collaborative projects, or have researched the issue of Sino-Japanese repatriation themselves. Hence, interview questions vary according to the profile of interviewees. Depending on different cases, I designed appropriate interview questions that relate to the specific case and interviewee's individual experiences. This aids my aim to gather insight into their personal understanding of the case and the issue of repatriation in their specific context.

In addition, since Sino-Japanese repatriation is an emergent area that lacks a robust discourse and is highly sensitive in nature. I have to acknowledge that challenges are inevitable as part of the interviewing process of the research. For example, both Chinese and Japanese interviewees tend to provide positive answers to questions like: 'what challenges did you encounter during the project?' 'How do you evaluate the process of collaboration with your Chinese/Japanese partners? Answers that avoid any form of criticism do not always provide comprehensive information for the case and the research.

However, as Willig (2008) emphasises, semi-structured interview adopt a conversational format between the interviewer and the interviewee. The dialogue that takes place as part of the semi-structured interview shapes the interaction between both sides. The nature of this dialogical method allows the researcher to pose follow-up questions on the basis of the interviewee's response. Simultaneously, the interviewee can ask the researcher to elaborate on unclear questions, which can prevent misunderstandings and further clarify complex statements (Blandford, 2013). Moreover, shaping the interview as an open, contingent and unfixed conversation allows new ideas and perspectives to emerge during the interview process (Legard, Keegan and Ward, 2003).

Thus, the format of the semi-structured interview enables me to generate innovative ideas with the informants. It also allows me to be responsive towards both Chinese and Japanese informants' doubts on, for instance, the research purpose. The semi-structures approach mediates their worries about the nature of the research. Although challenges and limitations exist, adopting a semi-structure interview structure helps me gather data whilst building a trustworthy relationship between interviewees and myself, both in China and Japan.

3.4.2 Pilot test and case study

As Soy (1997, p. 1) points out, 'case studies emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships.' Case studies can be used to conduct a deep interpretation through representative examples, and have the ability to influence further practices and encourage further research of the discussed issue (Saldana, 2011). Overall, it is a research method that aims to analyse a problem and study how different actors address the problem.

As researching the issue of Sino-Japanese repatriation in the context of China is politically sensitive, a pilot test was essential for the success of this research. A pilot study not only helps the researcher to identify practical problems, but also points to larger dilemmas that may arise as part of the main research project (Teijlingen, Rennie, et al, 2001). During the pilot test, during which I had no access to specific cases, I instead used a wide range of repatriation examples and a cluster of informants to analyse Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions. In my research I firstly chose Museums A and B as my pilot test subjects, but my requests were rejected based on risk-averse decision-making among the museums' leadership. This initial impediment prompted me to better appreciate the

sensitivity of my topic and to formulate a more successful approach of recruiting informants for the pilot and the subsequent fieldwork.

Under this circumstance, I finally interviewed five informants who were either familiar with the issue of repatriation, or had relevant experience and research interest in the issue. Director C, staff member D and researcher I participated on the condition of anonymity, without identifying their name and institution. Another two interviewees, Zhang Hongwei and Wang Yunxia, gave permission to use both their real name and to reveal their institutional affiliation. Each interview lasted for approximately one hour.

Despite my ability to recruit informants, however, during the pilot test I experienced various difficulties and obstacles. 2015 was the 70th anniversary of both the end of World War II and the victory of China's Resistance War against Japanese Aggression (Xinhua Net, 2015b). The general political and diplomatic atmosphere between China and Japan was tense because of the historical memory of warfare and the Japanese government's refusal to acknowledge or apologise for wrongdoings during that year. As part of this sensitive situation, it was particularly hard for directors and curators of Chinese museums to talk about the topic of Sino-Japanese repatriation. They carefully considered the political sensitivities at the time, as well as their official identification, the reputation of their museums, and the huge social pressure from the public in China. In addition, the five successful interviews I conducted evidenced that informants, although cooperative and forthcoming, maintained a highly diplomatic approach including great caution with the details they provided and language they used.

Taking the pilot study into consideration, I decided to analyse two specific cases at the second stage of the fieldwork. The first is a specific case of Sino-Japanese

repatriation that involved a private museum, Miho Museum (Miho) in Japan, the Shandong Provincial Museum (SPM) and the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH). The collaboration between them concerned the physical repatriation of a stolen cultural object and proposed the strategy of a long-term loan to undertake Sino-Japanese repatriation. The other case involved the International Dunhuang Project (IDP), which introduces the concept of digital repatriation to the Sino-Japanese context. These two cases both achieved relatively successful results, providing new ways of sharing access to cultural heritage in terms of repatriation in two different forms: physically and digitally. The negotiation and cooperation processes between the stakeholders played an essential role in these two cases, and provided a valuable example of how relationships among all parties are constructed throughout the process of negotiation.

In total, I interviewed eighteen interviewees from China and Japan. Table 1 lists all these interviews under three cases, providing a general map of all interviews that I conducted in China and Japan. More details are provided in the next section.

More specifically, six informants that I had interviewed in the pilot testing stage provided me with their own understanding of Sino-Japanese repatriation, as well as some personal experiences on participating in previous international exhibitions between China and Japan. At the second stage of fieldwork, I chose Chinese and Japanese IDP branches and the Miho Museum as main sites to conduct interviews in the fieldwork (Figure 3.2). I interviewed twelve informants for two specific cases, including direct and indirect participants: the former could provide first hand experiences and details that were not yet published; while the latter provided background information and personal perspectives on the chosen cases when directly involved participants were not accessible.

Table 1: An overview of interviews conducted in the fieldwork

Case One: Sino-Japanese Exhibition Exchanges				
Time	Name	Affiliation	Location	Length of interview
25/09/2015	Zhang Hongwei	Director, the Institute of Gugong Studies, Palace Museum	China	31 minutes
28/09/2015	Staff member D ²⁶	Anonymity	China	30 minutes
28/09/2015	Researcher I ²⁷	Anonymity	China	57 minutes
16/03/2016	Researcher E ²⁸	Anonymity	China	63 minutes
20/05/2016	Researcher F ²⁹	Anonymity	Japan	64 minutes

²⁶ Interviewee requested anonymity.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

Case Two: Sino-Japanese Repatriation and the Case of the Miho Museum				
30/09/2015	Wang Yunxia	Professor, Renmin University of China Law School	China	73 minutes
22/10/2015	Director C ³⁰	Anonymity	China	65 minutes
26/04/2016	Director H ³¹	Anonymity	China	10 minutes
12/05/2016	Hiroaki Katayama	Curator, Miho Museum	Japan	145 minutes
Case Three: International Dunhuang Project and Digital Repatriation				
15/03/2016	Liu Bo	Head of International Dunhuang Project Beijing, National Library of China	China	68 minutes
15/03/2016	Lin Shitian	Former Director of International Dunhuang Project Beijing, National Library of China	China	53 minutes

³⁰ Interviewee requested anonymity.

³¹ Ibid.

29/03/2016	Han Chunping	Research Librarian, University of Lanzhou	China	100 minutes
02/04/2016	Sheng Yanhai	Head of International Dunhuang Project Dunhuang, Dunhuang Research Academy	China	113 minutes
07/04/2016	Wu Jian	Director, Digital Center, Dunhuang Research Academy	China	15 minutes
12/04/2016	Director G ³²	Anonymity	China	237 minutes
19/04/2016	Ma De	Former Director, Document Research Institute, Dunhuang Research Academy	China	56 minutes
13/05/2016	Wada Hidetoshi	Curator, Ryokoku Museum	Japan	30 minutes
20/05/2016	Mitani Mazumi	Director of International Dunhuang Project Japan, Ryokoku University	Japan	30 minutes

³² Interviewee requested anonymity.



Figure 3.2. Four main sites of the fieldwork (Map Data © 2018 Google)

The idea of involving a group of relevant interviewees that knew the case in an indirect way came from the informant methodology. This methodology is often adopted in organisational analysis (Seidler 1974, Schwadel and Dougherty 2010), which provides a strategy to interview a small group of people in each institution who can provide their personal experiences, ‘information, ideas and insights on a particular subject’ (Kumar, 1989, p. 1).

Already available information on which this research drew to understand certain examples regarding repatriation is brief and lacks details, which makes my interviewees’ direct experiences crucial to this thesis. Thus, I decided to interview several interviewees who may work in different museums or cultural institutions or may not work in the same project, however, their experiences are interconnected as part of the specific research topic, repatriation, and easier to get access to. Some of the informants could provide general information about the research topic; while others could talk about the details of the project they have participated in, and provide their own insights freely. Moreover, I also picked potential informants from different positions in one institution, from both China

and Japan, to shape a comprehensive understanding of each case.

- Case one: Sino-Japanese exhibition exchanges

In case one, the Sino-Japanese collaborative exhibitions, interviews of a cluster of key informants have replaced the particular case of Museums A and B in the pilot test. First of all, I interviewed Zhang Hongwei, the director of the Institute of Gugong (the Palace Museum in Chinese) Studies in the Palace Museum, China. I also contacted four researchers, including staff member D, researcher E and I from China and researcher F from Japan, who each had rich experiences of working cooperatively in Sino-Japanese collaborative projects. With many experiences of international communication, these four informants have provided general information of their engagement in Sino-Japanese collaborative exhibitions, their working experiences with Japanese scholars and their perspective on Sino-Japanese repatriation.

- Case two: Sino-Japanese repatriation and the case of the Miho Museum

At the centre of this case is a repatriation case undertaken by the Miho Museum, the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH) and Shandong Provincial Museum (SPM). The Miho Museum is a private museum established by a religious group, the Shinji Shumeikai. In 2001, the Miho Museum in Japan signed an agreement with the SACH in China to return a stolen Bodhisattva statue without any payment (Sims, 2001). According to this repatriation case, the Miho Museum established a long-term relationship with SPM, sharing the physical access to the statue in the long run (Soudign and Tighuis, 2003). This case provides an inspiring example of the ways in which negotiation and the strategy of sharing access to certain cultural relics help build a sense of protection and a reciprocal relationship among all participants, and thus has the ability to lay the groundwork of Sino-Japanese repatriation.

For this case, I contacted the Miho Museum chief curator, Hiroaki Katayama, who was in charge of this repatriation case in 2001 and has maintained relations with SPM ever since. On the Chinese side, I interviewed two Chinese participants: director C and director H who had experienced this Sino-Japanese repatriation case to a certain degree. I also contacted Wang Yunxia, who is a Chinese expert on the issue of Sino-Japanese repatriation during the Second War World.

- Hiroaki Katayama, the curator of the Miho Museum, is a direct participant in the Sino-Japanese repatriation case. With the support of an English-Japanese translator from the Miho Museum, his Japanese perspective on the repatriation case and his reflections on the Sino-Japanese negotiation process are hugely valuable.
- Wang Yunxia, a professor at Renmin (People's) University of China in the area of cultural heritage law. Her particular legal perspective on the issue of Sino-Japanese repatriation through the lens of cultural heritage law provided additional information on Sino-Japanese repatriation outside the field of museum studies. Her experiences are significant because she attended the Expert Meeting on the Settlement of Disputes Concerning Cultural Heritage Displaced during the Second World War, organised by UNESCO, which gave me up-to-date information of Sino-Japanese repatriation both in domestic and international scope.

- Case three: International Dunhuang Project and digital repatriation

The International Dunhuang Project (IDP) is the core of this case, and thus all the interviews concentrated on informants' understanding of this project, their acceptance of digital repatriation, and the feasibility of encouraging

Sino-Japanese repatriation by sharing digital access to dispersed cultural relics.

IDP is an international cooperative project of digitisation that focuses on the Dunhuang manuscripts found in the Library Cave in Dunhuang, Gansu Province in China. These materials were sold by Daoist monk Wang Yuanlu to Western and Japanese expeditions in the 1900s, and then dispersed from Dunhuang to libraries and museums worldwide (Beasley and Kail, 2007). In order to establish an international database of these Dunhuang materials and make them ‘freely available on the Internet in a variety of languages’, the National Library of China, the Dunhuang Research Academy, the British Library, Ryukoku University in Kyoto and other cultural institutions decided to work cooperatively in this IDP project since 1993³³. The project provided a new strategy of sharing digital data among different partners, constructing an international research network between relevant Chinese and Japanese institutions, and thus proposing the concept of digital repatriation to China, which is critical to study in terms of Sino-Japanese repatriation.

For this case, I interviewed nine informants. Liu Bo and Lin Shitian from the National Library of China, who are taking part in the Chinese branch of the IDP Project. I also talked with Han Chunping, who works in the library of the University of Lanzhou and whose research topic is the digitisation of Dunhuang Manuscripts. Within the other branch of the IDP project in China, the Dunhuang Research Academy, I interviewed three directors and one researcher from different departments in the institution: Director G, who requested to be anonymous, Director Wu Jian, Sheng Yanhai, and researcher Ma De. The Japanese branch of the IDP project is located at Ryokoku University in Kyoto. There, two informants agreed to be interviewed: the curator of the Ryokoku

³³ For more information on the International Dunhuang Project, see <http://idp.bl.uk/idp.a4d> [Accessed 20 August 2018].

Museum, Wada Hidetoshi and the director of the Japanese IDP project, Mitani Mazumi (Figure 3.3).



Figure 3.3. The location of informants in Chinese and Japanese branches of International Dunhuang Project (Map Data © 2018 Google)

- Lin Shitian, former director of IDP China, who works at the Center of Rare Books and Special Collections, National Library of China. As Head, he was able to provide details on the communication processes between the international partners of the project, as well as the larger framework of the Chinese branch of the IDP project.
- Liu Bo, head of IDP Beijing and a current member of the Department of Digitisation of the National Library of China. He currently takes the responsibility to lead the IDP project in the Beijing branch in China. He provided information on the digitising procedure, current situation and further targets of the project.
- Sheng Yanhai is the head of IDP Dunhuang in China. He also leads digitisation projects of other materials related to the Dunhuang Caves in the Academy.
- Mitani Mazumi, the director of the Japanese IDP project, knew the current

situation of the IDP project in the Japanese branch.

- Han Chunping, Wu Jian and Ma De from China, as well as Wada Hidetoshi, the curator of the Ryokoku Museum from Japan, all had abundant knowledge of the development of the digitisation of Dunhuang Manuscripts through their individual research. They also conducted research in the field of Dunhuang Studies; hence, they provided useful feedback as users of the IDP database, and their attitudes on digital repatriation from both the Chinese and the Japanese side.

Chapter Four

Sharing physical access to cultural heritage

through Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions

4.1 Introduction

In previous literature reviews, I discussed the complicated relationship between China and Japan. Although the Sino-Japanese relationship is contingent, these two neighbouring countries share a long history of exchange and communication in the fields of economy and culture, from the ancient times to the present (Tian 1987, Meng 2012). The frequency of these exchanges largely decreased during the Second Sino-Japanese War. Nonetheless, China and Japan began to recover and renewed their political, economic and cultural relations with the signing of *The Joint Communiqué* in 1972, which attempted to put an end to the hostile stance between the two parties (Iriye, 1990). The *Sino-Japanese Peace and Friendship Treaty*, signed in 1978, then marked a boost of cultural collaborations and exchanges between the two countries in various areas such as literature, art, calligraphy, music, movie and sport (Wang, 2003). Partly due to the treaty, China and Japan recognised the significance of cultural exchange as one of the most effective diplomatic approaches to promote both cultures, rebuild national images and alleviate the strained Sino-Japanese relationship (Wang 2003, Marchukov 2016).

As an important format of cultural exchange between China and Japan, I classify Sino-Japanese exhibitions into two types: the loan exhibition and the exchange exhibition. The former is most commonly situated outside China/Japan to exhibit typical Chinese/Japanese culture to overseas visitors, while the latter combines

exporting exhibitions of the country's own culture and, in exchange, bringing in exhibitions from the other culture. Drawing on the interviews I conducted with a cluster of informants in China, this chapter attempts to answer the below questions on Sino-Japanese exhibitions between China and Japan: How did these two types of exhibitions emerge and develop? What are the differences between international loan exhibition and the exchange exhibition? What is the process and effect of producing these exhibitions, given the tense political context? What is the relationship between these exhibitions and Sino-Japanese repatriation? What are the potential obstacles and difficulties to further develop these kinds of exhibitions?

Attempting answer these questions, I argue that Sino-Japanese exchange exhibition is more interactive and relatively more flexible than the loan exhibition, which encounters less governmental intervention on the provincial/municipal level. The model of long-term system of short-term shared access to cultural heritage, which derives from the Sino-Japanese exchange exhibition, has the potential to create a reciprocal relationship between Chinese and Japanese participants, thus sets a relational and ethical foundation to develop Sino-Japanese repatriation.

To be more specific, this chapter advocates the Sino-Japanese exchange exhibition as an ethical approach that can cultivate a dialogic and relationship of trust among participating Chinese and Japanese museums and museum professionals. Frequent communication and discussion embedded within the preparation and practice stages of exchange exhibitions, means this model provides greater opportunity to enhance mutual understanding between collaborating Chinese and Japanese museums. Knowledge exchange between both sides can improve and encourage joint professional development, which

ultimately forms a community of practice for all participants.

Moreover, concerning the state museum system in which Chinese and Japanese national, provincial and municipal museums operate, exchange exhibitions have the capacity to shape long-term partnership and enhance mutual development for museums from both sides. Gaining access to these exhibitions means publics in both countries have the opportunity to understand both cultures in new ways, by which Chinese and Japanese people can improve their understanding of both cultures and their cultural differences. Consequently, Sino-Japanese exhibitions exchanges lay a foundation of trust for further communication within the Sino-Japanese state museum system regarding repatriation.

The first section of this analytic chapter illustrates the characteristics of the loan exhibition, explaining how Chinese and Japanese cultural diplomacy impacts the scale, the theme and exhibits selected for the loan exhibition and revealing the limitations and potentialities of the relationship-building process within the loan exhibition. Accordingly, the second part examines the Sino-Japanese exchange exhibition as an ethical model, exploring how this new way of sharing can construct a relationship of trust from three aspects: the long-term partnership between museums, the emerging community of practice for professional development and the mutual understanding and trust between Chinese and Japanese publics. This part also analyses the impact of these relations on negotiating Sino-Japanese repatriation. In the last section of this chapter, I list several limitations that might impede the development of Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions, which is worthy for further consideration.

4.2 Loan exhibitions between China and Japan

Having classified Sino-Japanese exhibitions into loan exhibitions and exchange

exhibitions, these two types share some similarities: their most fundamental purposes, for instance, are to present the host country's culture, to increase cultural exchange and cooperation, to create mutual understanding and respect, and to build close relations between the two countries. However, the interviews I conducted and relevant literature on the topic suggest that these two types of exchange are different in terms of the proportion and the frequency with which they occur, the identity of the organisers, the purpose and the exhibited themes, aspects and processes. This section firstly analyses how a shift in emphasis of Chinese and Japanese cultural diplomacy could impact the Chinese/Japanese loan exhibitions to other countries; it then concentrates on Chinese external loans exhibitions to Japan in particular to explore current developments and limitations of this type of exhibition. The next section analyses what kinds of relations Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions can build and how they can impact the development of Sino-Japanese repatriation.

4.2.1 China's and Japan's loan exhibitions: an effective approach towards cultural diplomacy

This section argues that both China and Japan recognise the significance of loan exhibitions as an effective approach towards cultural diplomacy. Due to the different focus placed on cultural diplomacy by China and Japan, the country's overseas loan exhibitions share common diplomatic aims, yet differ significantly in various other aspects, such as the quantities of exhibitions, and the selection of exhibition themes and exhibits.

The idea of cultural diplomacy garners attention in terms of its potential to contribute to international relations. Ljuben Tevdovski (2009, p. 24) defines it as follows: 'Cultural diplomacy projects the diverse culture of the whole nation' and 'promotes the spirit, ideas and ideal of the nation, in the same time promoting

openness and diversity', which gives audiences from other nations 'opportunities to entirely disagree with the politics of a state, and still appreciate, cherish or enjoy segments of its culture'. Tevdovski's explanation suggests that cultural diplomacy can largely affect international communication and their cultural approaches, and could even help build a bridge between countries that hold hostile political stances towards each other (Tevdovski, 2009).

In the post-war era, China and Japan both understood cultural diplomacy as a powerful strategy to represent the nation's 'soft power' (Liao 2006, Iwabuchi 2015), which plays a crucial role on disseminating national culture, and shaping the nations' image and reputation in the international arena (Nye 2004, Melissen 2005). Since the 1950s, both countries recognised cultural exchange as an important aspect of cultural diplomacy to promote their unique cultural identity abroad (Liu and Qu 2013, Otmazgin 2012). In this sense, loaning exhibitions to partnering countries can be seen as a one-way cultural exchange that brings Chinese/Japanese culture to another culture. The ultimate purpose of these loan exhibitions is not only to seek opportunities to reshape China and Japan's national image on the international stage, but also to show each country's soft power and cultural strengths, to gain international respect and a mutual understanding of Chinese/Japanese culture (Liu and Qu 2013, Otmazgin 2012).

Due to the different emphasis of China and Japan's cultural diplomacy, the exhibition themes and exhibits between Chinese and Japanese loan exhibitions are markedly different: while China is inclined to select themes in relation to ancient Chinese culture and, accordingly, select archeological cultural relics to display; Japan aims to promote both ancient and contemporary Japanese art, Japanese creative lifestyle and popular culture, such as anime and manga.

The Chinese government has consolidated the approach of loan exhibitions to overseas countries within its framework of cultural diplomacy (Lu and Han, 2011), which promotes ancient Chinese culture as a typical ‘identification of China’ (Shan, 2014). China made its first attempt to export exhibitions in 1950, to the Soviet Union, and has since the 1970s gradually increased the amount of loan exhibitions to include hundreds of countries in Europe, North America, Oceania, Asia, and Africa (Zhang, 2014). Between 1973 and 1978, representing the first attempt at cultural diplomacy after China began to open its door to the world, the *Exhibition of Archaeological Finds of the People’s Republic of China* travelled around the world and attracted millions of visitors (Kong, 2015). The themes of these exhibitions mainly cover different aspects of ancient Chinese culture, including paintings, artefacts and archaeological cultural relics (Liao, 2006).

