

MA Thesis

Ritual Comes Before Shooting:

Ritual Archery Propagation Movement in Contemporary China

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Introduction

Archery, the practice of using a bow to shoot arrows, was common in many traditional societies as a means of hunting and combat during warfare. With the arrival of modern weaponry, the central role of archery in the military and hunting decreased, relegating the practice to the realms of competitive sport and recreational activity. Unlike in Korea and Japan where the traditional style of archery continued in existence, the practice had disappeared almost completely in China where traditional archery in East Asia is said to have originated. It was not until recently that time was ripe the traditional form of archery's revival in China. Since 2014, the movement regarding Ritual Archery 禮射 propagation has been widely practised through the reenactment project of the Archery Ritual of the Shires 鄉射禮 as one of nation's key academic research topics under the name "The Reenactment of *Yili*¹ and the Research on Rebuilding Contemporary Daily Etiquette 《儀禮》復原與當代日常禮儀重建研究". Given that the project is managed by the National Planning Office of Philosophy and Social Science with the substantial support from the Chinese government, alongside China's eagerness in presenting itself as a soft superpower, cultural heritage emerged as the state's major interest. The glorification and revival of traditional values likewise seems to wield great influence on China's future manifestation of cultural heritage. In this sense, with the Ritual Archery Propagation Movement's special emphasis on archery-related rituals, Ritual Archery has been introduced as an attractive and appealing subject in terms of both spiritual and material aspects.

The main research questions this paper seeks to answer is: how the Ritual Archery Propagation Movement starting in 2014 is given significance and legitimized so as to be in line with the larger drive by the state to promote and revive traditional Chinese values? Followed by subquestions: how is the Ritual Archery Propagation Movement developed? To what extent does this movement integrate with governmental policies? Within what context, does Ritual Archery Propagation Movement gain its authority and power? How does the state's official desire of

¹ *Yili*, literally the Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies, is a Chinese classical text about rites, ceremonies, social customs, and social protocols of Zhou Dynasty (ca.1046-256 BCE).

promoting and reviving traditional value affect the understanding and transmission of the cultural heritage, namely Ritual Archery within contemporary Chinese social practices? How the embodied experience of practising archery shapes the way in which Ritual Archery is understood and accepted or even incorporated into society?

The ultimate goal of the thesis is to contribute to the cultural heritage discourse through a critical examination of the ongoing legitimate procedure of the Ritual Archery Propagation Movement from both the governmental and private side. Likewise, this paper seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of how the Chinese government attempts to establish and promote a culturally advanced China through its recent narratives and practices in propagating traditional Chinese values.

Methodology and Literature Review

As the current Ritual Archery Propagation Movement is led by the Center for Chinese Ritual Studies of Tsinghua University 清華大學禮學研究中心, I have selected the affiliated organization, Tsinghua Ritual Archery Workshop 禮射研習會 and the reenactment project of the Archery Ritual of the Shires as cases for my research. Considering that the current Ritual Archery Propagation Movement is a recently developed movement, when gathering and analyzing the data of Ritual Archery and the movement, my sources include the official website of Ritual Archery Workshop², news articles, secondary literature regarding Archery Rituals 射禮, proceedings of Ritual Archery related conferences and symposiums such as the First International Symposium on Ritual Archery in 2017, and a textbook published by Ritual Archery Workshop.

This paper focuses primarily on cultural governance of China to draw an inference on how the Chinese government has attempted to preserve and promote cultural heritage as the background of the Ritual Archery Propagation Movement. In this paper, cultural governance has served as a conceptual framework for

² Official websites of Tsinghua Ritual Archery Workshop:
http://www.zhonghualixue.com/index.php/home/index/list_pic/catid/30/p/1.html

interpreting China's current practice in creating a culturally advanced image to export "China Dream 中國夢" and shapes the understanding of the cultural heritage. I first referred to Callahn's interpretation of "China Dream," then referred to Moon's viewpoint of cultural governance as a government cultural policy, namely the promotion of culture by the government in a broader sense.³ Then I adopted Bang's understanding of cultural governance as cultural management and a political form⁴, "new kind of top down leadership and management" as a narrower sense to analyze China's cultural policy and its manifestations.⁵ In the context of Chinese cultural governance which directly connects to the government's manifestation of cultural heritage, I have referred to Perry's study that cultural governance as a means to glorify Chinese tradition and values to strengthen party propaganda. For analyzing the Chinese government's official narrative toward cultural policy and cultural heritage management, I have referred to specific Xi Jinping's speeches, including the official report from the official website of the Ministry of Culture. In Chapter 2, I incorporate references from various archery-related classical texts such as Confucian philosophical texts and secondary literature regarding historical and cultural significances of traditional archery to look at how the movement emphasized the ritual aspect of traditional archery. For example, I have referred to Zhang, Yao, and Ji's article "Zhixuyu dexing: XianQin shejian jingsai de lishi wenhua jiedu (Order and Moral: Historic and Cultural Interpret of Archery Competition in Pre-Qin)" for the evolution of archery in Chinese society, examining how archery had once been a source of entertainment, martial training, and competitive sport, but also conflated with the concept of moral cultivation for practitioners and literati to be integrated as an indispensable part of rites and ceremonies. Chapter 3 zooms in on the revival process in the course of promoting the movement, paying special attention to the

³ Moon 2001, 432. "[...] government's direct or indirect involvement in the promotion and administration of programs of cultural organizations (including museums) existing in specific geographic boundaries with unique financial and administrative arrangements."

⁴ Bang 2004,157. "Culture governance is about how political authority must increasingly operate through capacities for self- and co-governance and therefore needs to act upon, reform, and utilize individual and collective conduct so that it might be amenable to its rule."

⁵ Bang 2004,159.

reenactment project of the Archery Ritual of the Shires, as well as examining the movement's challenges and combined efforts in encouraging and promoting the concept of Ritual Archery, namely "Ritual comes before shooting 先禮後射" to archery practitioners and the general public. I refer to Daugbjerg, Eisner, Knudsen, and Schauble to conceptualize reenactment as the key to explaining its function on cultural heritage promotion, as well as its intersection with authenticity to coordinate the promotion of Ritual Archery. I also relied on Selby and Rorge to demonstrate the physical display and internal mental state of traditional archery in both competition and individual training, as well as how this notion of moral striving is further conveyed and reinforced by the Ritual Archery Propagation Movement.

Chapter 1

Cultural Governance and the Birth of the Ritual Archery Propagation Movement

Introduction

This chapter will chart China's present-day cultural heritage discourse by tracing the trajectory of Chinese cultural heritage which led to the birth of the Ritual Archery Propagation Movement. Unpacking the Cultural Revolution's impact and the current Confucian revival's significance, it will apply the concept of cultural governance as a theoretical framework for understanding the Chinese government's motives and efforts at disseminating traditional Chinese culture.

Cultural Heritage and Cultural Governance of China

China has undergone a radical transformation over the past few decades, with rapid economic development, political upheavals, ideological integration and policy reforms which have a crucial impact in its cultural heritage planning and management. As a new site for global competition, the UNESCO World Heritage list functions as a barometer for international reputation among nations seeking to demonstrate their soft power. China has joined the scene as an active player in the field of cultural heritage since its debut in the International Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1985, ranking second in the world with a total number of 53 World Heritage Sites now. Synchronously, the development of the Chinese heritage field needs to be contextualized against the backdrop of the Cultural Revolution, a sociopolitical movement which was initiated to eradicate the "Four Olds"—old customs, old culture, old habits and old ideas, under Chairman Mao Zedong's rule from 1966 to 1976. This decade-long chaos, involving "cultural vandalism", has not only brought irreparable damage to China's cultural legacy on a national scale with mass demolition of historically valuable sites and objects, but also left Chinese people with indelible scars at all levels, putting the

intellectual citizens in the doldrums for long. Numerous cultural practices and customs that have long been cherished in the course of Chinese history were stigmatized as the remnants of old traditions, becoming objects of contempt and derision. Amongst them, Confucianism, the philosophy founded on ideas by Chinese philosopher Confucius (6th century BCE) who emphasized benevolence⁶, and Confucius-related sites such as Cemetery of Confucius, Temple of Confucius and the Confucius Family Mansion were the main targets of “struggle sessions 批鬥”⁷ and there was a crescendo of criticism and destruction with the rise of the Anti-Confucius Campaign⁸ in its later stage. The extent of the damage has not been quantified, the “scope of mass destruction nationwide was so grave that it may never be fully chronicled,”⁹ and “the communist ideological struggle against feudalism and traditional Confucian thinking was unlikely to provide a sympathetic environment in which it might be revived.”¹⁰ Without exaggeration, any sociocultural vacuum in contemporary China and in its cultural life can be traced back to and give an account of the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution. Besides the crippled economy and millions of ruined lives, the traumatic experiences of this turmoil period have dragged Chinese people into an overwhelming sense of mutual distrust and enmity, which is oftentimes described a catastrophic loss of national spirit and morality by Chinese scholars.

With the implementation of Deng Xiaoping’s Open-door policy in 1987, China entered an era of planned economy and a new phase of cultural reform. The Policy opened up wide-ranging cultural opportunities as cultural heritage-related policies gradually took shape in ways that reflected China’s cultural pluralism while also providing the framework for redefining and reforming the cultural landscape.

⁶ Benevolence also stands for “humanity” or “authoritative conduct.” The meaning of the term is very broad but often associates with morality and cultivation in Confucian philosophy.

⁷ A form of public humiliation and torture practiced during the Cultural Revolution.

⁸ A political propaganda campaign that criticized nearly everything related to Confucius during 1973-1976, the later Cultural Revolution period.

⁹ Sofield and Li 1998, 369.

¹⁰ Selby 2000, 389.

The ideological confusion among Chinese people caused by changing values following the accelerated economic development and the pervading sense of menace attributed to the changing international circumstances have precipitated the emergence of shared values in the name of traditional Chinese culture. Founded on the idea that “China’s cultural tradition has become a strong bond for ethnic harmony and national unity,”¹¹ the glorified traditional Chinese culture has manifested as emblematic party propaganda to strengthen government legitimacy. Cultural governance has thus been deployed as a symbolic resource for the perpetuation of the state system and political authority in staking their claim to a “right to rule.”¹²

The major fundamental goal of cultural governance in China is to uphold and consolidate the legitimacy of the government through enhancement of core socialist value¹³. The application of cultural soft power has resonated strongly with Chinese leadership since Hu Jintao, the former General-Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) made a claim that “culture is the lifeblood of the nation,”¹⁴ and addressed the need to develop China’s cultural soft power since “the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation will definitely be accompanied by the thriving of Chinese culture”¹⁵ in the 17th National Congress of CCP in 2007. This instrumental emphasis on the promotion and management of cultural soft power has gained full force under the incoming CCP General-Secretary leader Xi Jinping in the name of Chinese Dream, “the great revival of the Chinese nation,” as his signature policy and unequivocal political line. Xi has set out his vision for manifesting a series of discourses on inheriting and disseminating traditional Chinese culture in a global

¹¹ Ai 2011, 130.

¹² Perry 2013, 3.

¹³ Core socialist value here refers to the value of “prosperity, democracy, civility, harmony, free dom, equality, justice, the rule of law, patriotism, dedication, integrity and friendship.” See Xi, *The governance of China*, 188.

¹⁴ “Full text of Hu Jintao's report at 18th Party Congress (6)”, *Globaltimes*, accessed May 03, 2019, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/744884.shtml>

¹⁵ “China's Soft Power Campaign”, *Wilsoncenter*, accessed May 01, 2019, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/chinas-soft-power-campaign>

context, stating that “outstanding traditional culture is the root of the heritage and development of a country and a nation”, revealing the Party's growing soft power ambitions and strong cultural confidence. ¹⁶

Under these circumstances, China’s consistent attempts at systematizing and inscribing its tangible heritage have led China to exert a stronger influence over the international heritage field. At the domestic level, in response to Xi’s concern that “[w]e must be sober-minded in saying that we are a country of great culture and are in period of rapid urbanization, so cultural protection work remains an arduous task,” strengthening the overall commitment to efforts at protecting cultural heritage as a means of boosting China’s standing has become an urgent matter of public policy.¹⁷ Laying the foundation for cultural relic protection, the State Council has released a series of policies and regulations for cultural relics, such as regulations on museums, plans on revitalizing China's traditional crafts, and established dedicated management institutions. The Ministry of Culture and the State Administration of Cultural Heritage likewise formulated and issued a series of suggestions for cultural product promotion, and carried out action plans on the maintenance and protection of historically and culturally significant sites. Recent Chinese heritage and management policies have reflected tremendous efforts at highlighting the significance of intangible cultural heritage (ICH)¹⁸ and addressing issues related to cultural governance, management and practice. The Chinese government has established a comprehensive system to preserve ICH and folk artistic forms since 2011, where ICH was introduced to China as a key concept with the enactment of the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Intangible Cultural

¹⁶ “Full text: China's new party chief Xi Jinping's speech”, *Wilsoncenter*, accessed May 01, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-20338586>

¹⁷ “China's Xi orders better protection of cultural heritage”, *Reuters*, accessed May 01, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-art/chinas-xi-orders-better-protection-of-cultural-heritage-idUSKCN0X9164>

¹⁸ According to the Article 2 of *the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, intangible cultural heritage stands for “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.” See <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention> for the full text.