Unlike China, Japan’s cultural diplomacy not only focuses on introducing Japanese cultural traditions, language education and human exchange programs, but, since the 1980s, also placed distinct emphasis on promoting Japanese pop-culture after Japanese media culture, such as television programmes, manga and anime became popular on a global scale (Iwabuchi 2015, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2017). The *Diplomatic Bluebook 2015* captures the wide range of Japanese cultures that Japan goes through great lengths to promote around the world, including ‘Japanese traditional culture like tea ceremony, cuisine and pop culture such as animation, manga and fashion’ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2015). Although Japan continues to exhibit ancient Japanese culture overseas, the country’s specific cultural diplomacy strategy has shifted the emphasis of Japanese loan exhibitions towards Japanese contemporary art and popular culture (Nakamura, 2013). An example of a loan exhibition with contemporary focus includes the travelling exhibition *Winter Garden: The Exploration of the Micropop Imagination in Contemporary Japanese Art* and

Japan: Kingdom of Characters, which introduced Japanese characters in anime and manga to the world (Japan Foundation, 2018).

Although the total amount of Japanese loan exhibitions is significantly smaller than those organised by China, both countries have cooperated on a large scale with exhibiting countries. So far, under the Twelfth Five-year Plan Project from 2011 to 2015, China has signed agreements on cultural cooperation with 157 countries (Jin, 2015). This period also witnessed a boom in external, loan exhibitions held outside China. According to Zhang (2014), there were at least 158 exhibitions held in more than 21 countries in Asia, Europe, and North America and so on in the 1990s, and this increased to more than 600 collaborative exhibition projects between 2000 and 2013. For Japan, the Agency for Cultural Affairs and the Japan Foundation are two major governmental institutions that undertake Japanese loan exhibitions. The total quantity of Japanese loan exhibitions is smaller than the amount of Chinese loan exhibitions, totalling at least 83 overseas exhibitions held by the Agency for Cultural Affairs from 1951 to 2018, and more than 100 travelling exhibitions undertaken by the Japan Foundation from 2005 to 2018 (Agency for Cultural Affairs 2018, Japan Foundation 2018). Since the twentieth century, Japan organised these exhibitions in collaboration with a wide variety of countries, including the U.S., Turkey, Portugal, Italy, China, United Kingdom, Russia, Thailand and Brazil (Agency for Cultural Affairs, 2018).

4.2.2 Chinese external loan exhibitions to Japan

Japan was one of the earliest countries that China began to contact with by loaning exhibitions (Zhang, 2014). As Shan Jixiang, the director of the Palace Museum in China pointed out, before China and Japan recovered their diplomatic relations officially, China held an external loan exhibition, the *Chinese Dunhuang*

Art Exhibition, in 1957 with Japan (Shan, 2014). From the day after the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Japan, the Chinese loaned exhibitions to Japan most frequently (Shan, 2014). However, Japan loaned much less exhibitions to China than to the U.S. for example. According to the catalogue published online by the Agency for Cultural Affairs in Japan, there were only three outbound loan exhibitions of Japanese culture heritage to China between 1950 and 2018, but more than twenty exhibition loans to the U.S. (Agency for Cultural Affairs, 2018). On this premise, I will now analyse Chinese external loan exhibitions to Japan in a more detailed way, exploring the characteristics of this type of Sino-Japanese exchange and its limited effect on constructing an interactive and collaborative relationship between Chinese and Japanese participants.

I argue that Sino-Japanese loan exhibitions are an effective diplomatic means that involve strong governmental intervention through meaning China's governmental institutions play a leading role in the decision-making process of the exhibition. Moreover, both Chinese and Japanese participants tend to adopt less risky exhibition strategies by selecting only uncontested exhibition themes, such as ancient Chinese culture. These kinds of loan exhibitions, from China to Japan, have the potential to establish unidirectional, one-way communication rather than a two-way collaborative exchange between Chinese and Japanese participants.

- The Chinese government plays a leading role in Chinese loan exhibitions to Japan

From the 1970s to the present, the goals of loan exhibitions from China to Japan are still both politically and culturally-orientated (Wang, 2013). Zhang Hongwei, a director in the Palace Museum, who has close working relationships with Japanese museum professionals and scholars, told me during my interview with

him that these external loan exhibitions must follow the general direction and rules made by the Chinese government.³⁴ The government is in a leading position during the whole process of these exhibitions.³⁵

Here it is worth mentioning the most representative official institution, Art Exhibitions China (AEC), which is in charge of most of the cross-national loan exhibitions. This institution was established in 1971 for organising the most influential loan exhibition: *Exhibition of Archaeological Finds of the People's Republic of China* from 1973-1978 (Shan, 2014). In 2007, it was officially named as Art Exhibitions China and placed under the direct control of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH), which is supervised by the Minister of Culture (Art Exhibitions China, 2018). Its essential mission is to organise and host international exhibitions, coordinate international exchange events, and host relevant conferences and seminars (Kong, 2015). By undertaking Chinese loan exhibitions across countries, nations and cultures, a principle, which must be obeyed and is repeatedly emphasised by the AEC is 'to strictly conform to the current Chinese diplomatic policies and to serve the general diplomatic situation'.³⁶

Organising Sino-Japanese loan exhibitions as part of this governmental system, the Chinese government strongly intervenes in the process of developing and producing the exhibition. Accordingly, the selection of exhibition themes, contents and exhibits all serve the political and diplomatic aims of the loan exhibitions. As director C and staff member D indicate, any chosen themes or objects that may not match current Chinese diplomatic strategies, because they relate to controversial political and historical issues, may hurt the Chinese

³⁴ Zhang Hongwei, interview by the author, China, 25 September 2015.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Director C, interview by the author, China, 22 October 2015.

national image and will not pass the examination process led by the SACH.³⁷³⁸ Under these circumstances, loan exhibitions tend to choose less risky and less sensitive topics that meet the most common interests of the Japanese public towards ancient Chinese, and exhibit uncontested cultural objects that are strongly representative of ancient Chinese culture.

- Adopting less risky strategies to select exhibition themes and uncontested exhibits

Past Sino-Japanese loan exhibitions include the *Exhibition of Cultural Relics from Inner Mongolia, a Nation on Horseback in Northern China* between 1983 and 1984³⁹, *Exhibitions of the World's Four Great Civilisations: The Chinese Exhibition* between 2000 and 2001, and the *Great Romance of the Three Kingdoms* which was held from 2 May 2008 to 15 March 2009 (National Diet Library 1992, Hiroshima Prefectural Art Museum 2003, Tokyo Fuji Art Museum 2008). Evidently, the themes of these exhibitions consistently relate to ancient Chinese culture, and the collections on display are, in each of these cases, archaeological cultural relics. Due to the historical and cultural relations between ancient China and Japan, Chinese and Japanese people have a common interest in this kind of theme: especially the Japanese have an ardent love of ancient Chinese culture.⁴⁰ Discussing the decision-making process behind the selection of archaeological cultural relics as items on display, director C also commented:

In China, unearthed archaeological cultural relics are the most non-political form of art, they were from the ancient China, and won't arouse any ideological disputes in any foreign countries outside China. They all came from thousands of years ago. Therefore, these exhibitions were very popular

³⁷ Director C, interview by the author, China, 22 October 2015.

³⁸ Staff member D, interview by the author, China, 28 September 2015.

³⁹ For more information, see <https://rnavi.ndl.go.jp/kaleido/tmp/21.pdf> [Accessed 5 July 2017].

⁴⁰ Director C, interview by the author, China, 22 October 2015.

and gained a warm welcome from visitors in Japan.⁴¹

Whilst acknowledging the diplomatic significance of promoting ancient Chinese culture to Japan, the themes and forms of Sino-Japanese loan exhibitions, to some extent, lack diversity. Moreover, choosing risk-averse topics means these kinds of exhibitions lack the capacity to deal with the difficult histories between China and Japan, forego the opportunity to construct a communicative platform for both sides to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the controversial history and to heal from the painful past by exploring different issues together.

- *A shift from unidirectional communication to two-way collaboration in the Sino-Japanese loan exhibition*

In my interview with researcher E, he indicates that China tends to organise more loan exhibitions on ancient Chinese culture to take place in Japan, while Japan, on the other hand, produces fewer exhibitions to take place in China.⁴² In other words, outbound loan exhibitions from China to Japan constitute one-way cultural exportation, which risks a Chinese lack of understanding of the Japanese culture. Furthermore, during and after the loan exhibition, the Chinese participants lack in-depth communication between the Chinese side and the Japanese public, and lack of a more sophisticated understanding of visitors' feedback, which provides certain limitations for further developing overseas loan exhibitions (Wang, 2013).

Nevertheless, it remains promising that Chinese external loan exhibitions have inevitably transformed from unidirectional loaned cultural heritage to the participating museum, to collaboratively exchange project with the museum. As the then President Hu emphasised, cross-cultural exchange became one of the core parts of Chinese Foreign Policy and forms one of the most crucial factors in

⁴¹ Director C, interview by the author, China, 22 October 2015.

⁴² Researcher E, interview by the author, China, 16 March 2016.

increasing Chinese soft power as part of the 21st century (Hu, 2012). More concerned with cross-cultural exchange, Sino-Japanese exhibitions construct a more collaborative relationship among participants of both sides.

Taking the *Great Romance of the Three Kingdoms* held in 2008 as a representative example, the exhibition achieved great success and attracted more than a million visitors during its tour of seven cities in Japan.⁴³ During the preparation stage of this exhibition, ‘experts from China and Japan spent three years personally visiting more than 70 related heritage sites and museums in China, selecting around 130 pieces/sets of cultural relics from 34 cultural institutions and museums’ (Momo, 2010, p. 4). In this example, the joint efforts that were made by Chinese and Japanese scholars and museum professionals generated opportunities to develop mutual understanding during the collaborative process, setting the foundation for better communication in further cooperation. Although limitations remain persistent, there are promising signs that the way in which stakeholders collaborate when organising Chinese loan exhibitions to Japan is changing future practices.

4.3 Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions shape a reciprocal relationship on the basis of mutual trust and understanding for both sides

Compared to external loan exhibitions, Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions are more interactive, which refers to a long-term system of sending out and bringing in short-term exhibitions. The exchange exhibition is also relatively flexible, with less governmental intervention on the provincial/municipal level between China and Japan. To be more specific, this type of exchange exhibition demands an interactive process of collaboration from Chinese and Japanese museums involved in the exhibition; with museum professionals of both museums sharing specialised

⁴³ Director C, interview by the author, China, 22 October 2015.

knowledge and negotiating various aspects of the exhibition; and the public of both countries sharing physical access to cultural heritage from both sides, enjoying each other's culture through exhibition exchange.

I acknowledge that Sino-Japanese exhibition exchange cannot directly provide practical approaches to address Sino-Japanese repatriation, however, my research shows that mutual understanding and trust gradually emerge throughout the exchange process. Consequently, exchange projects have the potential to build a relationship of trust among participants through various ways of sharing, thereby setting a relational and ethical foundation for negotiating Sino-Japanese repatriation in the future.

With this acknowledgement, this section emphasises how people from different cultures and countries negotiate, collaborate and learn together as part of Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions. Drawing on the interviews I conducted and already existing examples of Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions, this part analyses how this trustworthy and reciprocal relationship can be formed through three ways of sharing within exhibition exchanges: the short-term access shared between Chinese and Japanese museums, professional knowledge shared by museum professionals of both sides, as well as the physical access to cultural heritage through exchange exhibitions shared by Chinese and Japanese visitors.

4.3.1 Establishing a long-term partnership through bilateral cultural agreements signed by Chinese and Japanese local museums

In the 21st century, both Chinese and Japanese cultural diplomacy policies emphasise the necessity and significance of improving cultural exchange in the international arena (Zhang 2012, Liu 2009). Equal cultural exchange and communication are regarded as an essential cultural approach to win international

respect, and thus achieve a win-win situation under current cultural diplomacy.⁴⁴ On this premise, Chinese and Japanese cities make systematic efforts ‘to forge private contacts’ through the signing of bilateral cultural agreements and the establishment of Friendship Cities (Betzler and Austin, 1997, p. 585). Although these measures are also an aspect of cultural diplomacy, they provides a long-term official platform for museums and cultural institutions working on provincial/municipal level to initiate a large amount of cultural collaborative projects, including exchange exhibitions, art fairs, art festivals, cultural years and so on (Han, 2011).

China has a long history of establishing friendships with Japanese cities.⁴⁵ Since the 1970s, China has adopted a form of people-to-people diplomacy and begun to form friendly city relations with Japan via cooperation and communication in terms of politics, economy, financial investment, culture, education and science (Zhang, 2012). Originally, this initiative was called Sister City, however, President Zhou Enlai changed it to Friendship City to emphasise the equal status of the two cities (Cheng, 2012). By following the people-to-people diplomacy, which was proposed by President Zhou, the main function of establishing Sino-Japanese Friendship City relations is to unfreeze Sino-Japanese unofficial and official relations, and then encourage Sino-Japanese official relations by non-official diplomatic actions between cities (Wang, 2001).

As of January 2016, China and Japan have built 250 pairs of Friendship Cities, much more than between China and other countries.⁴⁶ With more provinces, cities and towns in China and Japan being connected in friendship, more and more

⁴⁴ Zhang Hongwei, interview by the author, China, 25 September 2015.

⁴⁵ Researcher I, interview by the author, China, 28 September 2015.

⁴⁶ For more information, see the China International Friendly City Federation, <http://www.cifca.org.cn/Web/SearchByZhou.aspx?guojia=%c8%d5%b1%be> [Accessed 5 July 2016].

bilateral cultural agreements between local museums have been signed.⁴⁷ Broadly speaking, these agreements not only encourage local promotion and communication in the area of economy, culture, education and so on, but also promote positive interactions to strengthen Sino-Japanese culture relations (Betzler and Austin, 1997).

The launch of exchange exhibitions is a key element of these bilateral cultural agreements. For instance, the Chinese city of Lüshun became a city of friendship with the Japanese city of Kitakyushu in 1979, leading the municipal museums in these two cities to sign a long-term agreement for exchange exhibitions in 2010⁴⁸ (Takahara, 2010). The exhibition *Modern Scenery of Dalian: Lüshun Museum Collected Historical Photographs of Dalian* travelled to the Kitakyushu Museum of Natural History and History (known as Kitakyushu Museum) in October 2012. Two years later, the Kitakyushu Museum organised the *Exhibition of the Steel Industrial City* in the Lüshun Museum (Kitakyushu Museum 2012, Lüshun Museum, 2014). Another representative example is the ‘Friendship City relations’, which were built in 2011 between Shanxi Province in China and Nara Prefecture in Japan (The East Asia Local and Regional Government Congress, 2012). After Shanxi History Museum held an exhibition of *Emperors of the Tang Dynasty and Their Royal Tombs* in Nara, The Museum of the Archaeological Institute of Kashihara, Nara Prefecture, cooperated again with Shanxi History Museum to bring a Japanese exhibition, *Exhibition of Archaeological Cultural Relics in Nara Prefecture* to Shanxi, China in 2011. This is the first time Japanese archaeological cultural relics were brought to Shanxi Province to be exhibited, and it is no surprise that they attracted a large number of visitors at that time (Shanxi History

⁴⁷ Researcher I, interview by the author, China, 28 September 2015.

⁴⁸ The agreement was signed in 2010 by three museums, including the Lüshun Museum in China, the Kitakyushu Museum of Natural History and History in Japan, and Incheon Metropolitan City Museum in South Korea. These three museums jointly constructed a collaborative East Asian Friendship Museum Exchange Program. For more information, see <http://www.lvshunmuseum.org/News/NewsDetail.aspx?ID=357> [Accessed 15 July 2017].

Museum, 2016).

The signature of the long-term bilateral agreements and the partnership that was built through the policy of building ‘Friendship City relations’ stimulated the rapid development of exchange exhibitions on a provincial/municipal level. Unlike the Chinese loan exhibitions towards Japan, which are predominately impacted by the Chinese central government, Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions between provincial/municipal museums are closely linked to local authorities, which are relatively flexible and have a certain degree of freedom to choose exhibition themes and exhibits, and to negotiate with Japanese partners.

On the Chinese side, as Director C told me in the interview, local museums, local branches of the AEC and local archaeological institutions are all possible members of exchange exhibitions, depending on the nature of proposed exhibits.⁴⁹ In such cases, the local participants are responsible to submit all the required documents such as their design of the exhibition theme, their object list, their assessment of and strategy for security, and the invitation from the Japanese museum participating.⁵⁰ The central governmental institution SACH only takes the responsibility to make a final decision of approval on the exchange exhibition after the required documents have been submitted to the Provincial Administration of Cultural Heritage.⁵¹ For Japanese side, the Japanese government also does not strictly regulate these local exchange exhibitions, as director C and Researcher I indicated, drawing from their personal experiences in Japan.^{52,53}

Therefore, the model that exchange exhibition provides refers to a sustainable

⁴⁹ Director C, interview by the author, China, 22 October 2015.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Researcher I, interview by the author, China, 28 September 2015.

system of exchanging temporary exhibitions between Chinese and Japanese participating museums. On the one hand, long-term agreements have the capacity to maintain the partnership for at least the period of its validity. On the other hand, exchange exhibition can generate diverse collaborative opportunities for museum professionals. Regarding the issue of Sino-Japanese repatriation, the long-term partnership and continuous cross-cultural collaborations that derive from this model have the potential to gradually deepen mutual understanding and trust between Chinese and Japanese participants, and ultimately provide possibilities for negotiating Sino-Japanese repatriation in the future.

4.3.2 Establishing a reciprocal relationship among Sino-Japanese museum professionals through joint professional development

For museum professionals, the model of Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions can enhance mutual understanding through the negotiation and communication process of the exhibition exchanges. Exchange exhibitions also generate a community of practice through which museum professional on both sides achieve mutual development in terms of history, technologies and research findings, which in turn, establish a reciprocal relationship among museum professionals through joint professional development.

- *Creating mutual understanding among museum professionals through negotiation and communication*

In my interview with director C, he indicated that it is a necessary process for Chinese and Japanese museums involved in the exchange project to negotiate with each other, in order to choose culturally appropriate exhibition themes, and reach a consensus between what objects are allowed to be exhibited by the host museum and what objects the partnering museum want to include in an exchange

exhibition.⁵⁴ Researcher I points out that the communication between museum professionals and staff members from comparable institutions is frequent, smooth and relatively rational during the negotiation and consultation phases of Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions.⁵⁵ Both sides, Researcher I comments, have already recognised the significance of exchange exhibitions and their ability to construct cultural ties and improve cross-cultural collaboration.⁵⁶

As these interviews suggest, the negotiation and communication between Sino-Japanese scholars and museum professionals who are part of the process of exchange exhibitions helps strengthen their interaction and achieve consensus on various aspects regarding the exhibition. Moreover, good communication constructs mutual understanding and trust between participants, creating a relationship that has the capacity to stimulate further Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions. These collaborations also have potential to help mitigate the tense Sino-Japanese relationship by building mutual understanding, mutual trust and respect between Chinese and Japanese scholars, museum professionals and the public, which opens doors to repatriation, and, in turn, leads to even greater mutual trust.

- Creating a community of practice through joint professional development and cross-cultural communication

As David Dean (1996, p. 2) indicates, ‘exhibitions are rarely the product of one individual. They require teamwork involving all museum specialists’. Indeed, the cross-cultural collaboration facilitated by Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions brings together museum professionals from interrelated Chinese and Japanese museums as a team and constructs a community of practice to achieve mutual

⁵⁴ Director C, interview by the author, China, 22 October 2015.

⁵⁵ Researcher I, interview by the author, China, 28 September 2015.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

development by sharing knowledge among collaborating institutions. The concept of a 'community of practice' derives from the theory of social learning, and has been applied to many other fields, such as education, organisation studies, health care and international relations (Le 2009, Bueger 2012, Edwards, Islam, et al 2017). At the heart of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger's early research on social learning, they understand communities of practice as interactive processes in which participants who share common interests can 'enable learning to occur and knowledge to evolve' (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 111).

Wenger, et al (2002, pp. 4-5) further describe the community of practice as below:

Groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their understanding and knowledge of this area by interacting on an ongoing basis.

These people ... typically share information, insight, and advice. They solve problems. They help each other. They discuss their situation, their aspirations, their needs.

Over time, they develop a unique perspective on their topic as well as a body of common knowledge, practices, and approaches. They also develop personal relationships and established ways of interacting. They may even develop a common sense of identity. They become a community of practice.

As Wenger, et al (2002) suggest, the practical processes such as those underpinning the Sino-Japanese exchange exhibition facilitate cross-cultural collaboration between Chinese and Japanese museums that allows participating museum professionals from both sides to share professional knowledge through

the exhibition exchange. This knowledge exchange is mutually beneficial for museum professionals working or situated in different cultures, helping them recognise their strengths and weaknesses, achieve joint professional development, and shape a comprehensive understanding of the inherent cultural differences.

For instance, museum staff that works cooperatively during Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions can share their previous experiences in practice and learn specific technical skills from each other, such as the transportation of exhibits, applying technologies of preservation, enhancing security and developing exhibition designs (Wang, 2013). In addition, the common interests in Chinese/Japanese culture that museum professionals share, provide a robust basis from which to negotiate cultural differences and attempt to explore a culturally appropriate way to interpret certain exhibits and curate the exhibition (Shi, 2016). By making these common efforts, Chinese and Japanese participants form a better understanding of the cultural significance of selected exhibits, as well as the specific cultural elements that are embedded within the exhibition. Consequently, the model of exchange exhibitions has the capacity to generate a community of practice through which participants can share knowledge and insights, achieve a productive result of mutually developed, specialised skills, as well as a profound understanding of cultural differences. Accordingly, these improvements form the foundation of a reciprocal relationship between Chinese and Japanese museum professionals that has the potential to facilitate further Sino-Japanese exhibitions exchanges.

The most recent exchange project between the Capital Museum in Beijing, China and the Edo-Tokyo Museum in Tokyo, Japan, illustrates the productive and reciprocal relationship that museum professionals construct through exhibitions exchange. From 18 February to 19 April 2017, the Edo-Tokyo Museum in Tokyo

took the lead in the organisation of an exhibition titled *Edo and Beijing: Cities and Urban Life in the 18th Century*. The premise of the exhibition was to make comparisons between Beijing and Tokyo, exploring differences and similarities pertaining city development and citizen life in the 18th century (Edo-Tokyo Museum, 2017a). A year after the success of Edo and Beijing, a similar exhibition took place in Beijing. The *Urban Life: Tokyo and Beijing in the 18th Century* went on display in the Beijing Capital Museum from 14 August to 7 October 2018 (Beijing Capital Museum, 2018). Chinese and Japanese museum professionals and curators worked collaboratively as part of the design and curatorial process of these two exhibitions (Zhang, 2018).