Heritage. This legislation has allowed China's State Council and the Ministry of Culture to announce and confirm 1,327 national representative intangible cultural heritage items, and 1,986 inheritors of these ICH items at a rapid pace by the end of 2017. It further facilitated the enacting of local protection regulations on the intangible cultural heritage and traditional folk cultures, increasing the scope for national financial subsidies for inheritors of national intangible cultural heritage, establishing ICH training centers and exhibition centers, instituting workshops for cultivation of inheritors of national intangible cultural heritage items, and training the representatives from colleges and universities.¹⁹ In addition to that, the International Festival of the Intangible Cultural Heritage hosted biannually in Chengdu since 2007, as the only thematic festival in the world, explicitly speaks of China's enthusiasm for ICH with extensive diplomatic efforts aimed at reclaiming China's national strength and global power. Parallel to China's eagerness in presenting itself as a super soft power which provided the impetus for a discussion on Chinese identity, China's current wave of "Heritage Fever" has provided a new stimulus to the issue of cultural authenticity which corresponds more firmly to the glorification and revival of traditional values in China's present-day heritage discourse and its future manifestation of cultural heritage.

Chinese Traditional Values and Confucian Revival

While the so-called Confucian revival of the early to mid-1990 was "the joint product of American futurologists eager to see in Confucianism a positive force in capitalist modernization, plus East Asian intellectuals anxious to provide a global and deterritorialized ideology to post-communist Asian societies"²⁰ to promote an independent and civilized image of China, the Confucian revival in present-day China is reportedly guided by a strong ideology of "making China great again."²¹ As China

¹⁹ See "Cultural protection achievements of the last five years", http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/culture/2017-09/20/content_32205227.htm for more details.

²⁰ Burke and Prochaska 2008, 43.

²¹ "Making China great again: Xi Jinping's troubled nationalist revival", *NewStatesman*, accessed

stands at the crossroads of diverging old and new value systems, the issue of whether Chinese values should combine with or replace Western values has been keenly debated by the academia and policymakers. The concept of “cultural competition” pervades the understanding of this cultural clash, where it suggests that China’s ability to “provide a different mode of cultural development from western cultural evolution determines whether Chinese culture can prevail in the cultural competition between the Eastern and the Western world in the 21st century.”²² Being influenced by the belief that China is entering a time to tell its own story, this story-telling potential ranges from a desire of spreading “China Dream” to exporting the “China Model.”²³ During the 19th National Congress of CCP in 2014, Xi further commented, “We should increase China's soft power, give a good Chinese narrative, and better communicate China's messages to the world.”²⁴ This endeavor to position China as a new center of global prosperity and order is backed up by Confucian futures studies, primarily by looking to the past to explain the present and future. With growing nostalgia for China’s ancient golden age, there are compelling interpretations and insights that China’s current rise to global power is “not without precedent, it is actually the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation to its ‘natural place’ at the center of the world.”²⁵ In this context, there is a tangible ground for Confucian classics to be appointed and implemented as a key to Chinese story-telling and Chinese value systems, for its future manifestation of global influence.

The contemporary resurgence of Confucianism undoubtedly has a political purpose, particularly in the climate of a fierce centralization of power intended to consolidate Xi’s position as the unchallengeable party leader. This has engendered the shift from a total denial to the selective and strategic adoption of the Confucian

May 01, 2019, <https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/books/2018/10/making-china-great-again-xi-jinping-s-troubled-nationalist-revival>

²² Peng 2017, 2.

²³ Callahan 2013, 10.

²⁴ “China's soft power is on the rise”, *Chinadaily*, accessed May 02, 2019, <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201802/23/WS5a8f59a9a3106e7dcc13d7b8.html>

²⁵ Callahan 2013, 11.

concept, as Chinese traditional culture is transformed from being considered backward into unique asset that could wield China's influence on the global stage. Accordingly, Chinese traditional culture has been depicted and praised as 'outstanding', 'brilliant', 'fine', 'unique', 'distinctive' and 'profound' in Xi's political speeches. At the opening ceremony of the International Conference Commemorating the 2565th Anniversary of Confucius' Birth and the Fifth Congress of the International Confucian Association in 2014, Xi made an emblematic speech, saying, "We must never forget our history; only then can we open up a new era. [...] We should learn how to best carry forward our fine cultural traditions, and at the same time promote contemporary culture"²⁶ which further confirmed that traditional Chinese culture is the foundation for Chinese to deal with the global mingling and clashing of cultures.

Within academic circles, the revival of Confucian value highlights and denotes a variety of meanings ranging from "trust" to "belief", values said to have vanished in current Chinese social intercourse. With rapid societal changes generating grave concern, Confucian ideas have emerged as a solution to admonish frivolity in society by advocating ritual 禮 and virtue 德.²⁷ A considerable amount of Confucius-related sites and objects with historical significance have recaptured past glory and many are currently being reviewed in the name of "Nation's Key Academic Research Topics." These projects are led by distinguished scholars of the Chinese academic field, but basically come under the purview of The National Social Science Fund of China which is managed directly by the National Planning Office of Philosophy and Social Science with substantial support from China's central government. Every project thereby can be explicitly understood as the state's official gesture to promote and to improve the awareness of traditional Chinese cultural

²⁶ Xi 2017, 341.

²⁷ In Confucian Philosophy, ritual in a broader sense is in line with social system, refers to ceremonies of ancestor worship, the burial of parents, and the rules governing respectful and appropriate behavior between parents and children. In a narrow sense it is central to self-cultivation and ethical cultivation. Virtue associates with morality to make up ideal person. See more details in <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-chinese/#VirEthDaoJunRen>. There is also an interesting interpretation of Ritual and Virtue as 'physical force' and 'moral force'. See more details in Camus 2017, 125.

values. After much meandering, situated as less materialistic values, the once-abandoned Confucian ideas have been reframed in a new context to serve the role of directing people towards Chinese humanistic values.

Traditional Archery Revival in College

After the mass demolition of tradition prompted by the Cultural Revolution, Traditional archery's existence was severely threatened.²⁸ It was only very recently that traditional archery in China was ripe for revitalization. Through the rise of Confucian revival that connotes core Chinese value,²⁹ a special emphasis is placed on intangible cultural heritage in order to allow traditional archery an opportunity to be practised on the tertiary-level campuses. Following the listing of the reenactment project of the Archery Ritual of the Shires as a subcategory of the "The Reenactment of *Yili* (the Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies) and the Research on Rebuilding Contemporary Daily Etiquette", this designation has readily installed traditional archery as an important form of intangible cultural heritage.³⁰ With the advent of

²⁸ Stephen Selby, 1997. "The archery Tradition of China." accessed May 01, 2019. http://www.atarn.org/chinese/chin_art.htm

²⁹ "Core value is a fundamental factor for the texture and orientation of a culture, are the soul of cultural soft power and a key to building a nation's cultural soft power. In essence, cultural soft power depends on the vitality, cohesion and appeal of the core values of a nation. Therefore, cultivating and disseminating the core values and effectively integrating the people's mindset is an important means of ensuring that the social system operates in a normal manner and that social order is effectively maintained. It is also a major aspect of a nation's governing system and capacity." See Xi, *The governance of China*, p.181

³⁰ Intangible cultural heritage manifests inter alia in the following domains, in which traditional archery almost fully fulfills.

(a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;

(b) performing arts;

(c) social practices, rituals and festive events;

(d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;

(e) traditional craftsmanship.

the reenactment project, traditional archery is given a deeper significance to highlight its ritual orientation to create a synergy effect in the later promotion in the campus under the name of Ritual Archery Propagation Movement.

The revival of the archery tradition in its early stage in college is indeed a joint effort of a large number of participants, organizations, and individuals. For instance, LUT (Lanzhou University of Technology) Traditional Archery Club, as the very first official archery-related student association in mainland China since 2012, collaborated with various universities and hosted several traditional archery competitions which are open to students from schools and colleges.³¹ Subsequently, more university-level traditional archery associations were created across the country, and their successful management of interuniversity competitions also fueled the foundation of The University Alliance of Traditional Archery 高校射藝聯盟 which was later enlarged to The University Alliance of Ritual Archery of China 中國高校禮射聯盟. Backed up by their joint slogan of “promoting traditional culture, reviving Chinese traditional archery”, these university-based associations sought to find ways to differentiate themselves virtually and visually from the recreational archery societies. Besides technical training to meet the needs of target shooting, the implementation of commandments regarding archers and the Way of archery received a great stimulus from numerous archery-inspired texts and references. Given that Confucian philosophy is the key feature of traditional archery, archery has long been perceived as one of the Six Arts³²六藝 which stresses the Confucian concept of “Superior man君子”³³ to be labeled as a gentlemanly sport, enabling

See <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention> for the full text.

³¹ See <https://baike.baidu.com/item/兰州理工大学传统弓射艺联盟协会/4818139?fr=aladdin> for details.

³² Six Arts are Ritual, Music, Archery, Charioteering, Calligraphy, and Mathematics that associates with Confucian philosophy and education.

³³ Superior man is also known as “noble man”, “ideal man” and “gentleman”, refers to ethical nobility in Confucian Philosophy.

The connection between superior man and archery is given by following phrases. *The Book of Rites*. XLIII. She yi', <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cfu/liki2/liki243.htm>, Translated by James Legge, 1885. “Confucius said, 'The student of virtue has no contentions. If it be said that he cannot avoid them,

literati to consider archery as a means of “assessing an archer's virtuous conduct 觀德行.”³⁴ In other words, the growing perception that archery is not a matter of target-hitting, but a continuous moral striving of self-reflection and self-cultivation, has allowed archery, characterised by “the man who would be benevolent is like the archer 仁者如射,” to be regarded as a symbolic measure of perfect virtue of a man.³⁵ This concept has been well approached with the growing demand for practising and being engaged with an authentic Chinese traditional sport in colleges. To illustrate, the principle “Not to speak when practising archery and discipline your thoughts and behavior; When misses the target, seek for the cause of failure in yourself. 习射无言, 正心正己, 发而不中, 反求诸己” is derived from the chapter She Yi 射義 (The meaning of the ceremony of archery) in the Confucian classic text *Liji* 禮記³⁶ (Record of Rites):³⁷

“Archery suggests to us the way of benevolence. [The archer] seeks to be correct in himself, and then discharges his arrow. If it misses the mark, he is not angry with the one who has surpassed himself, but turns around and seeks [for the

shall this be in archery? (But) he bows complaisantly to his competitor, ascends (the hall), descends (again), and exacts the forfeit of drinking. In his contention, he is still the superior man.”

³⁴ The concept derived from She Yi (The meaning of the ceremony of archery) of the Confucian classic text *Liji* (Record of Rites), “The archers, in advancing, retiring, and all their movements, were required to observe the rules. With minds correct, and straight carriage of the body, they were to hold their bows and arrows skilfully and firmly; and when they did so, they might be expected to hit the mark. In this way (from their archery) their characters could be seen.” Translated by James Legge, 1885.

³⁵ The term benevolence and the connection with archery can be seen from *Mencius* 2A6. Translated by James Legge, 1885. “The man who would be benevolent is like the archer. The archer adjusts himself and then shoots. If he misses, he does not murmur against those who surpass himself. He simply turns round and seeks the cause of his failure in himself.”

Mencius is a collection of anecdotes and conversations of Confucian philosopher Mencius 孟子 (ca. 372-289 BCE), and it was supposedly compiled around 300 BCE.

³⁶ *The Book of Rites* is supposedly compiled during Warring States Period (475 BC-221 BC).

³⁷ This Phrase is the 10th commandments of LUT Traditional Archery Club and Traditional Archery Association of Xuzhou University of Technology. See <https://baike.baidu.com/item/兰州理工大学传统弓射艺联盟协会/4818139?fr=aladdin> for the full list of commandments.

cause of failure] in himself.”³⁸

This repeatedly emphasized notion of virtue in the course of practising traditional archery also corresponds with the political rhetoric that “traditional Chinese virtues are the essence of Chinese culture and embody rich ethical and moral resources.”³⁹ This active revival of archery tradition in universities thus could be understood as a spontaneous and voluntary action of people who believe that traditional archery is an essential part of Chinese traditional culture that could benefit young Chinese by performing internal and external cultivation through rigorous training. Archery thereby has been transformed from an abandoned practice to the focus of intensive spiritual value as well as material value and has emerged as an appealing display of Chinese traditional value among the academic field and within the community of scholars. Combined with the larger force’s guideline that “Young people must integrate correct moral cognition, conscious moral development and active moral practice, consciously establish and practice the core socialist values, and take the lead in advocating good social conduct. Young People must strengthen theoretical improvement and moral cultivation, take the initiative to carry forward patriotism, collectivism and socialism, and actively advocate social and professional ethics, and family virtues.”⁴⁰ On this basis, the Ritual Archery Propagation Movement has found a way into campuses to stress cultural implication and practical significance of Rituals as a core of Chinese civilization.