Zhang Liang (2018), as the curator of the Chinese side of the partnership, deeply appreciates the common efforts that Chinese and Japanese participants made jointly for these two exhibitions. The context in which the exchange took place posed a set of specific demands from the collaboration between the two museums. For instance, curators made separate selections of exhibits to not only suit the exhibition theme, but to develop culturally appropriate displays for the specific Chinese/Japanese context. According to Liang, this allowed Chinese/Japanese visitors to enjoy the exhibition more comprehensively and productively (Zhang, 2018). For the exhibition held in Japan, staff selected 116 out of 185 sets of Chinese exhibits from the Capital Museum; while in China, the exhibition displayed 112 out of 181 sets of Japanese exhibits (Edo-Tokyo Museum 2017b, Zhang 2018). Another small but significant point of consideration was the shift of the exhibition title. The name of Edo refers to ancient Tokyo and was adopted during communication among Chinese and Japanese curators. However, the title changed from ‘Edo and Beijing’ to ‘Tokyo and Beijing’ in an attempt to help Chinese visitors unfamiliar with ancient Japanese culture understand the exhibition.

In sum, cross-cultural communication and knowledge exchange within the process of exchange exhibitions helps both Chinese and Japanese participants develop more sensitive and cross-cultural curatorial skills, and improve mutual understanding of cultural differences through which a reciprocal relationship is shaped. In turn, the relationships established through exchange exhibitions have the potential to generate more opportunities to develop Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions in the future.

- Constructing interpersonal relationships among participants

Organising Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions requires continuous communication among museum professionals who participate in these cross-cultural collaborations. It is perhaps not surprising that my interviews identified the interpersonal relationships constructed between participants, through professional but also unofficial and private communication, as a key factor for the success of partnerships during and beyond exchange exhibitions.

According to staff member D, a close interpersonal relationship between Chinese and Japanese participants can play a crucial role in facilitating the negotiation and consultation phase of exchange exhibitions.⁵⁷ Referring specifically to the most politically sensitive issues that had to be negotiated together beforehand, participants were inclined to communicate about project-related issues in a more unofficial way, taking a soft and indirect approach to deal with sensitivities.⁵⁸ Beyond exchange exhibitions, constructing an informal and cross-cultural interpersonal network among interrelated Chinese and Japanese museum professionals also has the potential to shape a confidential atmosphere among participants, relieve tension and thus facilitate the negotiation process of

⁵⁷ Staff member D, interview by the author, China, 28 September 2015.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Sino-Japanese repatriation.

4.3.3 Deepening mutual understanding between Chinese and Japanese publics, and facilitating healing from the painful past

As opposed to the international loan exhibition, the Sino-Japanese exchange exhibition is relatively flexible in the exhibiting formats and exhibition themes it facilitates, meaning museums have more freedom to decide what to exhibit and which objects to exchange. Hence, this model can create more versatile opportunities for both Chinese and Japanese publics to intersect with each other's cultures, fostering mutual understanding and reducing biases on both sides. Overtime, exchange exhibitions contribute to the alleviation of resentment and the rethinking of unfavorable impressions held by both sides on the basis of mutual understanding, ultimately allowing healing from the painful past for both Chinese and Japanese publics. .

In my interviews with researcher I and director C, both participants acknowledged that Chinese and Japanese visitors share common interests in ancient culture and the contemporary development of Chinese and Japanese societies.⁵⁹⁶⁰ These common interests between Chinese and Japanese publics, and the interconnection between Chinese and Japanese culture, help engender a peaceful atmosphere between each other. Accordingly, sharing physical access to exchange exhibitions can construct mutual understanding and trust between the two countries and their publics.

As a researcher, it is important to acknowledge here that previous or already existing exchange exhibitions did not touch on potentially controversial topics or exhibited contested cultural objects. Nevertheless, the model of the exchange

⁵⁹ Researcher I, interview by the author, China, 28 September 2015.

⁶⁰ Director C, interview by the author, China, 22 October 2015.

exhibition creates a constructive space for both Chinese and Japanese publics to alter conventional, fixed impressions and biases towards each other, cultivate a new, and intimate comprehension of each other's culture. The exhibiting space, as Dean (1996, p. 7) illustrates, allows 'the viewers to learn, reflect, and assimilate the world at their own pace, the baggage of preconceptions and biases can be dispelled and new, enlightened attitudes engendered'. Therefore, the model of Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions not only has the capacity to create more dialogic opportunities between museums and museum professionals but can also build connections between their Chinese and Japanese publics, the exhibition and the two cultures. As more Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions begin to appear, these cultural collaborations form a productive way forward for Chinese and Japanese people and their shared struggle with contentious Sino-Japanese issues; greater mutual understanding and trust can gradually reduce the resentment towards each other and aid a renegotiation of the painful past. Ultimately, the ethical model of the exchange exhibition, which proposes a long-term system of shared short-term access to Chinese and Japanese cultural heritage, forms a foundation upon which to explore future possibilities for repatriation.

4.4 Limitations of the model of Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions

- Small scale limits its influence

So far, I have illustrated that Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions play a valuable role within Sino-Japanese relationship building, however the development of exchange exhibitions introduces a number of problems that require more attention. Compared to the quantity of international loan exhibitions, there have been fewer Japanese exhibitions brought to China than the other way around (Lu and Han 2011, Shi 2016). The small amount of Japanese exhibitions provides fewer opportunities for Chinese participants to collaborate and communicate with their Japanese peers and to engage with Japanese culture. To a certain degree, the

imbalance between Chinese and Japanese produced exchange exhibitions negatively impacts the Sino-Japanese exhibitions exchange.

Moreover, as part of our interview, director C commented that the current initiatives of professional knowledge exchange between Chinese and Japanese museum professionals are limited by foundational works related to the exhibition development, such as shipping, but less on mutual learning in the field of research and technologies.⁶¹

- *Risk-averse strategies limit further development of Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions*

Not unlike institutions involved in international loan exhibitions, both Chinese and Japanese museums undertaking exchange exhibitions share a tendency to adopt risk-averse strategies to avoid potential conflicts. Whilst being topics that can enhance mutual understanding of both cultures, ancient Chinese/Japanese culture, Chinese/Japanese contemporary economic or industrial development and Japanese popular culture such as manga and anime are common exhibition themes due to their perceived non-political and non-controversial nature.

However, themes that touch upon political and historical disputes, exposing the painful past between China and Japan, remain absent from exhibition agendas. The prime reasons for the avoidance of difficult territory are perhaps related to the potential for highly political and sensitive issues to deteriorate Sino-Japanese relations, the threat of conflict and opposing perspectives to certain disputes, and the strong social pressures both sides encounter. Although these are understandable concerns, risk averse strategies avoid the meaningful negotiation of difficult issues that Chinese and Japanese museums can facilitate and may

⁶¹ Director C, interview by the author, China, 22 October 2015.

restrain further development of Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions.

- *Fluctuations of political relations and unsolved disputes between China and Japan*

Due to contradictions between the ambiguous attitude of the Japanese government and its leaders, and China's pressing desire to receive apologies from the Japanese government, plus various political and territorial disputes, the political relationship between China and Japan is complicated and unstable, which I have fully discussed in previous chapters.

According to the interviewee I undertook with Wang Yunxia about her personal experience on exploring Sino-Japanese restitution, she indicates that it is different when talking about the politically and culturally sensitive issues with Japanese scholars⁶², which proves that a lack of mutual trust is an ongoing challenge between Chinese and Japanese stakeholders. Chinese and Japanese staff communicated with each other smoothly only with regard to uncontested topics like ancient culture and contemporary art⁶³, yet, both participants consciously tried to avoid sensitive issues that related to political disputes, unsolved historical problems and Sino-Japanese repatriation during formal and informal contact as much as possible.⁶⁴

4.5 Conclusion

Compared to international loan exhibitions, Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions have greater capacity to engender the kind of trust that enables repatriation. As I discussed above, I acknowledge that Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions have limitations, especially with regards to controversial issues such as repatriation.

⁶² Wang Yunxia, interview by the author, China, 30 September 2015.

⁶³ Director C, interview by the author, China, 22 October 2015.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

However, this model has the potential to construct a trustworthy and reciprocal relationship between Chinese and Japanese museums, museum professionals and the publics through a long-term system of exchanging short-term exhibitions. It is promising that exchange exhibitions can cultivate and nurture mutual understanding and trust between China and Japan, overtime, such cross-cultural efforts open up the possibility to explore Sino-Japanese repatriation.

A key question that for further consideration relating to the issue of Sino-Japanese repatriation is what Chinese and Japanese museums can do to maintain and deepen the mutual trust that has already been established through exchange exhibitions. One answer is that establishing clear catalogues of existing collections in both Chinese and Japanese museums might be a valuable approach. In fact, each Chinese informant I interviewed expressed the need for better and more widely shared cataloguing, which can be regarded as a foundational principle for both Chinese and Japanese museums.⁶⁵⁶⁶⁶⁷ Thus, it is significant for both Chinese and Japanese institutions to investigate the provenance of their collections and create digitally available catalogues of their collections. For Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions, doing so can facilitate the process of selecting uncontested exhibits with clear provenance and help museums curate the exhibition in a culturally appropriate way. Establishing a clear catalogue of collections can also avoid conflict and suspicion towards the provenance of certain cultural objects from participating museums.

By analysing differences between international loan exhibitions and exchange exhibitions, this chapter discussed how Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions have a greater capacity to build a reciprocal relationship on the basis of mutual trust,

⁶⁵ Zhang Hongwei, interview by the author, China, 25 September 2015.

⁶⁶ Wang Yunxia, interview by the author, China, 30 September 2015.

⁶⁷ Researcher I, interview by the author, China, 28 September 2015.

understanding and joint development among Chinese and Japanese participants. The model this chapter explores concerns cross-cultural collaboration within the Sino-Japanese state museum system. The next chapter focuses on a relatively successful case study of Sino-Japanese repatriation between Japanese private museums and the Chinese government. It explores another ethical model of sharing physical access to cultural object through the strategy of long-term loans.

Chapter Five

Sharing physical access to cultural property

through the strategy of long-term loan

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focuses on Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions. Clarifying two different types of international exchange exhibitions: loan exhibition and exchange exhibition, it analyses how mutual understanding can be established through cooperative process in exchange exhibitions between Chinese museums and Japanese museums. It regards Sino-Japanese exhibition exchange as a community of practice, which has the potential to shape mutual relationship and encourage mutual knowledge exchange between Sino-Japanese collaborative museums. This chapter then concerns museums' physical engagement of stolen cultural objects, exploring an ethically model of sharing physical access to the cultural property through long-term loan in a Sino-Japanese repatriation case between the Miho Museum (Miho), a Japanese private museum, the Chinese State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH) and the Shandong Museum (SM), a provincial museum in Shandong province, China.

To fully understand the significance and the implications of sharing physical access to cultural property through the strategy of long-term loan, the model demonstrated by the case, it is necessary to be familiar with its historical background. According to the *Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict* (1954 Hague convention), the *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* 1970 (1970 UNESCO Convention) and the

Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects 1995 (1995 UNIDROIT Convention), cultural property leaves its country of origin illegally via two main channels: illicit export and war plunder (Brodie, 2005). To be more specific, in terms of Sino-Japanese repatriation, Chinese cultural property was scattered through war plunder, illegal excavation, illicit trafficking and theft (Kraus 2009, Gu, Xie, et al 2012). As opposed to the regrettable transactions that dispersed the ancient Dunhuang archives, described in the next chapter, this case concentrates on an exquisite Chinese Buddhist statue from the Eastern Wei dynasty (AD 534-550), commonly known as a Bodhisattva. It was stolen from Boxing County, Shandong province, China in 1994, but reappeared in the Miho Museum in Japan in 2000 (Prott, 2009).

Initially, a local Chinese peasant excavated this sculpture accidentally in Boxing County in 1976 (Jing, 2014). Since 1979, the Cultural Relics Management Committee of Boxing County, the local governmental institute for preserving cultural heritage, collected and preserved this statue (Wang, 2008). However, after being stolen by an unidentified party in 1994, this statue disappeared for more than five years. Not until the end of 1999 did a Chinese scholar, Yang Hong, receive an anonymous letter, pointing out that this Buddhist sculpture (Figure 5.1) with a very special cicada crown exhibited in a Japanese private museum, Miho Museum, was the stolen work from Shandong, and thus drew attention from the Chinese State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH) (Yao, 2001).

In 2000, the *New York Times* also revealed that this statue was displayed in the Miho Museum, after which the SACH and Chinese scholars began to investigate the case (Eckholm and Sim, 2000). Through detailed investigation, including a 1983 paper in the well-regarded Chinese journal *Cultural Relics* containing a description and pictures of the statue (Figure 5.2) (Chang and Li, 1983), clear

evidence shows that the stolen statue was the one originally from Boxing County, China.



Figure 5.1. The Buddhist statue in Miho Museum, Japan (Left)

Figure 5.2. The stolen Buddhist statue published in a Chinese journal (Right)

As a private museum, the Japanese religious group, Shinji Shumeikai (also commonly recognised as Shumei), opened the Miho Museum with Shumei Cultural Foundation's private collections in November 1997, which were primarily purchased by Shumei founder Mihoko Koyama and her daughter, Hiroko Koyama (Koyama, 1997). It is comprised of ancient cultural artifacts from Japan, China, Italy, Egypt, Greece and South Asian (Koyama, 2007) (Figure 5.3). The Miho Museum purchased this sculpture from Eskenazi, a famous auction shop in London in October 1995, without knowing it was a stolen object.⁶⁸ The

⁶⁸ Hiroaki Katayama, interview by the author, Japan, 12 May 2016.

investigation and negotiation process proceeded smoothly between Miho, SACH and SM for more than half a year (Wang, 2008). As a mutual satisfactory result, the Miho Museum signed a memorandum for the repatriation of this Bodhisattva sculpture with Chinese participants, SACH and SM, on 16 April 2001. In accordance with the agreement, all parties concurred that the work would be repatriated to China, after a loan period of seven years where it would temporarily continue to reside at the Miho Museum until just after the Museum's 10th anniversary exhibition. Moreover, the parties agreed that, after the repatriation to China, the sculpture would continue to travel back to the Miho Museum routinely as a half-year loan exhibit every five years (Wang 2008, Prott 2009).



Figure 5.3. The Miho Museum

‘Relatively successful’ indicates that, through a negotiation of the repatriation process, both sides reach an ethical compromise on their shared aims. This term contrasts with an unsuccessful, paralysed situation that frequently occurs as part

of repatriation processes due to sensitive political relations, ambiguous legal complexities and so on. Yet, huge worries from the repatriating institution, contradictory perspectives towards repatriation and additional social pressure both in China and Japan is inevitable (Okauchi 2010, Tu 2012). For example, the Miho Museum held a very cautious stand for loaning collections to international exhibitions after this case; moreover, it is difficult to sustain the relationship established between Chinese and Japanese museums.⁶⁹ These, to a large extent, lead to a highly cautious prospect in terms of Sino-Japanese repatriation, which means ‘relatively’. Besides, this model concerns a private museum; it is more relevant to other private museums, rather than state institutions.

Although limitation still remains, this repatriation case indeed achieved a reciprocal consequence by compromising on the practice of sharing physical access to the cultural property through a repatriation agreement that loans the object back to the repatriating nation at regular intervals. In this chapter, this model illustrates two important outcomes deriving from the specific Sino-Japanese repatriation case: the strategy of long-term loan and the ratification of the bilateral agreement on further cooperation regarding the cultural object, by which make this model referential to other repatriation claims.

Following the bilateral agreement, both Chinese and Japanese public could get access to the statue through the strategy of long-term loan, which exhibits in the Shandong Museum and the Miho Museum commutatively. For the Chinese side, it fills in the blank history of the stolen Buddhist statue, reinforcing the spiritual and physical connections between Chinese people and the statue. After the statue has been repatriated to China, a further plan of collaboration included in the agreement guarantees that the Chinese side agrees to loan the statue to the Miho

⁶⁹ Hiroaki Katayama, interview by the author, Japan, 12 May 2016.

Museum for a half-year exhibition. This to some extent helps to ease Miho Museum's panic of permanently losing its private collection. It also reduces considerable external pressures that Miho Museum encountered since Chinese and Western media revealed the news. Accordingly, this not only builds a bridge for partnership between two museums, but also has the potentiality to alleviate possible tensions between Chinese and Japanese governments in terms of Sino-Japanese repatriation.

Furthermore, sharing physical access to the cultural property concerns not only the establishment of a renewed relationship between Miho, SACH and SM through effective negotiations, but also museums' collections management policy, and even public morality. On the basis of mutual understanding and respect, all parties created a shared guardianship of the stolen statue, undertaking the responsibility of protection, supervision and management of the object together. This model could also compel both Chinese and Japanese museums to reexamine their current collections with unclear provenance and to reflect on their collecting and guarding policies. In addition, visiting the exquisite Bodhisattva sculpture and understanding its intricate story help to increase public's awareness of protecting cultural heritage and overseeing museums. In this case, other than domestic legislations and international conventions, museum ethics, public scrutiny and social pressures are all crucial for restraining museums from collecting questionable cultural objects, constructing the guardianship between museums and the public in the context of China and Japan.

In this chapter, we have to acknowledge that appreciable worries repatriating institutions hold drags the issue of repatriation into a dilemma of whether or not to have further cooperation with non-Japanese museums. However, adopting the model of sharing physical access to the cultural property provides more

opportunities for further cooperation between Chinese and Japanese museums. It could at least help to break the standoff and to signify a sign of progression of Sino-Japanese repatriation.

Analysing this case as a potential model for ethical ‘repatriation’ through sharing physical access to the cultural property via the strategy of long-term loan, this chapter is divided into five parts: introduction, repatriation of stolen cultural property, analysing the Sino-Japanese repatriation, some inspirations after repatriation and conclusion. The introduction briefly outlines the background story of the case, defining this repatriation as a relatively successful case, whilst indicating physical access shared through the strategy of long-term loan is an ethical approach reached through compromise. Following by introduction, the second section explores current situation and limitations to address repatriation of stolen cultural property. Subsequently, embedded in the Sino-Japanese case, the third part analyses the strategy of long-term loan, indicating it as a constructive approach to achieve common goals for both parties through negotiation and compromise. In so doing, it also provides an ethical model to establish shared guardianship, and thus has the potential to introduce new approaches to move forward the all-too-frozen Sino-Japanese repatriation debates. The fourth section lists some inspirations about after-repatriation issues such as how to create further cooperation, the establishment of self scrutiny system in museums and so on. The last part then concludes with several questions for further discussion.

5.2 Repatriation of stolen cultural property

As mentioned in the introduction, this section refers to the repatriation of stolen Chinese cultural properties, focusing on Chinese requests of repatriation towards Japan.

Since the late twentieth century, ‘uncertainties of the stock market’ and ‘investors’ newfound interest in collecting antiquities’ gradually stimulated the prosperity of the international art market, and consequently led to a dramatic increasing of demands for ancient cultural objects and soaring prices internationally (Burke, 1990, p. 428). Under this circumstance, Chinese and non-Chinese treasure hunters and art dealers indulged in highly profitable illicit art trades (WenwuChina, 2015). Either being illegally excavated from archeologist sites and tombs, or stolen from Chinese museums and cultural institutions, numerous cultural objects were illicitly exported and ended up to the international art market (Lu, 2002). For instance, according to the State Administration of Cultural Heritage in China, between 1983 and 1999, there were more than 7400 pieces being stolen from different cultural institutions, including the Buddhist statue in this case study (Yi, 2006). Although there is no complete statistic to show the exact amount till now, it is apparently that a considerable number of Chinese cultural properties were scattered in the international art market by art theft and smuggling.

There had already many momentous contributions been made in different areas to facilitate the repatriation of stolen cultural property. On one hand, to prevent ancient cultural properties worldwide from rampant trafficking and theft, two significant international conventions: 1970 UNESCO Convention and 1995 UNIDROIT Convention, have been established, laying the international legal foundation of repatriation for stolen, illicitly imported and exported cultural properties (Huo, 2016).

On the other hand, dominating museum communities, such as the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), the Museum Association (MA), the International Council of Museums (ICOM), constantly developed code of ethics to regulate museums’ ethical practices in this period (Edson, 1997). These regulations clearly

indicated museums' responsibilities of avoid acquiring and exhibiting any items with questionable provenance (MA 2015, ICOM 2017). These measures, to some degree, provided legal and ethical supports to reduce illicit trafficking of cultural objects and to address repatriation of stolen cultural property.

However, in the context of China and Japan, challenges and difficulties are inevitable due to three major factors, and thus result in a paralysis in Sino-Japanese repatriation.

First of all, international conventions had limited effects in this peculiar context. Many researchers have analysed the complexity and insufficiency of these international conventions in many other cultural contexts, such as vague definitions of sensitive topics, less constraining force, lack of retroactivity and so on (Prott 2009, Klesmith 2014, Zhu 2014, Huo 2016). These are all applicable to the Chinese-Japanese context as well. Furthermore, international conventions could only apply to cases occurring after the acceptance time of participant countries. Due to serious loss of Chinese cultural properties, China joined the 1970 UNESCO Convention in 1989 and then joined the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention in 1997; but Japan only accepted the 1970 UNESCO Convention since September 2002, and still absent from the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention.⁷⁰ Under this circumstance, international conventional provisions are inappropriate to address Sino-Japanese repatriation for those cultural properties stolen or illegally exported from China before 2002.

Secondly, incomplete database in China and stolen cultural properties' untraceable provenance in the international art market also set up obstacles to

⁷⁰ The list of state members who signed the 1970 UNESCO Convention and 1995 UNIDROIT Convention is available at: <http://www.unesco.org/eri/la/convention.asp?KO=13039&language=E&order=alpha>; <http://www.unidroit.org/status-cp> [Accessed 20 December 2017].

claim repatriation. So far, China had already registered a few numbers of categories to the UNESCO red list and the INTERPOL database to prohibit illegal art trades, and now begins to establish a nationwide database for stolen cultural properties since 2017 (ICOM 2010, ICOM 2015, Xinhua Net 2017a). However, due to the incomputable amount of stolen Chinese cultural objects, the completion of an integrated database on stolen cultural properties is still in process.

In addition, a substantial amount of stolen art objects have complicated and secretive, sometimes even fake sales record history. On the one hand, art dealers always inclined to keep confidentiality of previous buyers (Burke, 1990), on the other hand, they made fake provenance to receive higher profit, which is harder to be verified (Bull and Gruber, 2014). All these made it more challenging for obtain clear evidence through investigation in the process of repatriation.