Conclusion

This chapter presented that Chinese traditional culture is situated within the core values in the present-day Chinese political narrative, as the implementation of cultural governance draws the connection between Chinese history and contemporary Chinese society. While providing a useful framework to facilitate a

³⁸ *The Book of Rites*. XLIII. She yi’, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cfu/liki2/liki243.htm>, Translated by James Legge, 1885.

³⁹ Xi 2017, 182.

⁴⁰ Xi 2017, 57.

holistic understanding of traditional archery as cultural heritage, the research examined the contexts in which the Ritual Archery Propagation Movement gained ascendancy and centrality in the state rhetoric. Through the bottom-up efforts at reviving traditional archery in the campus, together with state's official narratives on stressing intangible cultural heritage and the manifestation of Confucian Revival, the Ritual Archery Movement has made the leap to a bigger stage as a part of cultural revival.

Chapter 2

Vivifying Ritual Archery

Introduction

This chapter seeks to contextualize the various references of ritual aspects of archery in order to identify a concept for Ritual Archery and discuss how the Ritual Archery Propagation Movement, including the Reenactment project of Archery Ritual of Shires are developed and valued.

From Traditional Archery to Ritual Archery

Archery has long carried mental and ceremonial significance on top of its function as a practical skill for hunting and warfare. Yet the Ritual Archery Propagation Movement in contemporary China has been given a deeper significance through being registered as a subcategory of “The Reenactment of *Yili* and the Research on Rebuilding Contemporary Daily Etiquette,” the propagation movement has arisen from a context that contextualizing the traditional form of archery to socio-cultural phenomenon with its connection to the rituals of Zhou Dynasty (ca.1046-256 BCE), “a ritual system of social practice which Chinese people regard as a unique attribute of Chinese culture.”⁴¹ Whereas archery had previously appeared frequently in figurative and direct speech mostly in relation to authority and power, from the Zhou dynasty (ca.1046-256 BCE) onwards, archery began to possess a socio-cultural value that transformed into a notion of moral learning with the concept of ritual and virtue.⁴² With the belief that there has been much less emphasis on understanding ritual aspects of the archery which provide the key to archery’s context and meaning throughout history, a bulk of studies of Chinese traditional archery has been conducted and developed to present the didactic and edifying notion of traditional

⁴¹ Selby 2000, 49.

⁴² Camus 2017, 55.

archery. This explicitly accentuated archery's ritual basis and long-lasting connotation of moral values, in essence, is a statement of rituals, and implies that Chinese scholars have readily acknowledged the significance of ritual-orientated traditional archery. Accordingly, what is the Ritual? The origin of Ritual was given in the following explanation by the Confucian philosopher Xunzi 荀子:⁴³

What is the origin of Ritual? It is said humankind innately has desires. When a man cannot obtain what he desires, then he is bound to seek it. If in seeking what they desire men are unrestricted and unregulated, then they are sure to fight to get it. Fighting results in chaos, and chaos results in all resources becoming used up. The Early Kings abhorred chaos, so they developed Ritual to bring order out of chaos, to discipline mankind's desires and to provide what they sought. Thus they brought into being a system in which desire did not lead inexorably to an exhaustion of supply, and where supply would not fail to keep up with demand: instead the two developed hand-in-hand. That is the origin of Ritual.⁴⁴

As seen from above, Ritual was developed “to bring order out of chaos, to discipline mankind's desires and to provide what they sought,” and Ritual was the very fabric that bound Chinese society together at that time. What then was ritual's role in the scope of traditional archery? Studies and joint academic research on Chinese traditional archery have attempted to contextualize the various references of archery, affirming that besides archery's function in the service of hunting, warfare and competitive sport, archery has also been a very important form of ritual throughout time. This finds support in many publications that analyze the diverse archery-related ritual ceremonies and events by using the term Archery Ritual. Evidently, what distinguishes the current wave of the Ritual Archery propagation from the aforementioned traditional archery revival, is the use of term Ritual Archery. As the name implies, the concept of Ritual Archery derived its name from Archery Ritual. Archery Ritual is an existing term in Chinese history, and its long trajectory can be traced back to the abovementioned Zhou Dynasty (ca.1046- 256 BCE) where the

⁴³ Xunzi, also widely known as Xun Kuang, was a renowned Confucian thinker. He was supposedly born around 335 BCE.

⁴⁴ Selby 2000, 49.

ancient Chinese ritual system is said to have been established and practised in a strict manner. In the category of Archery Rituals, four main types of archery rituals were practised according to rigid rules: The Major Archery Ritual, the Hospitality Archery Ritual, the Banquet Archery Ritual, and the Archery Ritual of the Shires.⁴⁵

Anciently it was the rule for the feudal lords, when they would practise archery, first to celebrate the ceremony of the Banquet, and for the Great officers and ordinary officers, when they would shoot, first to celebrate the ceremony of the Drinking in the country districts. The ceremony of the Banquet served to illustrate the relation between ruler and subject; that of the District-drinking, to illustrate the distinction between seniors and juniors.⁴⁶

As seen from the phrases, all participants were asked to stringently follow the rules of rituals in order to show respect to and gratitude for the elderly and their seniors. All archery rituals were practised in a context that portrayed the ritual impact of archery and the virtue of participants to connect ritual capability and internal cultivation. Archery possessed a socio-cultural value of ritual and virtue in the sense that they grounded an archer in moral learning.⁴⁷

Nevertheless, it is not solely because the Ritual Archery has rigid rules on rituals and procedures of old days that led the movement to define itself as Ritual Archery. It is necessary to understand why the ritual aspect of archery is important and to whom and for what reasons. Since the movement is facilitated by scholars and

⁴⁵ Selby 2000, 50. The four types of rituals: “The first was the Major Archery Ritual presided over by the king or another ruler. The second was the Hospitality Archery Ritual held in honor of visiting vassals; the third was the Banquet Archery Ritual held at official banquets and finally the Archery Ritual of the Shires held in the feudal fiefs to select archers to be supplied for the service of the royal household.”

⁴⁶ *The Book of Rites*. XLIII. She yi', <http://www.sacred-texts.com/cfu/liki2/liki243.htm>, Translated by James Legge, 1885.

⁴⁷ Lorge 2011, 17. “Archery continued to fulfill an important ritual function through highly formalized competitions for the aristocratic and knightly class. The Zhou construction of formal archery would resonate throughout the rest of imperial Chinese history as a spiritual and social act demonstrating self-cultivation.”

experts with a background in Chinese Ritual Studies, people who have evolved in the course of the movement development readily acknowledged the significance of archery in its ritual orientation. The current leading association in the movement, The Ritual Archery Workshop which is the affiliated organization of the Tsinghua Chinese Ritual Study Centre, defined Ritual Archery⁴⁸ as “a way of shooting that assesses one’s virtuous conduct 觀德之射,” which incorporates ideas of the above-mentioned *She Yi* (The meaning of the ceremony of archery).⁴⁹ Since archery as manifestation of the virtue of the archer first appeared in the *Analects* 論語, the concept of Ritual Archery is inevitably associated and derived from Confucius’s conception of archery.⁵⁰ As Confucius considered archery an ennobling practice, where the ceremonial aspects of the archery contest served and reflected to distinguish the higher cultural mores of gentlemen, archery analogies were consequently used by many thinkers in the Warring State Period (475 -220 BCE) to explain and deliver their larger points toward morality.⁵¹ Thereby archery is regarded to have a direct connection to mental cultivation.⁵² The Following two passages show how archery was metaphorically connected to the pursuit of virtue.

How is an archer to shoot? How is an archer to listen? Releasing the shot in perfect time with the musical note; moreover, to shoot without missing the

⁴⁸ See <http://www.zhonghualixue.com/index.php/home/index/show/catid/30/id/103.html>.

⁴⁹ Translated by James Legge, 1885. “The archers, in advancing, retiring, and all their movements, were required to observe the rules. With minds correct, and straight carriage of the body, they were to hold their bows and arrows skillfully and firmly; and when they did so, they might be expected to hit the mark. In this way (from their archery) their characters could be seen.” *The Book of Rites*. Warring States Period (475 BC - 221 BC).

⁵⁰ Camus 2017, 118.

Analects is a collection of anecdotes and conversations of Confucius 孔子 (ca. 551-479 BCE), and it was supposedly compiled during the Warring States period (475–221 BCE).

⁵¹ Lorge 2011, 19. “[...] the association of chariot driving and archery with the upper class would create a long-lasting connection between these particular skills and noble character. The teachings of such foundational thinkers as Confucius, who was of the knightly class and looked back to earlier times as a golden age, would permanently legitimize archery as an ennobling practice.”

⁵² Lorge 2011, 38.

center of the target. Only one of consummate virtue can do this! Someone not as consummate cannot be relied on to “hit the mark.”⁵³

The Master said, “Surely archery can serve as an illustration of the fact that the gentleman does not compete! Before mounting the stairs to the archery hall, gentlemen bow and defer to one another, and after descending from the hall they mutually offer up toasts. This is how a gentleman ‘competes.’”⁵⁴

The concept of Ritual Archery suggests a possibility for inner cultivation, for it required from the practitioner a clear and focused mind, and this is what truly gave it value beyond the realm of actual fighting,⁵⁵ drawing a link between moral conduct and personal character of an archer.

The Reenactment of Archery Ritual of Shires

Given the huge scope of “The Reenactment of *Yili* and the Research on Rebuilding Contemporary Daily Etiquette” which incorporates the Ritual Archery Propagation Movement in China, the movement initially stressed the importance on the historical reenactment of archery-related ritual ceremonies in its planning phase. Among archery rituals, the Archery Ritual of the Shires has been relatively well-documented and preserved since it was regularly held in spring and autumn as a recreational activity. The Tsinghua Chinese Ritual Study Centre and Jia Li Tang, a ritual study-based association supported by the Moonchu Foundation in Hong Kong, have carried out a seminal video recording project for the reenactment of the Archery Ritual of the Shires from July 2014 to October 2016, featuring the core members of The Ritual Archery Workshop.⁵⁶ The project was reformulated through strict historical accuracy, and the successful launch of the reenactment has been portrayed as a major achievement in their textbook of *Lishe Chujie* (Early Stages of Ritual Archery) in

⁵³ Translated by James Legge. *Li Chi* (The book of Rite), vol. 2 1967, 453.

⁵⁴ Translated by Edward Slingerland. Confucius, *Analects*, 19.

⁵⁵ Lorge 2011, 33.

⁵⁶ See <http://www.zhonghualixue.com/index.php/home/index/show/catid/33/id/43.html> for details.

2016.

The Archery Ritual of the Shires, held either once every three years in the Shires, or twice a year in the prefectures, proceeds from the second section of *Yi Li* (the Book of Etiquette and Ceremonies). The lineup of the Archery Ritual of the Shires consists the host, honored guest, Master of shooting, Master of Ceremonies, Master of Music, court musicians, three pairs of participants which are “upper”, “second” and “lower” pairs of senior and junior contestants, scorekeeper and audience. The Master of Music and court musicians performed the ceremonial music named *Zhou Yu* from *The Book of Odes*⁵⁷ in the third round and the archers were asked to hit the target on the beat otherwise they will not be considered as having qualified. At the end of the ceremony, the losing team demonstrates their respect to the winning team by drinking the penalty wine, and then all participants toast wine to each other. To get an overview of the Archery Ritual of the Shires, the following paragraph is a brief description of the Master of Shooting demonstrating the requirements of the ritual competition during the first phase of the competition in a warm-up session where no score was counted.

The ritual is in the form of a contest between three pairs of archers who have been seeded by age, seniority and skill. The seeding process may have taken place in another associated ritual, the Ritual of Taking Wine in the Shires, which was intended to rank the aristocracy by age and seniority. The ritual takes place in an imposing hall with an expansive courtyard surrounded by a wall. The hall is in fact a school known as a *xiang* or *xu* (a name which changed over time). Towards the northern end is a roofed pavilion with a raised floor, giving the impression of a theatrical stage. In this pavilion sit the host and chief guests in special reserved places between the two main columns supporting the roof. Access to the pavilion is gained by two sets of stone steps on the south side of the pavilion. Towards the southern end of the courtyard a single target butt is set up. The target face is covered with a cloth. To one side of the target is a small screen sheltering the scorer.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ *The Book of Odes* is well-known as the oldest collection of Chinese poetry, and it was supposedly compiled around Western Zhou (ca.1046 –771 BCE).

⁵⁸ Selby 2000, 54.

To quote the opening and closing scenes of the performance:

The three pairs wait to the west of the hall facing south: their approach is on the east side. The Master of Shooting comes over to the west of the hall, bares his left arm and shoulder, puts a thumb ring on his right thumb, puts on an arm-guard and then picks up a bow from the west of the steps. He holds four arrows together between his right forefinger and middle finger, with his thumb hooked around the string, the arrows at right-angles to the string, arrowheads level with the grip.⁵⁹ He goes up into the hall by the west steps, and facing north at the top of the steps, he addresses the guest: 'The bows and arrows are ready. The assembled officials invite you to shoot.' The guest replies: 'I have no skill in shooting. As you request to start, please proceed.' The Master of Shooting then proceeds to the Eastern Steps, faces north-east and addresses the host: 'We have asked the guest if we may commence the shooting: he agrees.'

[...]