The last factor refers to the conflict of two different attitudes between China and Japan on Sino-Japanese repatriation, which is aggravating the situation. As an ancient country with abundant cultural heritage resources, China had experienced numerous cultural properties being stolen or illicitly exported worldwide (Huo, 2016). Chinese government, museums and the public had made considerable efforts together to pursue repatriation of these lost cultural properties, such as joining international conventions, signing various bilateral agreements, repurchasing Chinese antiquities from the international art market and so on (Wang 2010, Tu 2012). China and its people regard the fulfillment of repatriation as a crucial mission of reinforcing Chinese cultural identity and rejuvenating the Chinese nation (Sui, Wu, et al, 2015).

Yet, the Japanese government and museums have always held a cautious and evasive perspective to Chinese requests of repatriation. It is undeniable that Japan

has made both domestic and international attempts to shed its international reputation as the looter of cultural properties (Masaki, 2007). For example, it established a domestic law in 2006, *Promotion of International Cooperation for Protection of Cultural Heritage Abroad*⁷¹, in order to help to promote international cooperation on protecting and restoring cultural heritage in developing countries that suffered serious damage to their cultural heritage because of war and unpredictable natural disasters, such as Afghanistan and Iraq (Masaki 2007, Akagawa 2015). Internationally, to eliminate the criticism from international society, Japan had already founded the Trust for protecting world heritage within UNESCO earlier in 1989, as well as signing the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* in 1992 (Masaki 2007, Scott 2008).

Despite these great efforts to protect vulnerable cultural heritage in the world, as for Sino-Japanese repatriation, Japanese museums regard it as a very complicated issue that involves sensitive political and diplomatic issues.⁷² Hence, the current perspective that Japanese government and museums hold is ‘to keep being circumspect and wait for further development’, as Hiroaki Katayama indicated in the interview, which sets considerable barriers to the issue of Sino-Japanese repatriation.⁷³ Under this circumstance, the success of repatriation between State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH), the Shandong Museum (SM) and the Miho Museum (Miho) provides a reciprocal and ethical model to stimulate the development of Sino-Japanese repatriation by adopting the strategy of long-term loan.

5. 3 Analysing the Sino-Japanese repatriation case

⁷¹ See http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/culture/coop/unesco/c_heritage/coop.html [Accessed 12 July 2017].

⁷² Hiroaki Katayama, interview by the author, Japan, 12 May 2016.

⁷³ Ibid.

Inspired by the idea of long-term loan policy, this relatively successful case set a significant and replicable example to undertake Sino-Japanese repatriation by adopting negotiation and the strategy of long-term loan; as a result, both sides have the opportunity to engage with the cultural property. It provides a reciprocal and ethical model which full with potentiality to avoid deadlock. This part explores various experiences that abstracted from this repatriation case: using negotiation to address repatriation dispute and the implication of long-term loan, working outside the state museum system, as well as difficulties and dilemmas the Miho Museum faced after the repatriation.

5.3.1 Negotiating on the basis of mutual understanding to address repatriation dispute

In this case, one of the most effective approaches that both Chinese and Japanese participants agreed to adopt is negotiation. By establishing the foundation of mutual understanding and respect, Miho, SACH and SM reached a comparatively satisfactory result for all through continuous discourses.

In fact, negotiation is never a trouble-free process, due to highly sensitive repatriation disputes and conflicts of interest. However, it can be a proper way of solving conflicts and avoiding formal litigations (Cornu and Renold, 2010). Learning from this successful repatriation experience, several characters, to a great extent, facilitate the whole negotiation and repatriation process.

Firstly, both Chinese and Japanese participants held a shared interest in Buddhist culture, which they leveraged to help find common ground to start a negotiation. Moreover, unofficial conversations and the creation of participants' personal friendship before entering into a formal negotiation largely reduced all members' anxieties, and thus set up a foundation of mutual understanding. Furthermore, as

the Miho Museum was established and managed by the religious group, Shinji Shumeikai (Shumei), its religious principles largely impacted the museum. Thus, another peculiarity in this case is that the religious influence to the Miho Museum and mutual benevolence held by all parties help create an amicable atmosphere during the negotiation stage.

- *Find a common ground: a shared interest in Buddhist culture*

Due to frequent cultural and religious exchanges since ancient times, both Chinese and Japanese parties shared equal interests in Buddhist culture, as well as a common understanding of the cultural and religious significance of Buddhism and Buddhist sculptures. Dating back to the sixth century, there is a long history of religious exchange between ancient China and Japan (Kusano and Li, 2012). Since then, Buddhism had experienced a unique transformation to Japanese Buddhism with different sects, tightly impacted by Japanese cultural and daily life (Yang, 2008). Following by the widely embrace of Buddhism culture, Chinese and Japanese people shared a common passion for Buddhist sculptures, finding spiritual sustenance in collecting and worshiping them.

Because of the historical communication on Buddhist culture, Chinese Buddhist statues also have profoundly influenced the shape and decoration of early Japanese Buddhist sculptures in Asuka and Nara Period (538-794). The stolen Buddhist sculpture in this case is one of the kinds. Before Miho purchased this statue, they had already conducted related research due to the similarities between it and Asuka Buddhist statues in Japan.⁷⁴ Therefore, this common affection and research interests help both Chinese and Japanese sides find the common ground to accept negotiation to address the Sino-Japanese repatriation case.

⁷⁴ Hiroaki Katayama, interview by the author, Japan, 12 May 2016.

- *Unofficial communication helps facilitating a smooth negotiation*

In order to avoid any conflicts or a standoff during formal negotiation, SACH, SM and Miho carried out an unofficial communication to interchange each other's standpoints and concerns, and thus set up a foundation of mutual understanding.

Koyama, the director of Miho at that time, and Wang Limei, the Chinese direct negotiator, had several informal conversations before SACH officially claimed the repatriation towards the Miho Museum (Jiang, 2015). These conversations helped to build a bridge of friendship between negotiators, and left a good impression for each other. Chinese participants regarded Koyama as 'a very well educated person with respect to the Chinese classics' (Wang, 2008, p.138). Miho Museum also appreciated Wang for her considerable understanding of Miho's concerns and worries, and also the huge external pressures that Miho had confronted.⁷⁵ Because of this, Miho decided to be straight and frank to deal with this complicated issue through negotiation.⁷⁶ Compared with official discourse, these private conversations among participants are much more relaxed and easier to create a friendly personal relationship by understanding each other's uneasy situation, which could largely facilitate the formal negotiation, as well as the repatriation, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect.

- *Being benevolent in the process of repatriation*

In the case, the negotiation and repatriation process went smoothly because of the mutual benevolence held by both Chinese and Japanese parties. On the one hand, Chinese side understood Miho's difficult situation as a 'good faith holder' and acknowledged its improper management and protection of the statue since the beginning. On the other hand, profoundly impacted by the religious believes, the Miho Museum's willingness to engage with the investigation, negotiation and

⁷⁵ Hiroaki Katayama, interview by the author, Japan, 12 May 2016.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

repatriation processes played an essential role in facilitating the whole case.

Stolen Chinese cultural properties always passed through many hands of international antiquities dealers and auction houses (Lu, 2002). They usually ended up in private collectors who usually purchased antiquities through legitimate channels, usually on the open market, without knowing they were stolen, which is regarded as purchasers in good faith (Flynn, 2008). According to Wang (2008), the direct negotiator, Chinese government acknowledged that Miho Museum is the good faith holder of the stolen statue. She indicated explicitly that the Chinese side fully understood Miho's purchase through legal approach without knowing it was a stolen statue (Wang, 2008). Therefore, the Chinese sides' acknowledging and complimenting Miho's crucial efforts, to a large extent, reduced Miho's overcautious attitude during the negotiation stage.

What's more, the self-reflection from Chinese participants deepened the mutual understanding for all participants in the dialogue, acknowledging its own negligence of improper safekeeping. As a good faith purchaser, the Miho Museum had conducted a thorough investigation of this stolen statue to verify its original provenance. As Mario J. Roberty, Miho's Swiss-based lawyer stated, 'Miho had already carefully examined each acquisition with regard to its authenticity as well as to its legal provenance' before purchase, but found out that 'this object did not result registered with any available registry of stolen cultural relics'.⁷⁷ Indeed, after the statue was stolen, the Cultural Relics Management Committee of Boxing County attempted to report the loss to SACH, however, for some unknown reasons, the official report was lost, and hence, this lost statue was not submitted to either the Chinese government or the UNESCO database of stolen cultural

⁷⁷ It came from an email that Mario Roberty sent on 3 April 2000, to respond to an email from a Chinese NGO Cultural Heritage Watch who questioned the provenance of Miho's collections. See <http://www.museum-security.org/00/057.html> [Accessed 19 July 2016].

properties.⁷⁸

On Japanese side, Miho's willingness to engage with the whole repatriation process made a considerable contribution to this case. In fact, the Miho Museum has enough reasonable excuses to reject China's request of repatriation, and thus lead to a frozen situation of this repatriation, because Miho's ownership of the statue is under the protection of Japanese domestic legislation: The *Civil Code*⁷⁹ (Scott, 2008). In accordance with Articles 192, 193, 194, Miho, who purchased the stolen statue in an open market peacefully and openly, acquired the ownership legally if the original holder did not 'demand the recover of the thing from the possessor within two years from the time of the loss or theft' (Article 193). That is to say, Miho has enough reasonable excuses to reject China's request of repatriation, and then each party becomes bogged down in a very difficult situation of standoff. Under this circumstance, Chinese participants like You Shaoping⁸⁰, the deputy director of Shandong Cultural Relics Bureau, were also worried about Miho's response before contacting Miho Museum (Jiang, 2015).

However, guided by Shumei's specific religious believes, the Miho Museum was in a very friendly position to face the repatriation request. The Shumei's faith has deeply embedded in the museum, as it was one of the reasons to establish the museum, and thus thoroughly impact the Miho Museum's behaviours and its decision-making process. Actually, this museum was built to provide opportunities for visitors to 'experience elements of the Shumei philosophy at the museum' (Shumei International, 2017). According to the Shumei's philosophy, it encourages a profound respect for nature and persuades people to look at the

⁷⁸ Hiroaki Katayama, interview by the author, Japan, 12 May 2016.

⁷⁹ The *Civil Code* is the most fundamental legislation in the private law system in Japan, which entered into force in 1898. See <http://www.moj.go.jp/content/000056024.pdf> [Accessed 20 July 2016].

⁸⁰ You Shaoping was one of Chinese participants who became involved in the whole negotiation process. Information from You came from an interview conducted by a Chinese journalist, Jiang Dan, and was published online in 2015. See <http://jnsb.e23.cn/shtml/jnsb/20150602/1444599.shtml> [Accessed 20 July 2016].

whole world with considerable benevolence and obeisance.⁸¹ Followed by this principle, just as Wang Limei, one of the Chinese negotiators described, ‘the Miho Museum held a very open and affable attitude since the beginning of the negotiation process’ (Wang, 2008, p.140).

Shumei’s specific principles that the Miho Museum followed also helped it adopt a spiritually informed benevolent approach to deal with the political and diplomatic issues concerning ownership of the statue (Koyama, 2007). From Shumei’s philosophy, it also admires the construction of harmonious relations between people.⁸² For this point, a balanced and peaceful relationship on the basis of benevolence means more to the Miho Museum than a single object, in terms of repatriation. Miho’s supportive attitude, to a large extent, enhanced the mutual understanding and reduced the tension between all parties in the negotiation and decision-making processes.

Certainly, conflict of interests is inevitable in the process of negotiation. For instance, representatives from Japan and China had entered into arguments for the term ‘repatriation’ and the loan period. The Miho Museum insisted to use the term ‘transfer of ownership’ rather than ‘return’ to describe the change of ownership (Miho Museum 2001, Jiang 2015). This implied Miho’s innocent character as a good faith purchaser and its cautious perspective for the issue of repatriation. For this point, Chinese side made a compromise for this by understanding Miho’s different situation. Besides, both sides agreed to the loan period of seven-year, as compensation to the Miho Museum until its 10th anniversary exhibition in 2007 (Jiang, 2015). However, by using the method of negotiation, all parties made a breakthrough to address Sino-Japanese repatriation: establishing a long-lasting friendship with benevolence and mutual understanding. This could reduce the

⁸¹ For more information, see <https://www.shumei-na.org/living/index.html> [Accessed 22 July 2016].

⁸² Ibid.

conflicts of interest and finally introduce compromise to achieve reciprocity of all parties.

5.3.2 Learning from the strategy of long-term loan

By adopting the strategy of long-term loan, this case provides an ethically model to address Sino-Japanese repatriation. On one hand, as a result of compromise, all parties have minimised the conflict of interests after continuous negotiation, achieving mutually beneficial cooperation under the repatriation. On the other hand, it helps to construct a sustainable guardianship that not only shared by all participants in the case, but also occurred between museums and the public. Between museums, it is a renewed relationship that emerged from the process of long-term loan: all parties took the obligation of protection jointly, formed a mechanism of consultation, and thus established a long-lasting partnership. While between museums and the public, it enhanced the social influence of repatriation and increased public's awareness of protecting cultural properties and overseeing museums.

- Compromising for reciprocity through the strategy of long-term loan

Generally, the long-term loan is an approach reached through compromise, which is agreed on by all parties after a significant period of negotiation in the spirit of mutual recognition, compromise and cooperation (American Indian Ritual Object Repatriation Foundation, 1995). It is practical to deal with unsolvable problems related to national legislations or political issues, and to a certain degree satisfy the urgent needs of both participants in the process of repatriation.

Due to the specific context between China and Japan, Sino-Japanese repatriation should be conducted in a more meticulous way. Chinese people and society were terribly damaged by Japanese troops during the three main invasions of China

since the 19th century, while Japanese government holds a cautious attitude nowadays to face historical issues of the aggression against China (Betzler and Austin, 1997). Therefore, the conflict of two different attitudes and the cognitive differences posed considerable obstacles to establishing a stable and close relationship between China and Japan. The issue of repatriation thus became an extremely sensitive topic, which could easily lead to diplomatic and political disputes, meanwhile, provoke conflicts and radical national emotions in both sides (Meng 1992, Han 2012).

Under this circumstance, just as Bunker recommended, long-term ‘extended loan’ could probably be the most attractive method to reduce the conflicts (Bunker, 2005). It could broker a compromise to alleviate the tense relationship between each party in repatriation and to enhance mutual understanding through peaceful negotiation.

For Chinese side, it is a big success that the physical ownership of the stolen statue has been transferred to China after the repatriation. It provided an effective and flexible experience for further Sino-Japanese repatriation. This return redeems the blank history of this stolen Buddhist statue, reconstructing its original historical and cultural context (Jing, 2012). It reinforced both spiritual and physical connections between Chinese people and the statue. In return, for the Miho Museum, its visitors could still get access to the statue because of the long-term loan, as the statue will be exhibited in two countries commutatively. This largely mitigates Miho’s panic and sadness of permanently losing its private collection. It also reduces considerable external pressures that Miho Museum confronted since Chinese and Western media revealed the news, improving its international reputation as an ethical museum with a high level of morality.

- *A sustainable guardianship shared by Chinese and Japanese museums*

To accomplish long-term loan, participants who are engaged in the case of repatriation need to open themselves to negotiation and communication, forming the premise of mutual respect and understanding. Both parties should establish a new mechanism where both sides take the responsibility to guard and preserve the cultural property jointly. In this regard, the strategy of long-term loan could be treated as a concrete practice of shared guardianship, by which shared physical access can be achieved.

Because of the nature of ‘long-term’, this guardianship is renewable and sustainable. By recognising the common obligation of guarding the object, as the Shandong Museum (SM) and the Miho Museum (Miho) shared the access to the object, they have established a long-lasting partnership, which greatly relieved the embarrassing situation and created more cooperation between SM and Miho. An example is the collaborative Sino-Japanese loan exhibition, *Buddhist Sculptures from Shandong: Tracing the Source of Asuka Buddhist Imagery*, with Miho in cooperation with SM and many other related museums in China, in order to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Miho Museum in 2007 (Tan, 2007). According to the agreement, the statue will be loan to Miho every five years, which means we could expect more collaboration between these two museums.

In addition, although the statue is exhibiting in the Shandong Museum now, Miho was already tightly connected to the statue. As Neil Curtis (2010, p. 244) indicated, ‘exhibiting the absence of an object can have a powerful impact, no less than that achieved by displaying it’. This invisible effect implied not only the efforts Miho Museum had made in terms of repatriation, which became part of Miho’s significant history, but also represented an alert for the Miho Museum to increase its ethical awareness of self-regulating its policies on acquiring,

exhibiting and protecting collections.

What's more, this shared guardianship also helped form a mechanism of consultation from the Miho Museum to the State Administration of Cultural Heritage in China. This will be a potential approach to prevent Miho from purchasing any stolen Chinese cultural properties. Meanwhile, SACH in China also promised to adopt restricted measures to secure its cultural properties (Sims, 2001).

- *Share guardianship between museums and the public*

Guardianship not only exists within museums, but also occurs between museums and the public. Revealing by the Western media, this repatriation case had aroused widely attention not only in Chinese and Japanese society, but also in the international scale (Eckhom and Sims 2000, Sims 2001). It has brought a huge external pressures to the Miho Museum regarding to the repatriation, meanwhile, public perception of repatriation and its social influence has been dramatically increased. Hence, public scrutiny will be gradually established to oversee museums against further purchase of collections with ambiguous provenance, and being more self-reflected on its management policies.

Furthermore, guardianship is shared to the public when people's awareness of protecting cultural heritage is increased. The accomplishment of this Sino-Japanese repatriation also raised a positive discussion in the general public in terms of protecting cultural properties. During the public selection of key highlights of the collections of the Shandong Museum, the dramatic story behind this exquisite Bodhisattva sculpture attracted public appreciation in Shandong Province, and was thus appraised as the most impressive and moving cultural

property by millions of participants.⁸³ For Japanese side, some visitors were also impressed by the repatriation story when they were visiting the Miho Museum and its 10th anniversary exhibition. Compared with formal litigations, the improvement of public morality, although not as strict as legislation, could help to shape the guardianship between museums and the public, and vice versa.

5.3.3 Working outside the state museum system

Working outside the state museum system is another specific character of this relatively successful repatriation case. This model concerns a private museum; it is more relevant to other private museums, rather than state institutions. The Miho Museum, as a private museum, enjoys considerable freedom to work outside the Japanese national museum system, as well as the autonomy of its private collections. All of these factors play a crucial role in facilitating the negotiation process, and also provide great possibilities to achieve the repatriation.

As a private art museum, Miho, to some extent, is more independent and flexible than Japanese public museums, enjoying considerable autonomy in the running of the institution and the care and interpretation of collections. Additionally, working outside the public museum system helped to establish a freer and more unhindered situation during the negotiation process between Miho, SACH and SM.

Established by religious juridical persons, the Shumei Cultural Foundation of Miho fits the definition of private museum in the *Museum Act* in Japan: ‘the term ‘private museums’ shall mean those established by ...religious juridical persons or by other juridical persons prescribed by Cabinet Order in the preceding paragraph’ (Japanese Association of Museums, 2008, pp.12-13).

⁸³ See *Ten highlights of the Shandong Museum's collections* (山东博物馆十大镇馆之宝), 2015 <http://art.iqilu.com/bgsz/201510/12/678328.html> [Accessed 20 September 2016].

According to the *Museum Act* (Japanese Association of Museums, 2008), the local government and its Education Committee take the responsibility to supervise and manage public museums (Article 18, 19). Public museums also receive subsidies from the central government (Article 24). Compared with public museums, private museums in Japan have more freedom to make decisions. The Museum Act states that the local Education Committee requires reports from private museums only in some very specific activities, generally for research and statistic surveys (Article 27). The local government can provide guidance and support in such activities in terms of technologies, management or consultation (Article 27) and sometimes also provide small financial supports (Article 28). Nevertheless, the government does not directly manage private museums, which means they could operate with fewer constraints from the government.

Moreover, Miho has considerable autonomy over its private collections. As a private museum, Miho does not rely on public money and national taxation, but depends on a private foundation (Souren, 1997). In fact, before the establishment of Miho, Mihoko Koyama and Hiroko Koyama had already purchased around 300 ancient artifacts from European and American art markets through the art dealer Noriyoshi Horiuchi, under the financial support of the Foundation (Koyama 1997, Reif 1998). In addition, according to Katayama, Miho has not registered their private collections in the national catalogues of important cultural properties.⁸⁴ On this occasion, Miho faced less pressure and criticism from the Japanese government than a state museum might have when it made its decision to repatriate the Bodhisattva statue to China.⁸⁵ As Katayama states, the Agency of Cultural Affairs in Japan did not publicly critique this repatriation case.⁸⁶ Being a

⁸⁴ Hiroaki Katayama, interview by the author, Japan, 12 May 2016.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

private museum indeed set up a favourable situation for the repatriation processes in this case.

5.3.4 Difficulties and dilemmas the Miho Museum faced after the repatriation

It is never easy to deal with the complex issue of repatriation. There are still many difficulties and worries from the Miho Museum. During and after the case, Miho not only suffered enormous external pressures, but also found it very difficult to maintain the new relationship with Shandong Museum (SM) under such a precarious situation. These pressures did not come from the state but from other sources. The Miho Museum (Miho) has to deal with enormous social pressures from domestic, international media, museums, scholars and the public. These external pressures to some extent impelled the Miho Museum to repatriate the statue to China, however, also dragged Miho into a very sensitive and embarrassing condition to identify with the issue of repatriation.

- Influenced by Japan's cautious attitude

In this case, the Miho Museum had suffered various criticisms from Japanese media. The researcher could hardly find any primary sources online, but confirmed by Katayama, who is the current curator in Miho Museum, he acknowledged that although Japanese public seemed not to have much negative reflection, the Japanese media nowadays still feels that it is not necessary to return the statue.⁸⁷ Moreover, some journalists even claimed that Miho should apologise to the public because this case incited panic in domestic museums in Japan.⁸⁸ This comment strongly implied the extreme cautious attitude held by major state museums as the mainstream perspective in Japan.

⁸⁷ Hiroaki Katayama, interview by the author, Japan, 12 May 2016.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Under this cautious circumstance, Miho itself also reduced the intensity of promotion on this repatriation case. According to current research, there is only one report could be viewed in Miho's official website, as well as one piece of documentary: *The Way of the Stolen Beauty*, in the NHK Education special issue, which had broadcasted on October 23, 2001 (re-broadcasted on December 12, 2001)⁸⁹ (Miho Museum, 2001). Moreover, during Miho's 10th anniversary exhibition in 2007, it published a catalogue contained photos and general description of the stolen statue (Miho Museum, 2007). However, none of these publications fully introduced the whole story of the statue, or the process of the Sino-Japanese repatriation, but inclined to emphasis on Miho's legal ownership of the statue and its benevolence to the repatriation as a good faith holder. The reason might be the influence of Japan's cautious attitude for repatriation, or Miho's attempts to avoid more social pressures and repatriation requests from other countries.

- *Criticisms from the international society*

Miho suffered great stresses not only from Japan, but also from international media and scholars. Before the Chinese government became involved to the case, *The New York Times* had already reported that Miho collected the stolen Chinese Buddhist sculpture before the negotiation process was launched, which raised wide attention from the Western media and society since then (Eckholm and Sims 2000, Doole 2000, Sims 2001). Although Miho had already made efforts to maintain its international reputation by accomplishing this Sino-Japanese repatriation, it still faced more queries to its collections with questionable provenance. Hence, it was still criticised by some Western scholars such as Neil Brodie and Colin Renfrew. Brodie regarded Miho as a museum that was 'happy to acquire material without provenance through dubious channels' (Brodie, 2006, p.

⁸⁹ For more information, see [http://ken.image.coocan.jp/sub15.html#MIHO MUSEUM](http://ken.image.coocan.jp/sub15.html#MIHO_MUSEUM) の石造菩薩立像. [Accessed 22 September 2016].

55), as well as Renfrew, who pointed out that Miho Museum flouted the international conventions and its own responsibilities (Gill, 2010).

What is more, Miho was confronted with requests of repatriation from countries like Italy, which also caused it considerable worries. In early 2007, Italian authorities alleged that around 50 pieces of cultural objects in Miho were stolen cultural properties that had been illegally exported from Italy (Masaki 2007, Scott 2008). It was suspected that Noriyoshi Horiuchi⁹⁰, the main art intermediary for Miho, purchased these objects with unclear provenance from an arrested Italian antiquities dealer Gianfranco Becchina⁹¹ (Mazur 2006, Watson and Todeschini 2006, Gill 2009). Later on, Italian governments requested repatriation of these cultural properties from Miho (McCurry 2007, Scott 2008). So far, there has been no further information from the media⁹². Katayama, on behalf of Miho, responded publicly that ‘he believed that Miho’s collection does not include anything that was dug up illegally’, and requested more evidence (McCurry, 2007). However, this brought more pressures to Miho from the international public and scholarly attention, and to some extent had a negative impact on Miho’s international and ethical reputation.

- Difficult to maintain the renewed relationship between China and Japan

As a private museum, although Miho has autonomy to manage its private collections in terms of repatriation, it is realistic but understandable that Miho has

⁹⁰ Noriyoshi Horiuchi, the main art dealer for Miho Museum, had a close relationship with Gianfranco Becchina, who was accused of organizing illegal excavations of antiquities from Italy. Horiuchi himself also became involved in the illegal trafficking of Italian cultural properties in 2008. For more information, see: <http://traffickingculture.org/encyclopedia/case-studies/operation-andromeda/> [Accessed 23 July 2016].

⁹¹ According to Gianfranco Becchina’s illegal transactions of stolen and illicit trafficking cultural properties, Italian governments had already successfully repatriated over 120 pieces of Italian cultural properties from several museums in the U.S such as the Getty museum. For more information, see: <http://www.museum-security.org/2010/04/looting-matters-miho-museum-italy/> [Accessed 23 July 2016]; <http://traffickingculture.org/encyclopedia/case-studies/gianfranco-becchina/> [Accessed 23 July 2016].

⁹² The latest news is from a blog posted in 30 March 2010 by David Gill, a reminder of the unresolved case with the Miho Museum. See <http://lootingmatters.blogspot.co.uk/2010/03/miho-museum-time-to-resolve-its-dispute.html> [Accessed 23 July 2016].

the fear of the grand loss of its private collections. Under the circumstances, Miho held more uncertainties to loan their non-Japanese collections to China after the repatriation case. It even holds a very cautious point of view of international exchange exhibitions. As Katayama explained in the interview:

After returning the Bodhisattva sculpture to China, Miho's reputation might be increased much in China, but seemed not to have too much social influence domestically in Japan. Maybe during that period, it more or less had some, however, public attention faded away as time passed by. The museum itself appeared to have less positive benefit than expected. Through this Sino-Japanese repatriation case, Miho Museum became more cautious to engage in international communication in terms of cultural properties.⁹³

In fact, during this Sino-Japanese repatriation process, Miho had built a friendly relationship with SACH and SM, organising a loan exhibition with SM, which indeed provided a strong potential model of Sino-Japanese repatriation. However, because of these worries and concerns, Miho did not conduct exchange exhibitions to strengthen the renewal relationship with SM afterwards.

Moreover, China hasn't established any relative legislation to encourage international exchange of sensitive cultural properties and to decrease the risks such as 'execution, provisional seizure and provisional disposition' of loaned cultural properties for international exhibitions (Huo 2016, House of Representative 2011, p. 1). In 2011, the House of Representatives in Japan passed the *Act on Facilitation for Exhibiting Overseas Works of Art, etc. to the Public* in Japan, which largely reduced non-Japanese countries' worry of losing its cultural properties during loan exhibition period. In order to facilitate international cultural

⁹³ Hiroaki Katayama, interview by the author, Japan, 12 May 2016.

exchange of highly valuable cultural objects, this issue still needs further consideration in both cultural and legal fields.

5.4 Some inspirations after the repatriation

This case plays a role of a catalyst in terms of Sino-Japanese repatriation. Its experience could not be perfectly replicated, either because it involves a Japanese private museum, or its religious background; however, the model of sharing physical access to cultural heritage via long-term loan is full of potentiality and sustainability, which could be referenced by any further repatriation cases. Here listed several after-repatriation considerations.

First of all, according to the bilateral agreement in this case, the repatriated sculpture would be on loan to the Miho museum every five years. Hence, it should have created more opportunities for further cooperation. Until now, there is only one cooperated exhibition being held in the Miho Museum during its 10th anniversary. Learning from the Italy-Met repatriation, it might be a good idea that Chinese museums begin to make efforts and establish more loan exhibition in the Miho Museum to sustain the existing partnership.

Secondly, the success of this repatriation case enabled all museums and other cultural institutions to reexamine current collections and self-reflect their current policies of purchasing collections. Not only Miho museum, but also many renowned museums in the world have also faced requests of repatriation because of those suspect items with ambiguous provenance (Bettelheim and Adams, 2007). Museums began to place more importance on the transparency of collections and their context, such as objects' provenance and the institution's ethics of acquisition (Albertson, 2016). As Aminateddoleh (2014, p. 780) proposed, museums should establish a 'heightened scrutiny system and acquisition

procedure that takes into consideration the country of origin and question the provenance’.

Furthermore, this self-reflection within museums and the shared guardianship between museums could help to set up a deterrent from the pilferage and illicit transaction of cultural properties. Certainly, it is impossible to cease the illegal trade of cultural properties with unclear provenance rapidly and completely. However, it to some degree restrains museums from purchasing questionable cultural objects, stimulates museums of the source nations to be more responsible for protecting their collections, and thus helps museums on both sides to act more ethically.

5.5 Conclusion

In this Sino-Japanese repatriation case, both sides had a comparatively happy ending: China successfully achieved the repatriation of this stolen statue, reconstructed its original historical and cultural context, and established a long-lasting shared guardianship with Miho. In the meantime, Miho came out of the embarrassing situation of collecting stolen cultural properties to a certain degree, maintained its international reputation as a private ethical museum, and created a harmonious friendship with Shandong Museum.

In the context of China and Japan, the model of the model of sharing physical access via long-term loan the cultural property has its potentialities and challenges. Relying on the power of negotiation, external pressures and ethics, it could be regarded as an alternative way to request cultural objects through political and diplomatic channels. On the one hand, Chinese museums could reflect on their omission and neglect, and thus pay more attention to protecting their cultural properties. On the other hand, Japanese museums need to behave more ethically

when they face heavy external social pressures and international criticisms, for example, acknowledging the provenance of the questionable object, consulting the Chinese cultural department before any new purchases of Chinese artifacts, and so on. Adopting this ethical approach, accepting compromise, could then reduce conflicts of interests for both parties on the basis of mutual understanding and respect, and thus could achieve the ideal situation where ‘museums can see repatriation not as a problem which they should avoid ‘being dragged into’ but as a welcome and important part of their role’ (Neil, 2006, p. 126).

However, this Sino-Japanese repatriation case only sees comparative success due to its specific objective factors, which means there still some issues that need further discussion and consideration. First of all, because of the nature of Miho Museum as a private Japanese museum, it enjoys considerable freedom to work outside the Japanese national museum system, as well as the autonomy of its private collections. All of these factors play a crucial role in building a more harmonious atmosphere for negotiation, and also provide great possibilities to achieve the repatriation. Yet, in terms of Sino-Japanese repatriation in which the Japanese national museum would be involved, there are many other issues with high sensitivities to consider, such as Japanese domestic laws, the cautious attitude of the Japanese government, absence from the 1995 UNIDROIT Convention, political sensitivities, tense diplomatic relations between China and Japan and so on.

Moreover, the direct participants from the Chinese side are the Chinese State Administration of Culture Heritage and Shandong Museum. As the official cultural department of the Chinese central government, it might to some extent impact Miho Museum’s decision during the negotiation process. Besides, under huge external pressures internationally and more requests from other countries

like Italy, it is also formidable to alleviate Miho and other Japanese museums' panic and help them step out of the dilemma. For this point, it also needs further consideration and efforts from both sides to maintain the established relationship in the long term.

Chapter Six

Sharing digital access to cultural heritage:

International Dunhuang Project

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the model of sharing digital access to Dunhuang Material through the International Dunhuang Project (IDP) and the idea of digital repatriation in the context of China. By studying the specific case of IDP, I will argue that although there are still many worries and disputes, international digitisation projects such as IDP provide a good model of digital repatriation to China. An ethical approach is to consider the digital repatriation of ancient manuscripts. Through compromise between China and other members of the project, such an approach can result in a win-win relationship.

According to UNESCO, there are approximately 160 million cultural relics that have left China, their country of origin, and these have been collected by more than two hundred museums around the world (Xiang, 2007). In terms of Sino-Japanese repatriation, 15,245 cultural relics were looted by Japanese troops from 1894 to 1949, including a large number of oracle bones, jades, bronzes, pottery, ceramics, silks, paintings, sculptures and ancient manuscripts and books (Zhang, 2012). However, the total number is far more than that. Private collectors, temples, libraries and museums in Japan still hold a considerable amount of Chinese cultural properties with unclear provenance, but they have not published a catalogue of this. With this limitation, it is not realistic to repatriate all of this lost cultural property.

Yet, with the rapid development of Internet and computer technologies, digitisation of collections is receiving much attention within museums, libraries, galleries and other cultural institutions (Ronchi 2009, Bautista, 2014). In terms of repatriation, digitisation could also play an important role to protect and share digitised images of this lost cultural property in this digital age. The development of International Dunhuang Project has indeed provided a good example of establishing an international online database which contains Dunhuang manuscripts and scrolls scattered all over the world, and has thus triggered the concept of digital repatriation in the context of China.

International Dunhuang Project (IDP) is an international collaborative project of digitisation that mainly focuses on the Dunhuang manuscripts found in the Library Cave in Dunhuang Mogao Caves, Gansu Province in Northwest China. These Dunhuang materials were sold by Daoist monk Wang Yuanlu during Western and Japanese expeditions in the 1900s, and then they dispersed from Dunhuang to libraries and museums worldwide (Beasley and Kail, 2007). With continuous efforts since 1993, IDP has made remarkable achievements: it has the IDP online database and close collaborative relationships among seven main countries: the United Kingdom, China, Japan, France, Germany, Russia and South Korea. According to this project, the concept of digital repatriation has begun to arouse more and more scholarly attention in China, in terms of repatriation.

To have a better understanding of International Dunhuang Project as a digital repatriation case in the context of China and Japan, this paper is divided into four parts: the introduction, overview of IDP, data analysis and conclusion. The first part briefly introduces the argument and structure of this chapter, which could provide a general idea to readers; the second part is the overview of the project's historical background, the purpose, current development, and the reason why the

researcher choose IDP as case study. After that, the researcher analyses data gained from the fieldwork and previous literature review through four aspects: digitisation and online database, international cooperation, digital repatriation in the context of China and a win-win situation reached through compromise. Based on the detailed analysis of the development of IDP Chinese and Japanese branches, this section also discusses the practical and ethical implications of IDP, and thus explores the potentiality and limitation of digital repatriation in China. The conclusion firstly summarises the whole chapter, attempting to indicate a potential but realistic model of Sino-Japanese repatriation, stimulated by International Dunhuang Project.

6.2 Overview of International Dunhuang Project (IDP)

6.2.1 The significance of Dunhuang materials

International Dunhuang Project mainly focuses on the digitisation of scattered Dunhuang materials around the world. As the website of IDP indicates, it refers to those ‘manuscripts, paintings, textiles and artefacts from Dunhuang and archaeological sites of the Eastern Silk Road’.⁹⁴ The main body of Dunhuang materials is over 50,000 manuscripts and paintings that were found in the Library Cave (Li, 1996). These Dunhuang materials recorded the development of politics, economy, culture and religion in ancient Dunhuang from the 4th to 13th century, and thus play an important role to research local culture, and the cultural and religious exchange between China and central Asia, as well as the ancient Silk Road.

First of all, because of the pivotal geographical location, Dunhuang was one of the most essential cities on the ancient Silk Road, linking the ancient China to Central Asia and Europe. The most famous Mogao Caves in Dunhuang experienced

⁹⁴ See International Dunhuang Project, 2016, <http://idp.bl.uk/idp.a4d> [Accessed 30 August 2016].

continuous excavation and Buddhist pilgrimage from the 4th to 14th century. These Dunhuang materials are witnesses of this period of history.

The Mogao Caves are located in Gansu Province, Northwest China. UNESCO declared it as one of the World Heritage Sites in 1987 (UNESCO, 2016). It is more than 1.6 km in length. Nowadays, 492 cells and caves still contain beautiful murals and sculptures, exhibiting the splendid 1,000 years of Buddhist art. Ancient Dunhuang manuscripts were placed and sealed in the No.17 Cave, also called 'the Library Cave'. In fact, the reason why they were hidden in the Library Cave is still unclear and many assumptions have been made (Tan 1988, Liu 2000, Sha 2006). Not until the monk Wang Yuanlu found this sealed cave by accident did the world begin to know Dunhuang materials and the ancient Buddhist culture they represented.

Additionally, these manuscripts and paintings themselves are very precious, not only because of the historical significance they embodied, but they could also help to facilitate research in terms of cultural and religious exchanges, Buddhism, and even sciences. The total amount of these the Dunhuang materials is no less than 50,000 pieces, which were written in variety of languages: over 40,000 pieces were written in Chinese, while the rest were in different languages such as Tibetan, Khotanese, Kuchean, Sanskrit, Uighur and others (Imaeda, 2008). This signifies cultural diversity and frequent communication in that period. Moreover, these materials also provide effective evidence to related research. Around 90% of the Chinese manuscripts are Buddhist scripts, and 10% are secular documents, including records of medicine, mathematics, geography, literature, astronomy and other subjects (Liu, 2002).

Dunhuang materials are also evidence of how they left their country of origin,

China, as well as the development of Dunhuang Studies in the world since the early twentieth century. With expeditions and extensive excavations from various countries in the twentieth century, valuable manuscripts, scrolls, textiles, paintings and artefacts were dispersed from Dunhuang to libraries and museums worldwide (Beasley and Kail, 2007). The ways these archaeologists purchased Dunhuang manuscripts were unethical and regrettable, which I will introduce in the next part. Their works indeed promote ancient Dunhuang culture and Buddhist art to the world, but these materials still could play a very important role in healing Chinese people and helping the world to reconsider the past.

6.2.2 Western and Japanese archaeological expeditions

These Western and Japanese members of archaeological expeditions purchased Dunhuang materials in the Library cave and thus caused a huge loss of these valuable manuscripts to Dunhuang regrettably. However, I cannot deny that these archaeological expeditions, to a large extent, helped to declare the significance of Dunhuang materials to the world, and also helped to promote ancient Dunhuang culture and Dunhuang Studies to the world.

These Western and Japanese expeditions came to Dunhuang several times; each time they bought a large number of manuscripts from the monk. The most famous archaeologist was Sir Marc Aurel Stein, who played an essential role in discovering these hidden Dunhuang materials. He was the first archaeologist who came to Dunhuang in 1907, and his discovery even inspired other French, Japanese, American, and even Chinese scholars and explorers (Zhao and Li, 2011). He went to Dunhuang twice. As he himself described, he purchased a total of 29 cases, including over 9,000 pieces of manuscripts and over 500 paintings, but only paid 200 Chinese taels the first time; later, in 1914, he brought over 600 pieces, paying 500 taels (Stein 1936, Bu 2000). All of these materials entered the

Stein collection, which is in the British Library nowadays.

The second person was a famous French Sinologist and archaeologist, named Paul Pelliot. He came to Dunhuang only one year after Stein. He knew very much about Chinese culture and understood the value of those manuscripts in the Library cave. After examining the whole cave for three months, he purchased more than 6,000 manuscripts in Chinese and other languages, and over 200 paintings, as well as other artefacts from the monk (Geng 2005, Liu 2000). These materials are located in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France now as Pelliot's collection.

Pelliot actually made great contributions to Dunhuang Studies. After Pelliot's expedition, Chinese scholars and the Qing government recognised the value and significance of these Dunhuang materials in the cave. They decided to buy the rest of the manuscripts from Wang Yuanlu (Geng, 2005). Over 6,000 pieces were sent to the National library of China and became their present day collections.

What is more, Stein and Pelliot's expeditions encouraged scholars and archaeologists in other countries. For example, Japanese expeditions went to Dunhuang twice between 1911 and 1912 (Otani, 1998). These expeditions were sponsored by Otani Kozui, a famous Buddhist in Japan (Imaeda, 2008). They spent eight weeks in Dunhuang and bought those hidden documents from the Monk and other residents near the cave (Zhao and Li, 2011). Actually, the exact amount is still unclear. Many manuscripts have since been bought by private collectors, where they remain nowadays. According to Zhao and Li's research, the Ryokoku University owns around 480 pieces (Zhao and Li, 2011).

There are also many archaeologists from Russia and America who went to

Dunhuang. According to all of these Western and Japanese expeditions, they gained a large amount of Dunhuang materials by paying very little. However, in terms of repatriation, it is very hard to define such a transaction as an illegal act, as both sides agreed to the final price of the transaction. For example, in Stein's dairy, he described that 'the monk was very satisfied with the price' (Stein, 1936, p. 148). In addition, neither the Chinese law nor the international conventions are suitable in this case. This is because the earliest domestic law in China was issued in 1982 (Murou, 2015), which is much later than the case. Japan signed UNESCO international conventions later than the case as well. Therefore, the vague definition of this kind of transaction and the lack of effective legislation makes the repatriation of Dunhuang materials more complex in practice.

Although more and more Chinese scholars have already acknowledged the irresponsibility and carelessness of the Qing government and their officials (Liu 2002, Zhao and Li 2011), Chinese people still feel the pain of these losses, and thus have strong national emotions to the issue of repatriation of these materials. This also makes the repatriation very complicated and difficult. However, Chinese people's wish for all of these materials to be repatriated to China is also unrealistic. In this chapter, I will argue later that International Dunhuang Project and the idea of digital repatriation could be a more ethical, effective and influential way to share, protect, and research these scattered Dunhuang materials, and thus form a win-win situation among all of the parties in the project.

6.2.3 Establishment and development of International Dunhuang Project (IDP)

- Establishment

The digitisation of Dunhuang culture is developing quite comprehensively, and covers three main aspects: manuscripts and textiles, Dunhuang murals and statues,

and Dunhuang caves. As introduced above, the IDP project is an international cooperative project of digitisation that mainly focuses on those manuscripts, scrolls, paintings and other types of documents found in the Library Cave, and other archives related to the cave and the Silk Road as well. In this project, the British Library cooperated with seven major cultural institutions from six countries, including two Chinese branches: the National Library of China (IDP Beijing), which joined it in 2001, and the Dunhuang Research Academy (IDP Dunhuang), which has participated since 2007, and one Japanese branch: Ryukoku University (IDP Japan), which has taken part in it since 2006.

The official website of this project was opened in 1998 (Beasley and Kail, 2007), which established an online international database of Dunhuang materials with efforts of all members, and made them ‘freely available on the Internet in a variety of languages’.⁹⁵ This database is open to the public from schoolchildren to scholars without any charges, as long as it is used for research and education only (Whitfield, 1997).

Apart from the online database, IDP also organises an international conference every two years, encouraging scholars from the international partners to get together to discuss and share the latest research and technologies. In addition, based on IDP, the British Library and other IDP branches have always designed various activities and exhibitions for the general public to improve their awareness of protecting Dunhuang culture (IDP, 2015).

- Current development

According to the website (<http://idp.bl.uk>) and ten semi-structured interviews (seven were conducted in China, including directors, participants and scholars in

⁹⁵ See International Dunhuang Project, 2016, <http://idp.bl.uk/idp.a4d> [Accessed 10 September 2016].

the National Library of China and the Dunhuang Research Academy; the others were two interviews with Japanese informants in the Ryukoku University and one interview with a Chinese scholar who works in this university). Chinese branches are developing and continue to upload images, whilst the Japanese branch paused its work for the IDP project in 2010.⁹⁶ However, it is promising to see that a new project, the Digital Archive Research Center (DARC), has been processed by the Ryukoku University according to the latest update of the IDP newsletter in 2017 (IDP, 2017).

In China, the National Library of China (IDP Beijing) holds the largest amount of Dunhuang materials: more than 16,000 pieces of Dunhuang materials, including manuscripts, scrolls and old photos. The small eight-person group in IDP Beijing keeps uploading around 400 pictures per week to the IDP website, in compliance with the strict standards of the British Library.⁹⁷ The Dunhuang Research Academy (IDP Dunhuang) is located in Dunhuang, so it has geographic advantages to researching Dunhuang culture. The digitising process of 400 pieces of Dunhuang materials in IDP Dunhuang has already been finished, and they have been uploaded to the database.

Meanwhile, these two institutions are independent organisations, which have also made additional efforts to build their own database for preserving and sharing Dunhuang culture. For example, IDP Dunhuang started to collaborate with the Mellon Foundation and the Getty Protection Institution in the U.S. in the 1980s, making attempts to establish a digital database of Dunhuang murals and caves.⁹⁸

In Japan, the digitisation of Dunhuang materials collected by the Ryokoku

⁹⁶ Mitani Mazumi, interview by the author, Japan, 20 May 2016.

⁹⁷ Liu Bo, interview by the author, China, 15 March 2016.