The shooting finishes and all grasp their bows without any arrows in hand, salute to the south and then salute just as they did when they went up to shoot. The senior contestant goes down three steps and the junior follows him slightly to the right, separated by one step. Then they walk side by side, the senior contestant to the left. In the same order as when going up to shoot, they keep to the left [of the second pair] cross in front of the steps and salute to each other. They proceed to the west of the hall, south of the Master of Ceremonies, take off their breast-guards, tabs and bracers, put their sleeves back down and wait at the west of the hall, facing the south, approaching from the east. All three pairs do this. The Master of Shooting puts down his rod, leans it against the west side of the west steps, goes up onto the podium, and facing the north addresses the guest: 'All three pairs have finished shooting.' The guest bows.⁶⁰

It can be inferred from the text that archery ritual is not merely a contest or a game of playing-to-win, as the essence of the ceremony is to demonstrate the archer's virtue to the audience by following a rigid ritual protocol. From the Confucian

⁶⁰ Selby 2000, 54-55, 59.

perspective, the correct demonstration of ancient etiquette gave the rich content which constitutes the notion of moral striving and moral adjustment, contributing to archer's inner cultivation. Therefore, even archery ritual can sometimes function as a recreational activity, where "the outward expression of the correct rites was directly tied to and affected the inner state of mind [of performers and practitioners]."⁶¹ Besides this phrase having its root in the proper conduct of participants in archery rituals, according to the project leader and the director of Tsinghua Chinese Ritual Study Center, Peng Lin, this is also associated with the belief that there was a rich humanistic connotation in the course of learning and practising traditional archery, which is not only aimed at cultivating one's mind and manners but also enables practitioners to be in harmony with others to reflect the Chinese humanistic quality.⁶² Again, situated at the heart of the propagation movement, the historical reenactment of archery ritual is correspondingly important to the archery revival movement itself. In addition to that, together with the People's Sports Publishing House of China, an affiliated institution of General Administration of Sport of China, Tsinghua Ritual Study Center published a book named *Lishe Chujie* (Early Stages of Ritual Archery) that defines the proper way of practising Ritual Archery, ranges from the correct manner of stringing and unstringing the bow to the contest rules in 2016.⁶³ This book was designed and published as the textbook of Ritual Archery at its initial stage, intended to be circulated in universities and schools. Under the influence of such promotion, traditional archery related performance was widely conducted during culture festivals in many university campuses.

Parallel to state's official promotion on establishing a cultural base at colleges⁶⁴, the Ritual Archery Propagation Movement is likewise facilitated through

⁶¹ Lorge 2011, 196.

⁶² Peng 2017, 97.

⁶³ For practising Ritual Archery see The Eight Ways of Ritual Archery, *Lishe Chujie* 34-66. For contexts rules, see 149-160.

⁶⁴ Xi 2017, 183. "We should create some forms of ceremonies and conduct various memorial and celebration events to disseminate mainstream values and enhance the people's sense of identity and of belonging. Efforts should be made to integrate the requirements of the core socialist values into various activities concerning intellectual and cultural progress, so as to attract more people to participate in such activities, upgrade their moral outlook and foster civic virtues in society for

establishing the Ritual Archery Research Base 礼射研习基地 at universities, primary and secondary schools. To qualify for a research base applicant institutions must fulfill a list of key requirements set by The Ritual Archery Workshop of Tsinghua Chinese Ritual Study Centre.⁶⁵ In addition, many universities followed the lead of Tsinghua University in setting up the Ritual Archery courses from September 2015⁶⁶, Chengdu University⁶⁷ and Chongqing University of Education opened traditional archery courses which consisted of studies on archery-related classical texts, archery training and craftsmanship of traditional archery equipment, aimed at encouraging learning, practising and the experiencing of traditional Chinese archery culture. Interuniversity competitions likewise enable students to refine their skills and learn from other archers across the country. Most recently, 2019 Tsinghua University Ritual Archery Competition and The Inaugural Beijing Primary and Secondary Schools Ritual Archery Invitation was held at Tsinghua University.⁶⁸

family happiness, extending care to others and contributing more to society.”

⁶⁵ See <http://www.zhonghualixue.com/index.php/home/index/show/catid/33/id/37.html> for detailed requirements.

⁶⁶ See <http://archery.sport.org.cn/news/2015/0921/137598.html> for more details.

⁶⁷ See http://news.cdu.edu.cn/index.php?m=news&a=show&news_id=23717 for more details.

⁶⁸ See http://www.sohu.com/a/322902691_406483 for more details of archery competition.

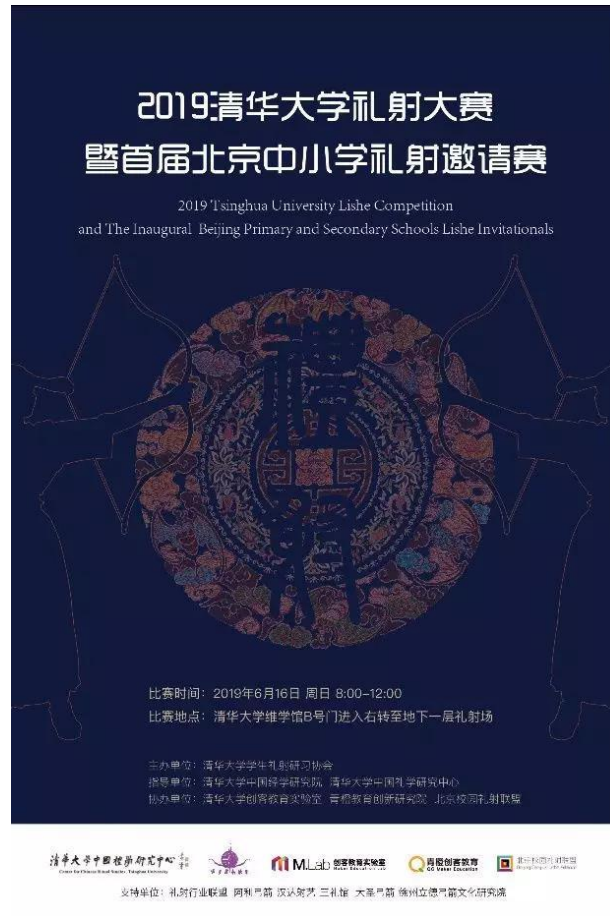


FIGURE 169. The poster of 2019 Tsinghua University Ritual Archery Competition and The Inaugural Beijing Primary and Secondary Schools Ritual Archery Invitation