⁹⁸ Director G, interview by the author, China, 12 April 2016.

University paused since 2010.⁹⁹ This Japanese IDP branch have already been uploaded 17,364 digitised images to the website.¹⁰⁰ Further cooperation depends on further communication between the Ryokoku University and the British Library.¹⁰¹

Although IDP is currently paused, Japanese scholars have never stopped their efforts to research Dunhuang and Dunhuang materials. For instance, Mitani Masumi, the professor in the International Cultural Department, Ryokoku University, he established a positive relationship with Lushun Museum by his thirty visits, for his research on non-Chinese Dunhuang materials held in Lushun Museum.¹⁰² Moreover, according to Mitani, who has attended IDP directly, ‘it is still promising that IDP Japan would possibly have more updates in the future, following more discussions with the British Library’.¹⁰³

This part only introduces the current situation of Chinese and Japanese IDP branches because this research will mainly discuss International Dunhuang Project and the idea of digital repatriation in the context of China and Japan. Yet, it does not mean other IDP branches have fewer achievements or will stop their work. In fact, IDP has already been developing smoothly for 23 years with the common efforts of all of the international participants. It has provided a new idea of sharing digital data among different partners, and thus proposed the concept of digital repatriation to China, which is worth studying in terms of Sino-Japanese repatriation.

6.3 From digitisation to digital repatriation

The last section introduced the historical background of Dunhuang and Dunhuang

⁹⁹ Mitani Mazumi, interview by the author, Japan, 20 May 2016.

¹⁰⁰ See <http://idp.bl.uk/> [Accessed 16 December 2018].

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

materials, as well as the development of International Dunhuang Project, which could provide a general understanding of the project. This part attempts to explore a conceptual transformation through the case: from simple digitisation to digital repatriation.

6.3.1 A shared international online database of Dunhuang materials

In the present digital age, computer-based technologies require frequent updates. Different types of digital devices and multimedia are also appearing increasingly. With this development, digitised technologies are widely applied to museums, galleries and libraries, in terms of digitisation of their collections, the application of multimedia, or the interaction with audiences, and thus worldwide scholarly attention has been attracted to the digitisation of cultural heritage (Cameron 2007, Brown 2007, Malpas 2008, Parry 2010, Ronchi 2009). Through digitisation, the international digitisation project provides a platform for various museums, libraries, research institutions, as well as researchers and the public to gain access to rich materials and collections from different countries.

International Dunhuang Project (IDP) is not just a project that is focused on the technical works of digitisation; the advantages of IDP are apparent and have been accepted widely. The international online database that IDP established can help preserve original items, share digital images between members, benefit related research, encourage more exhibitions and activities, and provide more opportunities for public engagement and more international cooperative projects.

- Unified standards of digitised images and document retrieval

In fact, before the IDP, efforts to replicate Dunhuang materials through transcriptions and photos had already been taking place since the 1930s (Rong, 2013). The director of the National Library of China at that time, Yuan Tongli,

realised that it was not enough to study Dunhuang culture only with photos supplied by Paul Pelliot (Wang and Yao, 2015). Since then, exchange librarians, such as Wang Chongming and Xiangda, went to the British Library and Bibliothèque Nationale de France to read and transcribe those dispersed Dunhuang materials. Until the 1960s, with the development of technology, microfilms and other facsimile forms were used and exchanged widely between China, UK and France for research, but many characteristics were still too vague to interpret and research due to the poor quality (Rong, 2013).

Yet, with the development of computer-based technologies, old photos and microfilms can be updated with digitised images with higher definition. IDP then provides a good model for this. In this project, the British Library designed a 4D database with a series of strict standards for the size, definition, uploaded standard, metadata and other elements.¹⁰⁴ As the director of IDP Beijing stated, ‘one uploaded photo should contain three different definitions, the common definition of images uploaded to the database is 90 dpi, which would not be appropriate for commercial use, but is already enough for academic use. Photos with a higher definition can be requested separately for a fee’.¹⁰⁵ Unified standards of digitised images and continuing to provide high quality photos are the basis of establishing an international online database.

In addition, Dunhuang materials are preserved in museums and libraries around the world. Every institution has a unique system to retrieve and manage collections. Due to different languages and database systems, it is difficult for foreign researchers to search for what they want. Therefore, it is very necessary to set up a whole series of strict standards and catalogues to code images from

¹⁰⁴ For more information regarding the technical issues that arose as part of the International Dunhuang Project, see <http://idp.bl.uk/pages/technical.a4d#Database> [Accessed 16 December 2018]. See also <http://idp.bl.uk/downloads/IDPDatabase.pdf> [Accessed 16 December 2018].

¹⁰⁵ Liu Bo, interview by the author, China, 15 March 2016.

different institutions (Wu, 2011), which could make it easier to retrieve related scattered materials of the same standards within one online database. In fact, although the British Library designed and unified upload standards for IDP, it still needs further improvements. The general public still finds it difficult to browse and search for materials unless they know the exact name and code number.¹⁰⁶

- Easy to access and promote the development of related research

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Dunhuang materials are dispersed in many museums and libraries in the world. The National Library of China, the British Library, Bibliothèque Nationale de France and the Institute of Oriental Studies, St. Petersburg are the four major institutions that hold around 40,000 pieces, with smaller holdings elsewhere (Whitfield, 2005). For this reason, building IDP, an international online database, provides more opportunities to access the digitised collections than the physical collections (Singh and Blake, 2012). With more access to these materials in the digital domain, it indeed gives scholars greater opportunities to browse, download and analyse digital photos with high definition and the specific information they carry.

Reading original pieces is very important for research, as there are still nuances between original manuscripts and digitised photos. However, these ancient pieces are too fragile and vulnerable for repetitive reviews. Scholars will not be able to get permission from different institutions easily either. They also cannot afford the high cost of these travels. Therefore, digitised photos with higher definition could help reduce the damage and protect the original documents. Besides, it also helps to reduce a large amount of traveling expenses, and thus makes it much more convenient and cheaper for international scholars to access them online rather than going abroad.

¹⁰⁶ Han Chunping, interview by the author, China, 29 March 2016.

Dunhuang materials do not always refer to complete manuscripts, scrolls, or paintings; it also refers to numerous small pieces, which carry several sentences or half of one painting. One of the biggest difficulties for researchers who study Dunhuang is that it is impossible for them to take out two pieces from two different museums for their research. Instead, these pieces are much easier to deal with by computer programs than original pieces that are already scattered worldwide. This web-based image-sharing platform of IDP actually provides a more convenient and feasible way to compare, contrast and put together pieces of the Dunhuang manuscripts and murals that were distributed over the world in research, as Figure 6.1 shows below. Furthermore, this platform also puts many useful links to other sources and information that could help users to expand their research more quickly and easily.

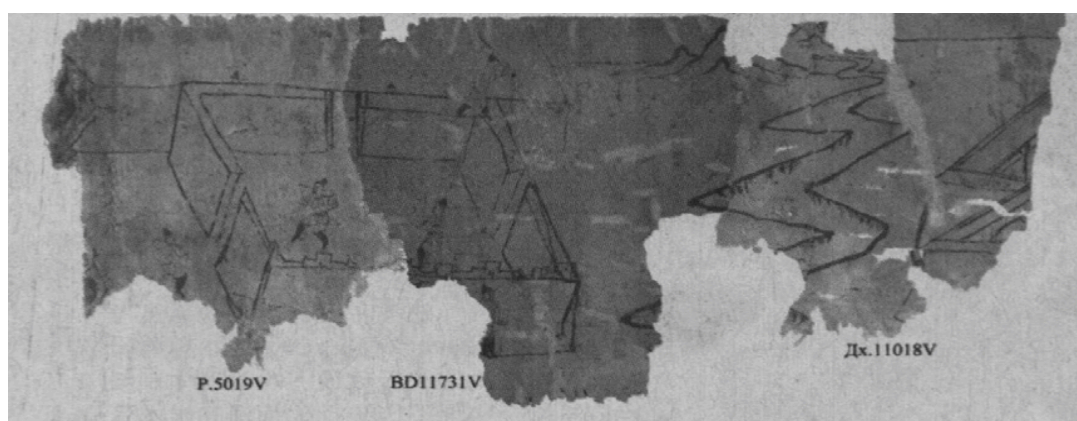


Figure 6.1. One painting consists of three different pieces in three countries¹⁰⁷

- Facilitate exhibitions and educational activities

The premier target for IDP is ‘to provide resources to all levels of users from schoolchildren to post-doctoral researchers’ (Beasley and Kail, 2007). For

¹⁰⁷ Image downloaded from Zhang Y.Q. (2016) ‘敦煌残卷缀合：拼接撕裂的丝绸之路 (The recombination of the fragments of Dunhuang manuscripts: Rebuilding the ancient Silk Road)’, *Chinese Social Science Weekly*, 24 May, pp. 3.

researchers, it could provide high definition photos and promote research; while for the general public and laymen, IDP also supplies various attractive events and activities in branches such as exhibitions and seminars without losing academic significance. These exhibitions and activities could help to improve public awareness of protecting Dunhuang materials and encourage their engagement in learning Dunhuang culture.

However, as discussed above, it is difficult to bring fragile manuscripts from different museums and exhibit them. Digital images can solve this problem. Due to the reusability and removability of digital images, museums and libraries can hold exhibitions by using photos, making duplicates, applying virtual reality technologies to revitalise ancient Dunhuang and other methods. Figure 6.2 is a good example. It shows a duplicate of a very important Dunhuang manuscript about ancient medicine. The original manuscript actually consists of two pieces: one in China and another in Japan, but the duplicate makes it possible to exhibit them together as a whole.



Figure 6.2. A duplicate of a Dunhuang manuscript in exhibition

- Encourage user engagement

As an international online database, IDP shares all resources with other parties and the public worldwide. The project encourages active engagement by all users and attempts to establish a dynamic relationship amongst them. On one hand, by designing events and activities as discussed above, IDP attempts to encourage more engagement of the general public. On the other hand, the IDP has never forgotten the importance of users' reviews and complaints since the beginning.

As the director of IDP, Susan Whitfield (1997, p. 132) stated, the initial design of IDP is:

Once the database is accessible to scholars they will be encouraged to add their own comments, correct mistakes, or suggest new information which will then be sent to the database coordination. This information, if appropriate, will be added to the database with accreditation.

For the database itself, not only the direct participants in this project, but users themselves can make their contributions to IDP with their comments and experiences, and thus could improve the project itself. It could also enhance the engagement and interaction between users and this digital project by reviewing the website freely online.

There are already many Chinese researchers who have acknowledged these advantages of International Dunhuang Project, especially in terms of digitisation of ancient archives (Lin and Sun 2003, Han 2007, 2009, Yu 2011). Yet, there are also many concerns and worries about its current weaknesses and its potential to dealing with the issue of repatriation of dispersed Dunhuang materials. For

example, although IDP aims to provide digitised images freely online for research only, it still has a high risk of inappropriate downloads and impermissible commercial use, which need to be controlled; academic communications between participating countries are not deep enough (Zhang and Dang, 2015).

Although worries and concerns still exist and need further endeavors, it is a positive sign that the international online database and its advantages have been widely accepted, from museums and libraries to scholars and laymen who are interested in it. IDP and its database cannot be regarded as a single database and the simple application of computer-based technologies; it not only needs the engagement of all participants and the public, but also relies on the international cooperation among museums, libraries and research institutions in all participating countries, which I will analyse later in this chapter.

6.3.2 International cooperation within the framework of IDP

In IDP, based on the common love of Dunhuang materials and Dunhuang culture, all participants have established a tight cooperative relationship. Because of the political sensitivities and the influence of the past, Chinese and Japanese IDP branches still lack sufficient connections. However, with the support of IDP database and the international framework, IDP provides an effective model to form a more diverse and close international research and cooperation network among participants. By encouraging the engagement of libraries, museums, universities and research institutions and their collaboration in terms of exhibitions and educational activities, IDP could finally help to shape a long-lasting partnership with mutual understanding and learning, which is crucial to improve the relations between China and Japan.

- The basis of international cooperation in IDP

IDP is not solely focused on the digitisation process and its database, but refers to a series of research, conferences and academic activities, which could enhance international cooperation and communication among participants. The basis of IDP and this international cooperation is the members' common love of and research interest in ancient Dunhuang manuscripts and Dunhuang culture. Seven members of IDP own large or small Dunhuang collections. Scholars in these countries have all made great contributions to Dunhuang Studies, which has also spread it to the world. Yet, compared with other countries, China and Japan are the closest countries and most familiar with each other. Although there are many external pressures and limitations, these two countries should have full potentiality to achieve sustainable collaboration.

First of all, Chinese and Japanese people have common cultural roots and similar religious beliefs. This implies the strong cultural and religious ties between these two countries. They are geographical neighbours in Asia that have had continual cultural and religious communication for a thousand years (Betzler and Austin, 1997). They have both sent ambassadors to exchange culture, art and Buddhism since the 6th century (Wang, 2014). As two countries that have had frequent communication since ancient time, it is possible to say that the similar cultural roots and common religious beliefs could help China and Japan to reach mutual understanding.

Second, Chinese and Japanese people also have common love of ancient Dunhuang manuscripts and Dunhuang culture. The Chinese government and scholars began to protect Dunhuang materials and the Mogao Caves in the early twentieth century. Since Japanese cultural diplomacy aims to protect human cultural heritage, Japan has provided huge financial sponsorship for the preservation of the Silk Road, including the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang

(JCIC-Hritage, 2010). This common love tightly links Chinese and Japanese people to protect Dunhuang caves and those fragile Dunhuang materials together. Moreover, as the center of Buddhism, Dunhuang and Dunhuang materials have played a very important role in researching ancient Buddhism, which is a common research interest of Chinese and Japanese scholars.

In addition, in the context of post-colonialism between China and Japan, equal communication within an equal power structure is not only the basis, but also the precondition of further Chinese-Japanese collaboration. Colonialism led to the unequal distribution of power between Western colonial hegemony and ethnic groups that were being colonised (Powell, 2013). Subsequently, post-colonialism disrupted this unbalanced structure and amplified the voice of former colonies to the world. China was also affected by colonialism exercised by Japan during the war period, at that time, the Chinese were thought to be a former semi-colony to Japanese imperialists (Childs and Williams, 1997). However, with the Chinese people's increasing awareness of their own power, the country began to transform the position of former colony to explore and assert their unique cultural identity and national pride. Nowadays, Chinese people can 'freely represent themselves as equal members of a political community' (Levi and Dean, 2003, p.11). On this basis, although the political sensitivities still exist, both Chinese and Japanese scholars could communicate equally and freely, and thus could build mutual respect for each other.

- What can be brought about by international cooperation in IDP?

Back to the case: International Dunhuang Project (IDP), current international cooperation has developed well within the framework of IDP, which has brought both advantages and limitations. Joining IDP could enhance mutual learning and establish a research cooperation network among all members, which can be

regarded as a community of practice. Unlike the Chinese and Japanese branches, the British Library is the core of this community. It has frequent collaboration with other participants, which sets a good example to the Chinese and Japanese branches.

One of the main advantages is that participants could learn about technologies and experiences, and exchange the latest research with each other from IDP and related training and conferences within the community. At the beginning of IDP, the British Library provided digitised infrastructure to the local branches, and trained local staff to use the latest digitised technologies and computer equipment.¹⁰⁸ Staff in local branches either spent a year or half a year in the British Library to receive training, or visited the British Library frequently to learn about technologies and standards.¹⁰⁹

This project also holds international conferences regularly, encouraging academic conversation and sharing of scientific advances. Topics covered range from the preservation of paper manuscripts to the study of specific archives, from editing the catalogue to establishing a digital database. Zhang Zhiqing (Wang and Yao, 2015), the director of the National Library of China mentioned in an interview:

This kind of communication is very interesting. Scholars and experts could discuss with each other independently and freely. This not only helps to develop IDP, but also to encourage their respective research. People in the conference even discuss very tiny questions like what kind of box should be used to protect Dunhaung manuscripts.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ For more information, see http://idp.bl.uk/pages/about_activities.a4d [Accessed 17 December 2018].

¹⁰⁹ Sheng Yanhai, interview by the author, China, 2 April 2016.

¹¹⁰ For more information of the interview with Zhang Zhiqing, see Wang Sixuan and Yao Weijie, '网上敦煌: IDP 的国际努力' (*Dunhuang on the internet: The international efforts of International Dunhuang Project*), 16 September 2015, <http://view.inews.qq.com/a/20150916A0121W00> [Accessed 12 May 2017].

This type of biennial communication provides a great platform for IDP partners to have mutual consultation and discussion. Although recently it has been paused, work meetings between IDP partners are continuing for discussion of the current development of IDP and other working details.¹¹¹

As more and more academic conferences and exhibitions have been held in IDP, it has strengthened the partnership among all of the members of IDP. By cooperating with museums, libraries, universities and research institutions, an international collaborative network among members has been established. In this network, the British Library (BL) is the secretariat and the core of IDP, which provides technical, academic and financial support to local branches. BL has also conducted many collaboration activities like exhibitions with other IDP branches, not only focusing on Dunhuang materials, but also expanding into many other themes. Other than that, IDP local branches have had collaborative projects as well. The structure of this network indeed strengthens the partnership between BL and local branches, and provides more chances for local branches to cooperate with each other (See Figure 6.3).

For example, BL and IDP Chinese branches have held several collaborative exhibitions, which either used digital resources of IDP as exhibits, or exhibitions inspired by IDP. The exhibition: *Aurel Stein and the Silk Road: A Hundred Years On*, which was organised by BL, the Royal Geographical Society and the University of Nottingham in 2014, is a good example of this (IDP, 2014). This photographic exhibition was one of the events organised to celebrate the 20th anniversary of IDP, exhibiting photos that Stein took during his expeditions along the Silk Road and are also available in the IDP database (IDP, 2014). In addition,

¹¹¹ Liu Bo, interview by the author, China, 15 March 2016.

the exhibition includes photographs taken during the joint fieldwork by IDP teams at British Library and experts from the Xinjiang Institute of Archaeology, China in 2008 and 2011 (IDP, 2014). The British Library and the Chinese institution worked cooperatively for two years. They not only made full use of digital resources in the IDP database, but also formed a profound friendship through the exhibition.

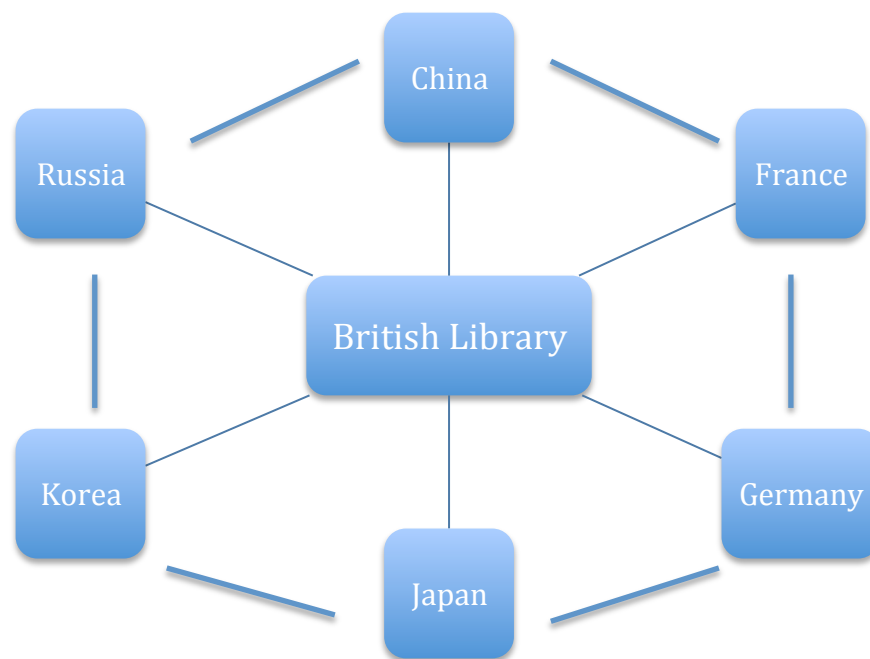


Figure 6.3. Cooperative network in Internatinal Dunhuang Project

IDP Beijing also did considerable work for the project and thus built a close friendship with BL. For instance, the exhibition entitled *Western Eyes: An Exhibition of Historical Photographs of China taken by European Photographers, 1860-1930* in 2008 was a cooperative exhibition between IDP Beijing and BL (IDP 2008, National Library of China 2008). This exhibition showed old photographs of Modern China with the closed-door policy after the Second Opium War (1856-1860) through the lens of Western photographers. It seems to have less of a relationship with IDP and Dunhuang materials, however, it was

indeed inspired on the basis of the friendship between IDP Beijing and BL within IDP. As a result, this relationship became closer due to this international cooperative exhibition.

In addition, IDP Japan, the Ryokuko University has been in cooperation with Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities regarding Turfan Studies and studies of Buddhism (<http://turfan.bbaw.de/>).¹¹²

- Limitations still exist

In terms of international collaboration, benefits and advantages have already been discussed above, however, nothing in this world is completely perfect. IDP also has limitations that still need to be improved. One of the insufficiencies is the lack of connections between IDP local branches, especially between China and Japan. Furthermore, the sensitivities of political relations and the influence of the past wrongs between Chinese and Japanese scholars still exist.

As Figure 6.4 shows, the ideal model of IDP should be a smooth circulation between BL, IDP China and IDP Japan, however, the relationship between the Chinese and Japanese branches still needs to be strengthened with more communication. One of the reasons is that the British Library plays an essential role in IDP. Local branches rely too much on the British Library. Besides, digitisation is actually a process that could be done with a small group of people in respective branches. For example, as Liu, the current director of IDP Beijing, said, ‘the IDP group in the National Library of China is quite small. It only has four people, including one director, one photographer and two for image processing’.¹¹³ Therefore, in the process of digitisation, to some extent, local branches only need to make sure that digitised images fit into the standards and

¹¹² Mitani Mazumi, interview by the author, Japan, 20 May 2016.

¹¹³ Liu Bo, interview by the author, China, 15 March 2016.

are uploaded to the local database in time. Compared with the relationship with BL, this also makes the connection between local IDP centers weaker.

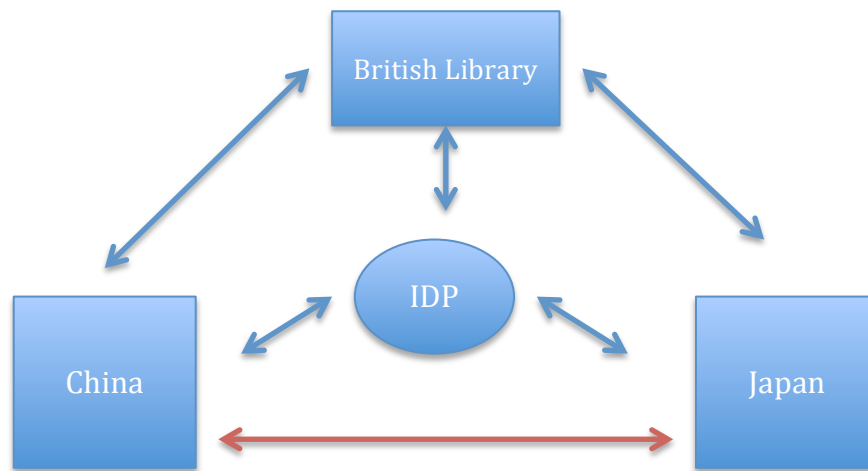


Figure 6.4. Ideal model of international cooperation between China and Japan in International Dunhuang Project

According to the fieldwork in both China and Japan, another issue is that the sensitivities of political relations and the influence of the past wrongs between Chinese and Japanese scholars still exist. It is inevitable that the external political atmosphere to some extent impacts scholars' opinions and standpoints. For example, Liu Bo has rare opportunities to talk with Japanese scholars, even in the International Dunhuang Project.¹¹⁴ Lin Shitian, the former director of IDP Beijing pointed out that,

Compared with the political and diplomatic negotiation between the Chinese and Japanese governments, the academic communication between scholars is relatively frank and smooth with mutual understanding, however, sensitivity still exists between scholars. For instance, there were some commemorative activities for Stein and Otani Kozui's expeditions to

¹¹⁴ Liu Bo, interview by the author, China, 15 March 2016.

Dunhuang. But their work is quite controversial in China. Because of this, Chinese scholars never attend those events.¹¹⁵

Thus, political sensitivities do impact the relationship between Chinese and Japanese scholars.

International Dunhuang Project provides an international cooperative model of digitisation to China which is full of potential. Apart from the international database, the international collaborative research network regards the British Library as the core, and connects it with other participants. Limitations of IDP and external political pressures still exist, however, members in the network protect Dunhuang materials together, take the responsibility of managing local IDP databases and collaborate with each other via various activities, which sets a good model for the Chinese and Japanese branches. IDP has the potential to establish a long-lasting partnership with mutual respect and understanding between China and Japan. What is more, as an international digitisation project on scattered Dunhuang materials, it also raises the idea of digital repatriation to China, in terms of Sino-Japanese repatriation.

6.3.3 Understanding digital repatriation in the context of China

The rapid development of digitisation and its application in libraries and museums has raised the concept of digital repatriation in China. As a country that is eager to consider the repatriation of 160 million lost cultural objects, it has already made many efforts, but has to acknowledge that the physical repatriation of all of this cultural property is not realistic. As a result, it is starting to accept the idea of digital repatriation as a compromise, due to the current reality. In short, I would argue that, although IDP is actually the very beginning, it is an ethical and

¹¹⁵ Lin Shitian, interview by the author, China, 15 March 2016.

feasible model of digital repatriation, which can establish a long-lasting shared guardianship and win-win situation among all participants, and thus provide more possibilities to move the issue of Sino-Japanese repatriation forward.

As Gardiner, McDonald, Byrne and Thorpe (2011, p.151) defined, digital repatriation ‘concerns the delivery in appropriate formats of copies of images, recordings, notes, observations and other records of the culture of a people.’ In the context of China, digital repatriation is a realistic approach to repatriation via digital formats of the cultural property that left their country of origin, China, through war plunder, illicit trafficking and theft. Digital repatriation in the context of China also has its own range of applications in that it will be more effective and acceptable to repatriate two-dimensional manuscripts and scrolls than three-dimensional cultural objects by using digital formats. Without replacing the original objects, these digitised resources could have their own cultural significance in certain contexts, such as encouraging more international cooperation, sharing guardianship and healing pains from the past.

- The main dispute between digital copy and real object

The most controversial aspect of digital repatriation is the relationship between digital object and physical object. Not only in China, but in the whole world, scholars and museum professionals have various worries and fears, which come from the nature of object-centeredness, and the value of authenticity and originality of their collections in these institutions (Fyfe, 2004). For instance, some scholars are concerned that it is very possible for digital copies to threaten physical objects, causing them to lose the value of authenticity (Cameron, 2007).

However, I agree with Witcomb (2007) and Cameron (2007), that information can facilitate social interaction; real objects are valuable because they contain unique

historical and cultural information. Acknowledging the historical and artistic value of physical manuscripts and objects, I would argue that digital objects also have their own cultural significance in certain contexts, as well as original objects. Just as Carl Hogsden and Emma Poulter (2012, p. 278) summarised, ‘it is not to propose that a digital object can or ought to replace a physical object, but simply that the two do different things and therefore complement each other’.

In other words, putting digital objects into specific contexts is crucial. Fiona Cameron (2007, 2008) argues that the political, cultural and social significance of digital objects can be fully illustrated in the specific context. Therefore, digitisation of collections should not only refer to simply scanning manuscripts, establishing databases and doing technical updates, but also place more emphasis on how to use the information and content in a variety of ways, as well as its cultural and social interaction and influence.

- Application scope of digital repatriation in the context of China

Since there are different types of cultural relics, I have classified them into two kinds: objects refer to three-dimensional artifacts like pottery, porcelain, bronzes, jades and others; archives refer to two-dimensional objects like manuscripts, scrolls, photos and so on. Digital repatriation in the context of China has the application scope that it will be more effective and acceptable to repatriate two-dimensional manuscripts and scrolls than three-dimensional cultural objects by using digital formats.

For those three-dimensional cultural artifacts, it is difficult for Chinese people to accept their digital repatriation. In the context of China, repatriation of objects is another issue. Cultural relics, including pottery, bronzes, porcelain, paintings, jades and others, not only means the object itself, but more importantly, it

represents the unique culture and history. Their shapes, ornamentation, dimensions, craftsmanship, material, historical meaning and research value are all specific elements that cannot be substituted. The hidden stories of these characteristics are more crucial. They can not only imply the historical and cultural background, but could also contribute to related research, such as history of costume, agriculture, politics and economic development in the past.

In addition, Chinese people's wish that past wrongs could be acknowledged and realised, moreover their national self-esteem could be identified by the world, if those cultural property can be repatriated to China. Therefore, digital formats of these objects cannot equal the significance of physical objects. Digital technologies, such as 3D technology and virtual reality, could be applied to promote museum objects to the scholars and the general public; however, digital repatriation of these objects still needs further discussion.

However, that does not mean that digitised manuscripts are not as important as the original objects. In fact, making replicas of two-dimensional archives was started in the early twentieth century, by using handwriting, black-and-white photos and microfilms (Lin 2016, Wang 2002). Although these copies were of poorer quality than high definition images nowadays, they represent a long history of efforts to obtain replicas of Dunhuang materials by Chinese scholars. Hence, as Lin Shitian, the former director of IDP Beijing, and Director G stated, the concept of digital repatriation has been in China for around two years, but Chinese scholars have been doing the work for a long period.¹¹⁶¹¹⁷

International digitisation project such as IDP provides a very good example of digital repatriation of two-dimensional Dunhuang manuscripts to China. The

¹¹⁶ Lin Shitian, interview by the author, China, 15 March 2016.

¹¹⁷ Director G, interview by the author, China, 12 April 2016.

reality is that a large number of Dunhuang manuscripts and scrolls were purchased during the Japanese expeditions, and have now been collected by museums, libraries, universities, temples and private parties. There are also no clear clues or detailed catalogues of these archives except those of public museums and libraries. Yet, by bringing Dunhuang materials to the digital domain through international cooperation, the model that IDP provides, to some extent, solves the problems. It is one of the effective approaches to aim for in the near future, and has much more potential to inspire more digital repatriation cases.

- Sharing guardianship within IDP

By establishing a shared international online database and a close international cooperative network, International Dunhuang Project (IDP) provides a new idea of sharing guardianship of the Dunhuang materials, especially for China. The model of IDP is also a sustainable process with full potential to encourage more digital repatriation of two-dimensional archives and to heal Chinese people's pain from past wrongs.

In the past, the words used frequently to describe the relationship between museums and cultural objects were ownership, custodianship and stewardship (Harth, 1999). When Geismar first used the concept of guardianship for the Māori cultural treasures, it was also a key strategy to 'acknowledge both the rights and responsibilities of the museum and other owners in the care of collection' (Geismar, 2008, p. 115). Marstine developed this concept and interpreted its significance to redefining repatriation and exploring the probability of collaboration within repatriation (Marstine, 2011). These evolving concepts could evoke mutual trust and co-operation, and also could establish a new friendship and partnership between museums and original owners.

Regarding IDP as a case of digital repatriation to China, libraries, museums and research institutions in different countries are working cooperatively to achieve a consensus that all members take responsibility to protect the original Dunhuang materials. On one hand, local IDP branches have uploaded images and managed the database independently;¹¹⁸ on the other hand, members have communicated and learnt about the latest research and technologies by frequent international collaboration. This allows IDP members to share guardianship and responsibility to protect those scattered Dunhuang materials and promote Dunhuang studies.

By sharing the guardianship of those lost cultural properties, the model of IDP could console and heal Chinese scholars and the general public from the pain of past wrongs. Laura Peers (2013) discussed that allowing owners to get access to their lost heritage is a very powerful and effective way to reconnect the people from the country of origin with their heritage. It can also ‘heal people from the social, mental, and physical pathologies caused by colonialism’ (Peers, 2013, p. 141). In the context of China, let us assume that Chinese people are visiting a Japanese museum. They may firstly feel at home if they see Chinese cultural properties exhibited in a Japanese museum, but soon they may feel strong pain and patriotic emotions due to the historical background between China and Japan. Yet, digital repatriation that IDP has made, and the shared guardianship could help to reduce these strong emotions and heal the pain to some extent. Being willing to share digitised resources with the public and take digital repatriation into practice in IDP actually represents a positive attitude and mutual understanding from all members. It is easier for Chinese people to get access to Dunhuang materials around the world, and thus be reconnected to the culture and history.

¹¹⁸ Liu Bo, interview by the author, China, 15 March 2016.

Additionally, sharing guardianship could encourage more digital repatriation. On the basis of frequent communication and cooperation in IDP, the most representative example happened in 2015 when Bibliothèque Nationale de France gave 400G high-definition photos of Dunhuang materials to the Dunhuang Research Academy (DRA) as presents. It authorised the IDP Dunhuang to use them for non-commercially free of charge (Xinhua Net, 2015a). They also signed agreements for further cooperation, including technical training and support, exchanging visiting scholars and collaborative research programs, relating to Dunhuang materials (Xinhua Net, 2015a). This is the first time for an overseas institution to return the digital copies of lost Dunhuang materials to China, and it is a very good beginning to encourage more digital repatriation.

- A very beginning of physical repatriation

In the context of China, most scholars who are working in the field of Dunhuang culture acknowledge the advantages of the IDP project, holding positive attitudes about the digital repatriation of Dunhuang materials.^{119 120 121} The Chinese government has also begun to pay more attention to the concept of digital repatriation and has listed it as one of the most important cultural projects in the propaganda.

However, worries and concerns still exist. Because IDP was firstly suggested and organised by the British Library, some researchers argue that this project might cause ‘technological colonisation’ (Singh and Blake, 2012, p. 96) of China. From interviews, some scholars have also questioned IDP, that it lays the issue of copyright aside in this project. As Ma De, one of my informants, said, this digitisation project is the only thing we can do currently.¹²² Some other people

¹¹⁹ Lin Shitian, interview by the author, China, 15 March 2016.

¹²⁰ Sheng Yanhai, interview by the author, China, 2 April 2016.

¹²¹ Director G, interview by the author, China, 12 April 2016.

¹²² Ma De, interview by the author, China, 19 April 2016.

are worrying about what will come next after finishing IDP. From my perspective, all of these questions and worries are worth more exploration. That is why this thesis acknowledges that, today, digital repatriation is a solution reached through compromise.

What is more, accepting the idea of digital repatriation is not equal to abandoning the efforts towards physical repatriation, but the very beginning of it. Chinese scholars have never stopped making efforts for the physical repatriation of lost Dunhuang materials. For example, fifteen experts and researchers got together and held a landmark symposium ‘Requesting Lost Dunhuang Manuscripts from Cave 17 towards the West and Japan’ in 1997.¹²³ Moreover, with increasing awareness of the significance of these materials, Ma De also pointed out that the Chinese government should gradually strengthen its voice for physical repatriation.¹²⁴

To conclude, by acknowledging that digital repatriation is indeed an approach reached through compromise when physical repatriation cannot be achieved at the moment, sharing digitised ancient archives and establishing an international collaborative network (as the IDP model provides) are much easier to accept in the short term in the context of China. Digital repatriation is just a very beginning stage. It could bring a win-win situation with mutual understanding and respect by shared guardianship and cooperation between all members. For the long term, it could also encourage and push for more digital repatriation, and thus move the issue of repatriation forward.

6.3.4 Can digital repatriation really create a win-win situation for all parties?

¹²³ See ‘向欧美及日本等国索要敦煌藏经洞流散文物座谈会召开 (*The opening of the symposium: Requests for lost Dunhuang manuscripts from Cave 17 from the West and Japan*)’, 26 December, 2009, <http://www.cnchl.com/a/hot/sshg/2009/1226/515.html> [Accessed 20 December 2018].

¹²⁴ Ma De, interview by the author, China, 19 April 2016.

- Ethics of compromise in terms of politics and economics

We have mentioned the term win-win situation above and pointed out that digital repatriation is actually an approach achieved through compromise when the physical repatriation cannot be achieved in the near future. In the context of China and Japan, ethics of compromise, which drives the current cooperation between China and Japan in the International Dunhuang Project, will be discussed in this section.

Compromise has been studied in politics, international relations and economics (Huxtable, 2013). There are many criticisms of compromise, connected to the ideas of endurance, cowardice, surrender or escape (Wan and Duan, 2008). In the area of politics, Shephard (2013) argues that compromise actually could be regarded as a norm of governance in political systems. According to Bellamy (2002), compromise could be classified into three different types in politics: one compromise for the conflicts of interests, one for ideological conflicts and the other for different identities. The core of all these compromises is negotiation.

A sensible compromise, as Bellamy (2002) indicates, could integrate different interests, and then achieve an acceptable and reciprocal result for all parties with an equal basis in the power structure. In the business context, negotiation is also the most important process. Here, compromise refers to bargaining to reach a consensus in business negotiations (Li, 2011). There is no absolute winner or loser, but a sensible compromise should be based on reciprocity, equality and reasonability in the negotiation process, attempting to satisfy the potential interests of all parties (Li, 2011). In terms of digital repatriation, sensible compromise means that all members achieve an acceptable and reciprocal result through sustainable collaboration and negotiation, which is win-win.

- *Yes, through compromise it can create a win-win situation for all parties involved.*

International Dunhuang Project (IDP) indeed provides a potential and feasible model of digital repatriation to China, but can digital repatriation really create a win-win situation for all parties? The answer is yes. It is a win-win relationship under sensible compromise.

Bell, Christen and Turin (2013, p. 195) once gave a good definition of win-win: ‘giving and receiving are rarely monodirectional or linear, and have to be thought of as reciprocal and cyclical ongoing processes’. In other words, win-win means each participant gains something rather than nothing. Win-win also refers to a dynamic balance of loss and gain among each party through international cooperation and communication. This balance is actually constantly changing and progressing via discourse and negotiations, which means it is quite a fragile relationship. To maintain this balance, members should keep tight communication and collaboration, and thus reach the acceptable result and reciprocity on the basis of equality. In short, there are four keywords that could help to build the win-win relationship: equal, balance, negotiation and reciprocity.

- *Equal*

Being in equal positions in the power structure is the basis and the precondition of a smooth negotiation and compromise. Only under this circumstance could members speak out freely and fairly. In IDP, the main participants are the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan, Russia and China, which refers to a complicated power structure. In the context of China and Japan, being in equal power positions can help to increase mutual respect and understanding through equal communication and negotiation.

- *Balance*

In the context of China and Japan, both countries' people's common love of ancient Chinese culture and the ethical principles of Confucianism largely impact the relationship between these two countries. That is why Chinese and Japanese scholars face less political sensitivities in the area of ancient Chinese culture and history. It is also the foundation for further Sino-Japanese cooperation and communication, and can thus establish a more harmonious and balanced relationship for digital repatriation.

Ancient Chinese ethical principles play an essential role in contemporary ethics of compromise. The two keywords of ancient Chinese Confucian ethics are He (和) and Zhongyong (中庸), which could help to interpret compromise. Confucius said: 'in practicing the rules of propriety, a natural ease is to be prized'.¹²⁵ Ease here means He (和), which is harmony. He has the best attitude to deal with various conflicts in a peaceful way. As Wong (2011, p. 207) explained, 'harmony requires the mutual adjustment of interests'; it can also manage the interests of different parties and 'how they are to be reconciled in case of apparent conflict'. Here, He refers to a balanced relationship with mutual endeavors of each party.

Zhongyong (中庸) and He (和) are closely connected with each other. Confucius explained his principle of Zhongyong by describing five excellent things to his students. Recorded in *The Analects of Confucius*, they are:

When the person in authority is beneficent without great expenditure; when he lays tasks on the people without their repining; when he pursues what he desires without being covetous; when he maintains a dignified ease without

¹²⁵ See James Legge, trans, *The Analects of Confucius*, Book 1, 1893, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/c/confucius/c748a/index.html> [Accessed 19 December 2018].

being proud; when he is majestic without being fierce.¹²⁶

Thus, following the principle of Zhongyong (中庸) could combine two opposed extremes. That is the principle of moderation. That is seeking balance. The concept of win-win is embedded in these ancient Confucianism ethical principles.

- Negotiation

Negotiation is an approach that establishes a win-win situation through compromise. It is not enough only to rely on those cultural ties when addressing the issue of repatriation; more discourse and negotiations are still needed to help construct the dynamic balance. Win-win should be a long-lasting and ongoing situation that requires common efforts, and then sees mutual development in terms of research and technology. Furthermore, to develop international collaborative projects like IDP and digital repatriation, it is necessary to build mutual trust, respect and communication via more collaboration and frequent dialogue, in both directions.

Back to the case study of IDP, digitisation of the Dunhuang materials plays a significant role of consolation and healing to Chinese scholars and the general public to have the opportunity to learn and research Dunhuang culture¹²⁷, which has also led to Chinese scholars' self-reflection and their reconsideration of the past (Zhao and Li 2011). This self-reflectivity actually could bring more opportunities for Chinese and Japanese people to build mutual trust and respect for further collaboration, rather than resentment.

- Reciprocity

¹²⁶ See James Legge, trans, *The Analects of Confucius*, Book 20, 1893, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/c/confucius/c748a/index.html> [Accessed 19 December 2018].

¹²⁷ Han Chunping, interview by the author, China, 29 March 2016.

Reciprocity is the most reasonable factor to achieve a win-win situation. During negotiation, weighing different interests of different participants is a key point to maintain the dynamic relationship, as well as the win-win situation. Taking IDP as an example, it is a multicultural project with seven major members and other institutions that only hold small collections of Dunhuang materials. With this structure, it is inevitable that conflicts of different interests certainly exist in the process of cooperation and negotiation. When conflicts become intense, sensible compromise could help to avoid the worst situation: the winner wins all, the loser loses all (Li, 2006). Although compromise can never be perfect for all parties, sensible compromise can find the common interest, the result of which could satisfy everyone via discourse and negotiations. That is a win-win situation through sensible compromise.

In addition, what makes IDP a significant model of win-win is that it never touches any participant's ownership and authority of their Dunhuang collections (Wang and Yao, 2015); instead, everyone gains from it, either with the latest technologies, or research achievements. As the secretariat, the British Library has provided funding and separate Internet servers to IDP local branches. Images are uploaded and stored in the local database, and cannot be modified by any other participants (Wang 2004, Wu 2011, Wang and Yao, 2015). This largely helps to draw all of these participants together and reduce their worries about 'technological colonisation' (Singh and Blake, 2012, p. 96) and the international digitisation project.

6.4 Conclusion

It is possible to say that most Chinese scholars nowadays have begun to accept and understand the advantages of International Dunhuang Project (IDP), although

problems still exist and need further discussion. Learning from the project, it is an ethical and potential model of digital repatriation by creating a shared international online database and a close international cooperative network to achieve a win-win relationship among all participants. It changes our idea of repatriation from simple digitisation to digital repatriation, from mutual hatred to mutual understanding and mutual respect, and from isolation to international collaboration.

Indeed, the issue of digital repatriation is still a controversial concept. Yet, from my perspective, digital repatriation is not the alternative to physical repatriation, but the very beginning of it, especially in the context of China and Japan. By improving the idea of Hogsden and Poulter (2012), encouraging international digitisation projects like IDP between China and Japan could help to create more opportunities to establish international collaborative platforms to share, protect and research digital information, and help to enhance mutual respect and understanding, and thus construct shared guardianship and long-lasting partnership in terms of Sino-Japanese repatriation. On this basis, it could also help improve relations between China and Japan, moving the issue of Sino-Japanese repatriation by stimulating wider acceptance and encouraging more opportunities of digital repatriation in the Sino-Japanese context.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

At the heart of this research is the aim to explore the potential and limitations of emerging approaches that can advance repatriation by building constructive and ethical relationships between Chinese and Japanese participants. The research is concerned with how new approaches generate positive outcomes for both sides, in light of a larger environment of caution amid wider political tensions. To be more specific, the research poses a number of questions: what kind of relationships has been constructed through Sino-Japanese cultural collaborative projects? How can relational ethics provide a lens through which to understand these relationships, and how can relational ethics facilitate Sino-Japanese repatriation? What contributions have museums, governments, and research institutions made to forge constructive relationships, and what role did each party play as part of these collaborations?

Given the limited space to reflect on the answers of these questions and to provide a platform for further discussion, this concluding chapter contains five sections. These include the research findings, the research's contributions to critical museum studies, the significance of the thesis to the issue of repatriation in the Sino-Japanese and global context, the limitations of the research, and the development of a larger discourse on this topic. The first part briefly outlines the overarching argument of the research and revisits research discoveries of the aforementioned chapters. Accordingly, the second section considers the unique contributions that this cross-cultural research make to the broader area of museum studies, advancing Chinese museum studies and critical museology I then point out the significance of the thesis to the issue of Sino-Japanese repatriation, as well

as the implications for the wider context in global. The fourth and the last section acknowledge the limitations of the study and raises suggestions for further research based on these gaps.

7.1 Research findings

The thesis analysed three models that could aid Sino-Japanese repatriation within the complicated Sino-Japanese context: the first model takes temporary exchange exhibitions as an opportunity for collaboration between Chinese and Japanese provincial/municipal museums; the second model shares physical access to a certain cultural object through a repatriation agreement that loans the object back to the repatriating museum at regular intervals; the third model constructs an international research network by sharing digital access to an international database of dispersed cultural heritage. This section succinctly explains the research discoveries by mapping out the patterns that emerge from comparing these three models. It answers the research questions outlined above by reflecting on each chapter. Accordingly, it explains the connection between each model and how they contribute to the thesis.

In summary, I argue that small but significant steps of sharing physical and digital access to cultural heritage, particularly within environments that share a long history of mistrust such as the Sino-Japanese context, can create the trust and mutual understanding needed to overcome paralysis. The projects explored here lay the groundwork for what could be a more open, sustainable process of negotiating repatriation based on reciprocity. The continuous endeavours of both parties to establish a win-win relationship through cultural collaborative projects and negotiation have the potential to challenge preconceptions that Chinese and Japanese hold towards each other. Ultimately, this approach can shape a consensus on protecting cultural heritage jointly through new ethical ways of

sharing.

Exploring the various forms of sharing cultural heritage, Chapter 4, 5 and 6 analyse potential approaches in two dimensions: physical and digital shared access. Discussing physical access to cultural heritage, Chapter 4 and 5 take international exchange exhibitions and a specific Sino-Japanese repatriation case as points of entry. To be more specific, chapter 4 analyses Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions as one of the most common cultural collaborative approaches between Chinese and Japanese museums. By exchanging exhibitions, publics in both countries have the opportunities to understand both cultures, gaining access to these exhibitions means both Chinese and Japanese people grow a better understanding of both cultures and their cultural differences.

Examining the repatriation of stolen cultural heritage, chapter 5 analyses the model of sharing physical access to cultural objects by adopting the strategy of a long-term loan and signing a bilateral agreement on repatriation and further cooperation. By adopting this approach, physical access to the cultural object is shared by the collaborating museums on throughout the duration of the loan period. Further access of the repatriating museum through regular intervals is also protected by the agreement.

Chapter 6 is concerned with the other dimension and explores, through a detailed analysis of the International Dunhuang Project (IDP), how digital information of large-scale scattered cultural heritage can be shared through international digitisation projects. In this chapter, the IDP provides an effective model for sharing digital access to cultural heritage between international researchers, including both Chinese and Japanese scholars. The project allows international researchers to gain free access to the digital database, facilitating relevant research

on archival studies of the ancient Dunhuang Material.

With regards to participants' identities and different fields that each model has the potential to develop, chapter 4 concerns the state museum system in which national, provincial and municipal museums from both China and Japan operate. By classifying international collaborative exhibitions into two different types, the loan exhibition and the exchange exhibition, I argue that the international loan exhibition is a strategy used in pursuit of cultural diplomacy; it is often more closely supervised by governmental bodies and symbolises the political and diplomatic purpose of national cultural promotion. Contrastingly, the Sino-Japanese exchange exhibition between Chinese and Japanese provincial/municipal museums is characterised by a greater freedom to communicate, to choose partners, themes and exhibits. In this sense, exhibition exchange between Sino-Japanese provincial/municipal museums is more flexible and has the potential to encourage more cultural collaborations within the Sino-Japanese state museum system.

Chapter 5, on the other hand, concerns repatriation and the negotiation process between a private, Japanese museum and the Chinese government. The case discussed exemplifies that, compared to national museums, private museums generally have greater flexibility and authority in their institutional decision-making processes. Moreover, the strategy of a long-term loan and the official agreement of further collaboration are positive and useful examples for other Japanese private museums to consider when working with the government. The former can, to some extent, mediate the repatriating, private museum's fear of losing collections permanently. The latter, on the other hand, the signed agreement between the museum and the Chinese government, can guarantee longstanding responsibilities and obligations for both parties involved the process

of repatriation.

The IDP project analysed in chapter 6 involves various international research institutions, museums and libraries in different countries. Participants working as part of this model are diverse, and the model covers a broader range of museums, research and cultural institutions. The project provides an international research network through which researchers can share digital data, update research outcomes and further develop the research area that the research platform facilitates.

Seen from the relational perspective, the three approaches and different types of relationship that chapter 4, 5 and 6 unpack have been established and developed among different participants. Chapter 4 illustrates what a trustworthy and reciprocal relationship among Chinese and Japanese museums and museums professionals involved in exhibition exchanges might look like. The frequent communication and discussion embedded within the preparation and practice stages mean this model provides greater opportunity to enhance mutual understanding between collaborative Chinese and Japanese museums. Knowledge exchange between both sides can improve and encourage joint professional development, which ultimately form a community of practice for all. Therefore, this format of exchange is able to shape partnerships and enhance mutual development on both sides of the collaboration, constructing a foundation of trust for future communication within the Sino-Japanese state museum system.

Chapter 5 argues that the relationship-building process between the Japanese private museum and the Chinese government is full of complexity. Crucially, the power dynamics inherent in the repatriation process between the Japanese private museum and Chinese government significantly influenced the negotiation process.

The repatriating museum inevitably encounters social pressure from both the inside and the outside. Nevertheless, building an interpersonal relationship before the formal negotiation commences and conducting negotiation with sensible compromise to achieve reciprocal results are key factors that made this repatriation case relatively successful. Adopting this model sets a foundation for shared guardianship between Chinese and Japanese participants on the basis of agreement and continuous collaboration in the future. In addition, signing a bilateral agreement to loan stolen cultural objects to the repatriating museum, which this chapter suggests, has certain referential significance for other repatriation cases taken place in a similar context.

The case study of the IDP, which chapter 6 analyses, focuses on the organisational structure of the international digitisation project, the relationship-building process behind the digitisation project, as well as the roles played by Chinese and Japanese branches of the IDP project. The international research network, as the very foundation of the project, constructs a reciprocal relationship between all international participants, including the Chinese and Japanese members. This chapter also shows the intermediate role played by a third or more parties in the network to reduce the tense relationship between Chinese and Japanese members, and facilitate indirect collaboration within the network.

7.2 Research contributions to repatriation and the wider field

According to the analysis of both the contributions and the complications of each selected case, this thesis firstly constructs a comprehensive and cross-cultural understanding of Sino-Japanese repatriation dilemmas. This research provides an overarching cross-cultural lens to research Sino-Japanese repatriation and considers both Chinese and Japanese perspectives and recognises political and cultural sensitivity.

This research also makes contribution to bridge a newly beneficial relationship of mutual understanding through frequent exchanges of knowledge, culture and technology in various aspects of collaboration. As a result, the research has identified an emerging Sino-Japanese community of practice that needs to be acknowledged and nurtured through common efforts between China and Japan.

In addition, this research provides a clear explanation of the complicated Sino-Japanese context and the dynamics of Sino-Japanese relations. By taking a post-colonial approach, the research identifies the current situation between China and Japan. It unpacks the long-standing tension between China and Japan caused by the sensitive Sino-Japanese semi-colonial history and changing contemporary Sino-Japanese relations; but also identifies the continuously cultural cooperation between the two countries, which is based on the shared cultural roots and the common interests towards ancient Chinese culture between China and Japan. On this premise, the thesis recognises the changing power structures behind the process of negotiation and collaboration among Sino-Japanese participants, as well as the significance of seeking common ground for both parties to establish a community of practice in which both the Chinese and the Japanese cultural identity can be constructed and cultural difference can be identified. Hence, the post-colonial approach I employed is referential for further research on post-colonial issues that relate to the Sino-Japanese context.

This thesis also makes a unique theoretical contribution in the ways in which it embeds the lens of ethics towards Sino-Japanese repatriation, extracting the theory of relational ethics from relational-based care ethics and integrating it into Chinese and Japanese interpretations of social relationships to ultimately develop a relational and ethical understanding of Sino-Japanese repatriation.

First of all, compared to traditional legal, governmental and commercial methods of addressing Chinese repatriation claims, this research fills a knowledge gap by exploring new ethical approaches that museums and cultural/research institutions could adopt to develop repatriation in the Sino-Japanese context. As part of the existing research trajectory on Sino-Japanese repatriation, many scholars have explored strategies through the studies of international conventions and domestic laws from a legal perspective (Peng 2008, Gao 2009, Guo and Gao 2006, Huo 2017), but rarely through the lens of ethics. This research thus provides a new ethical way of thinking through museum practices in terms of Sino-Japanese repatriation.

Drawing upon relational ethics, I highlight key principles in the research, such as the importance of building mutual trust, being beneficent, and emphasising common good rather than individual interests (Rawls 1971, Fisher 1999, Finlay 2011). Coincidentally, I discovered that the widely accepted Confucianism understanding of building harmonious interpersonal relationships, a belief shared between Chinese and Japanese society, represents a similar ethical belief in the significance of a more open, sustainable and trustworthy social relationship. This common ground makes the theory of relational ethics culturally appropriate to the Sino-Japanese context. Through the lens of relational ethics, this thesis has the potential to help Chinese and Japanese practitioners, as well as policy-makers, to consider their work on cultural property issues through such a framework.

Furthermore, in relationship to the wider field of museology, the application of relational ethics demonstrated by this research can contribute towards an ethical perspective for museums in building a positive and productive relationship with collaborating museums and communities, particularly as part of collection-based

work. It emphasises the importance and the necessity of building trust and showing respect to partners, especially in cross-cultural collaborative projects. It also provides theoretical support for museums to self-reflect on social responsibility and obligation, providing ethical guidance to their decision-making, process of negotiation and collaboration accordingly. Applying relational ethics to museum practice can also help generate potential strategies to encourage good communication, by clarifying preexisting conflicts and articulate shared interests with other participating museums and cultural institutions.

In relation to current research on repatriation in the Chinese context, some Chinese researchers have explored the roles played by governmental non-governmental organisations, and patriotic collectors in past repatriation experiences, yet underestimated the role of museums. This research thus approaches repatriation through the door of museums, identifying and analysing constructive ways of sharing cultural heritage among Chinese and Japanese museums, relevant cultural/research institutions and libraries. It also aims to enhance scholars' awareness of the important position of museums in advancing Sino-Japanese repatriation, rather than being understood as an object-depots or exhibition places.

Specific to Chinese museum studies, this research adapts and translates concepts of shared guardianship and digital repatriation, which are new to Chinese researchers, in an active way that is relevant to the Chinese cultural context. These ethical concepts derive from exemplary models of indigenous repatriation between the United States and Native American tribes, New Zealand and Maori communities, as well as Australia and the Aboriginal people, where the phenomenon of repatriation has received broader scholarly concern (Sullivan, Abraham, et al 2000, Resta, Roy, et al 2002, Geismar 2008, Turnbull and

Pickering 2010, Marstine 2011). The ethical connotations of these concepts imply address power sharing mechanism and the construction of an interactive relationship between repatriating museums and the indigenous communities.

Learning from scholarship on indigenous cultural rights, I have gradually realised the significance of a collaborative relationship between museums and the indigenous communities for the process of repatriation. Hence, I began to consider the possibility of applying these ethical concepts (acknowledging the very different circumstances, however) to the Chinese context, and exploring how these ethical approaches can address challenges and difficulties that Chinese and Japanese museums and cultural institutions encounter when negotiating the issue of repatriation. By introducing these new ethical concepts of Sino-Japanese repatriation to Chinese museum studies, the research encourages Chinese scholars to conduct further research to explore how museums negotiate ethical dilemmas in their practices, and how institutions across cultures can create more constructive ethical relationships.

By providing alternative perspectives on ethical and practical dilemmas that museums need to address, one of the most crucial contributions of the research is to provide a foundation upon which museums and cultural institutions can seek more innovative and sustainable ways to transform the old paradigms of Sino-Japanese repatriation and provide new models for reciprocal relationship of trust between both parties, addressing Sino-Japanese repatriation through a positive trajectory. The thesis also provides a new direction for museums and scholars to reconsider the importance of Sino-Japanese repatriation to China and Japan for building cultural identity and healing from the past. The long-term goal is not only to build mutual trust and understanding between the Chinese and Japanese side, but also to contribute towards constructing a community of practice

that can generate new ideas and enhance mutual development for both Chinese and Japanese stakeholders, reducing tension and improving the Sino-Japanese relationship in the future.

In terms of the issue of repatriation on a larger scale, the thesis contributes towards processes of repatriation in a global context. Sino-Japanese repatriation is in many ways representative of state-to-state repatriation in other cultural contexts, and the examples identified here are of both referential and practical importance. The ethical approaches of sharing cultural heritage that this research introduces are small but powerful steps in building the foundations for a win-win relationship. Such a mutually beneficial relationship is of great significance to both Sino-Japanese repatriation and the issue of repatriation across the globe. Moreover, this research is referential to similar repatriation cases in other culturally sensitive contexts that involve complex environments with a long history of mistrust and sensitive political relations. The ethical strategies that emerge from this research, such as conducting negotiations over repatriation through compromise, dealing with conflicts wisely, and adopting cross-cultural research methods, are also meaningful for museums and cultural institutions undertaking repatriation claims in other, similar cultural contexts across the globe.

7.3 Research limitations

I have encountered multiple challenges as part of the fieldwork, such as the sensitive external political environment between China and Japan, the particularity of the selected cases, being rejected by relevant museums and interviewees, as well as dealing with a lack of Japanese informants. These challenges introduced limitations that inevitably impacted the scope of the research. This section identifies these limitations, including those particular to each individual case, the short-term effect of selected cases and the insufficiency

of Japanese literature and the informants of the research. The next part raises the consequent considerations that should be considered for further research and discussion.

I have described the selected cases as ‘relatively successful’ in previous chapters as they all contain particularities and limitations. In short, the number of Sino-Japanese exchange exhibitions taking place on a provincial/municipal level is small. The topic and exhibits of these exhibitions generally focus on ancient culture and contemporary development, which can be considered less risky territory. Although research institutions and libraries have mostly accepted the International Dunhuang Project (IDP) and the database, Chinese and Japanese branches did not share any explicit contact whilst participating in the project, which indicated a significant lack of direct interaction between the two parties. The chosen repatriation case involved the Miho Museum, a Japanese private museum that collaborated with the Chinese government, which makes the case less representative for national museums. Therefore, I acknowledge that these models share some realistic limitations for their application to further practice. Adopting the case study approach as one of the main research methods, the feasibility of the suggested models does indeed have influence on the museum/research institutions involved; however, specific problems emerging from other cases still need to be addressed through case by case analysis.

The thesis advocates the benefits of building a long-term relationship of trust between Chinese and Japanese participants. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that the immediate achievements of the projects might only have short-term effects, hence lack sustainability after the collaborative projects end. The positive results can only be sustained through continuous mutual effort on behalf of both sides over a significant period of time. Regarding these models as the process of shaping a

community of practice may be idealising to a certain extent, but they are potential steps that can be further developed towards a more sustainable approach. However, there are still external and internal factors that will considerably influence the follow-up development of these approaches.

As part of the research, I found that sensitive Sino-Japanese relations have considerably influenced the cultural interaction between Chinese and Japanese museums in the present. The political and economic relations have changed continuously between ancient times and the contemporary world, which was discussed in chapter 2. The fluctuations of the current Sino-Japanese relationship considerably impact the external political atmosphere and the public's impression of the other side. For instance, particular moments, such as the 70th anniversary of both the end of World War II and the victory of China's Resistance War against Japanese Aggression in 2015, have intensified political relations and mutual resentments because of the historical memory of warfare and the Japanese government's attitudes (Xinhua Net, 2015b). Reversely, 2017 marks a turning point between China and Japan that calls for increased collaboration in the field of economy and culture since the Chinese and Japanese Prime Minister, Xi Jinping and Shinzo Abe, restarted a friendly conversation in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit (Xinhua Net, 2017b). These changing power dynamics lead to the current uncertainty and instability of the ever-contingent Sino-Japanese relation. Political and economic fluctuations, to some extent, impact the types, frequencies and degrees of cultural cooperation between China and Japan.

Under this circumstance, Chinese and Japanese museums are inclined to maintain a cautious stance towards their partners whilst designing collaborative projects, adopting strategies of risk control that impact the themes and exhibits chosen as part of Sino-Japanese exhibition exchanges. Moreover, the analysis of the

repatriation case in chapter 6 made apparent that Japanese participants remain fearful about facing domestic social pressure and encouraging repatriation requests from China in the future. This chapter evidenced that Chinese and Japanese acceptance of developing reciprocal relationships vary, and are influenced by the power structures underpinning the negotiation process and the consequent development of the repatriation case. This unbalanced power has created barriers for building long-term trust for both sides. The case study also illustrated that stereotypical impressions and social pressures from both sides persist, which can only be mediated through a common effort to enhance mutual understanding between Chinese and Japanese partners. How to mitigate this cautiousness, establish mutual understanding, and ultimately achieve mutual satisfaction is a key question that awaits further discussion.

Returning briefly to the research methodology, this research looks at the issue of Sino-Japanese repatriation through a cross-cultural perspective, and concentrates on the unidirectional repatriation of Chinese cultural property towards Japan. During the fieldwork phase, I interviewed eighteen interviewees, including three Japanese researchers, five Chinese scholars, as well as ten Chinese interviewees that have personal experience of working with Japanese scholars. The reason why the research included more Chinese interviewees than Japanese is not limited to language barriers, but relates mostly to the cautious attitudes adopted by Japanese scholars, as well as the researcher's Chinese identity, the limited amount of research time in Japan, and a lack of Japanese research contacts. Thus, the limited volume of Japanese literature and modest amount of informants limited the scope of the overall research. In accordance with these limitations, conducting further research with a Japanese colleague is an ideal suggestion to help broaden the research scope and create a deeper understanding of Sino-Japanese repatriation from the Japanese perspective.

7.4 Further discussion

Building on the foundation of this research and taking into consideration the limitations and gaps mentioned above, I will now attempt to outline new directions of research that require more in-depth exploration. As summarised above, the research emphasises the importance of building a reciprocal and collaborative relationship between Chinese and Japanese museums and cultural institutions by sharing physical and digital access to cultural heritage. It also explores how this relationship could help improve mutual trust and understanding on both sides, as well as its potential to relieve the current paralysis of Sino-Japanese repatriation.

One of the most obvious and crucial questions emerging from this endeavor is how museums and cultural institutions can maintain their newly established win-win relationship after collaborative projects come to an end. The construction of the trust-building process requires long-term cultural interaction from each side. I have suggested in previous chapters that reconsidering responsibilities and obligations towards the collections, and being self-reflective towards the difficult past, can considerably facilitate further inter-institutional practices for both Chinese and Japanese museums and cultural institutions.

Therefore, my first recommendation is that both Chinese and Japanese museums can take the responsibility to rethink their role in terms of repatriation, establish a self-check system of managing current collections, and to pay more attention to future acquisitions. As Amineddoleh (2014) proposed, museums should conduct rigorous investigations into their collections, clarifying the ambiguous provenance of objects and taking the interests of the country of origin into account. Doing so can help museums develop a comprehensive understanding of their collections,

and to provide evidence of the provenance to address potential repatriation claims. Taking collection-based measures can alleviate museums' anxiety towards repatriation requests and of losing their collections permanently, hence can help museums settle the ethical dilemma they encounter.

Another question that this research has been able to address in-depth is how cultural cooperative exhibitions could build a bridge between museums and the publics of countries that share a long history of mistrust and discomfort. However, the role that collections could play in such collaborations is also an interesting research topic that demands further unpacking, as it requires significant knowledge of the culture and the history, whilst connecting the past and the future, as well as the museum and the public.

Most museums, especially those working within a highly sensitive colonial context, tend to adopt strategies they perceive as less risky to interpret and exhibit cultural relics connected to complicated historical and cultural backgrounds. However, Laura Peers and Alison Brown (2003) suggest that the exhibition itself can function as a 'contact zone'. This concept of 'contact zone' is derived from Mary Louise Pratt (1991), and has been further discussed by James Clifford (1997). It refers to a space in which diverse cultures can interact with each other; contacts and conflicts can coexist to foster dialogues and conversations between different communities (Pratt 1991, Clifford 1997). Seeing artifacts as contact zones raises questions on how they might perform a role 'as sources of knowledge and as catalysts for new relationships, both within and between these communities' (Peers and Brown, 2003, p. 5). This idea provides an incentive to explore the merit of cultural objects in revealing historical and cultural significances, reshaping cultural identity, reconsidering difficult pasts, and providing opportunities for healing from the colonial history of source communities.

Apart from the object itself, it is also crucial to consider how museums can build their relationship with visitors. I would suggest that museums should improve their awareness of the public's cultural needs, recognising and respecting their cultural rights, which could help maintain the relationship between museums and the public. Rodolfo Stavenhagen (1998, p. 1) indicates that 'cultural rights ... have not been given much importance ... and they are treated rather as a residual category'. David Anderson (2012, p. 216) takes a further step to explore an innovative recognition of cultural rights, which 'highlights the responsibility of museums to reduce inequalities of social participation'. Anderson (2012, p. 224) also indicates that 'cultural rights can only be achieved if museums and cultural institutions give priority to public learning'. From this perspective, adopting the theory of cultural rights can inspire museums to create more opportunities for the publics of source communities to gain access to objects and cultural-related activities. Ultimately museums have the ability to support them in revisiting forgotten historical knowledge and recover from the difficult past. In this respect, more cross-cultural collaborations and interactive cultural activities will emerge, which could ultimately achieve a reciprocal outcome for both museums and the publics of source communities/countries.

As a thesis that mainly focuses on the Chinese perspective of Sino-Japanese repatriation, the lack of sufficient research on the Japanese side reveals another gap in this project that awaits further consideration and exploration. On the basis of a comprehensive Chinese understanding of repatriation, I would recommend further research to be conducted that looks in particular at Japanese national museums' strategies to address issues regarding the difficult histories of objects and their relations to the Chinese government and Chinese cultural collaborators. Compared to Japanese national museums, private museum have more autonomy

and freedom to deal with their own collections, while the collections of Japanese national museums have already entered the governmental catalogues of national treasures.

Moreover, as national museums, external pressures such as political relations and social pressures will considerably impact the decision-making process of directors, curators and other staff working at national museums. Therefore, it will be an interesting point of entry to analyse current the relationship between Sino-Japanese national museums, find out how they balance the inequalities of the power dynamics, and how they address both international and domestic social pressures through existing cultural cooperation. It is also worth exploring the attitude of Japanese mainstream museums and publics towards the cultural collaboration with China.

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