We have seen from the above that Ritual was developed to bring order out of chaos, and to discipline mankind's desires. Ritual helped to form a system of social practice. In this social system, rituals were “partly a form of religious observance among the aristocracy and partly a social rite of submission.”⁷⁰ This means, at the time of the Zhou, Ritual was a practice confined to the aristocracy, not for the peasantry, the majority of the population. Then the current active revival of the archery tradition with ritual orientation situated at its core sparks the intriguing question of whether contemporary Chinese society is under a kind of unruliness and chaos that needed the emergence of the concept Ritual to direct people. Recalling the background of the

⁶⁹ Picture source: http://www.sohu.com/a/322902691_406483

⁷⁰ Selby 2000, 49.

overall Confucian Revival from the academic circle, the answer seems obvious. Given this background, the propagation movement's development objective is to improve overall awareness of ritual in China by creating conditions for a sustainable revival of the traditional archery. In furtherance of the purposes of promoting the concept of ritual archery, as well as its practice, the Ritual Archery Workshop has adopted the concept derived from the six ministries⁷¹ regarding its organizational structure and administrative examination and put moral learning as their principle notion. It strives to have high moral values through practising ritual archery, providing health benefits to practitioners, and reestablishing a contemporary culture of Ritual Archery as its ultimate goal. This appreciation of its ritual impact is driven by a belief that the practice of archery rituals could contribute to rectifying the social order and creating harmony for Chinese society. Within this perimeter, efforts of the movement are mostly concentrated on enhancing rigorous training, establishing a well-sourced program and disseminating the practice of Ritual Archery on a national scale.

Conclusion

This chapter explored numerous archery-inspired texts and references to present the historical and cultural panorama of traditional archery in order to contribute to Ritual Archery's meaning-making process. In line with the propagation movement's aims to motivate Chinese people to appreciate the Chinese core value and Chinese tradition by embracing the idea and notion of Rituals, next chapter will follow the path of the Reenactment project of Archery Ritual of Shires, discussing how the government's eagerness in promoting and reviving traditional Chinese values and its top-down strategy in the political setup has shaped and affected the understanding and transmission of Ritual Archery in contemporary Chinese society.

⁷¹ The Six Ministries refers to a governmental structure functioned during Imperial China, mainly from Sui Dynasty (581-618 CE) to Yuan dynasty (1271-1368 CE). They were namely the Ministries of Personnel, Rites, Revenue, War, Justice, and Works.

Chapter 3

Ritual Archery on the Ground

Introduction

Chapter 3 will principally portray the current practice on visualizing the ritualized form of Ritual Archery, a revival through reenactment in constructing and promoting the Ritual Archery Propagation Movement. Besides exploring to what extent this movement has integrated with governmental policies, the chapter also examines how the state's official desire of creating a civilized image of the country shapes the understanding of the culture heritage. While presenting the underlying challenges that the movement faced, the latter half of the chapter will discuss how practitioners on the ground embrace the concept of "Ritual comes before shooting" to shape the way in which Ritual Archery is understood and accepted or even incorporated into contemporary Chinese society.

A Revival through Reenactment

Under the guise of reviving traditional Chinese value in order to establish a culturally advanced China, promoting cultural heritage has been an active field of investigation, gaining significant attention from academics and policymakers in recent years. Most attention has been paid towards the actual practices on the ground, addressing a critical intersection between cultural heritage and public awareness. In the center of such fostering, is that young Chinese should practise Chinese traditional culture and the core socialist values⁷² in the field.⁷³ To achieve this, the Chinese government has

⁷² Xi 2017, 187. "In ancient China our ancestors developed core values highlighted by 'propriety, righteousness, honesty and a sense of shame- the four anchors of our moral foundation, and a question of life and death for the country."

⁷³ Xi 2017, 184. "All social administrative agencies should make it their responsibility to advocate the core socialist values and reflect them in their routine work so that all activities conforming with the core values are encouraged and those running."

initiated plans to establish approximately 100 cultural heritage bases at higher-learning institutions nationwide by 2020 in order to promote and disseminate traditional Chinese culture. According to the Ministry of Education, cultural heritage embodies ethnic and folk music, dance, opera, sports, arts and crafts, and each base will target students who are not majoring in arts or sports as elective courses. In particular, the ministry suggests universities and colleges collaborate with folk artists and intangible cultural heritage inheritors, or to hire them as visiting professors. By completing each course, each student will be awarded two credits with 36 hours of class workloads.⁷⁴

Under these circumstances, to meet the growing and diverse demands for performing “living” cultures with authenticity, reenactment has surfaced as a feasible approach in representing cultural heritage. Reenactment practices refer to performance and production in the present, stressing immediacy vividness and participation.⁷⁵ The historical reenactment of Archery Ritual of shires has functioned as a key to the overall propagation Movement of Ritual Archery, and the rich details of the ritual impacts of the archery ceremony are then expected to garner the scrupulous attention of the audience, creating a shared experience for both audience and participants. In the process of reenactment, spectators are expected to be fascinated and inspired to perceive the impression of the past in a context of the present-day cultural heritage, creating a sense of curiosity and novelty. For the performers, reenactment provides a powerful and special experience of engaging with cultural heritage, in a way that is a part of heritage representation. This sort of performing in public not only strengthens and shapes a deeper understanding toward a historical event with cultural significance, but also prevent it from becoming a shared practice at a community level only. While the ritual demonstrations of archery seem overly elaborate and emphasized, through vivifying the process of ritual and visualizing the shooting, it provokes questions on value changes and the meaning of preserving cultural heritage in contemporary society. In

⁷⁴ See “China to establish cultural heritage bases at colleges” <https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d3d674d33457a4e77457a6333566d54/index.html> for more details.

⁷⁵ Daugbjerg, Eisner, and Knudsen 2014, 682.

so doing, it prompts people to look beyond the performance itself, fostering a deeper examination of the relationship between cultural heritage and actual practices to raise issues of cultural heritage inheritance, preservation, and participation which all members of society ought to be concerned about.



FIGURE 2⁷⁶. Practitioners perform the Archery Ritual of Shires on the First International Symposium on Ritual Archery in 2017.

As a landmark intangible cultural heritage project that demonstrates key segments of the ancient ritual, the reenactment of the Archery Ritual of the Shires has taken place in several Confucian-related sites, such as the Confucian Temple of Dacheng Hall in Qufu, Shandong Province⁷⁷, and the Temple of Confucius and the Imperial College Museum in Beijing in 2015.⁷⁸ At an international level, these professionally trained reactor groups and amateur archers performed a part of the

⁷⁶ Picture source:

https://www.tsinghua.edu.cn/publish/shss/1839/2017/20170507154706391533591/20170507154706391533591_.html

⁷⁷ See <http://www.zhonghualixue.com/index.php/home/index/show/catid/33/id/28.html> for more details.

⁷⁸ See <http://www.zhonghualixue.com/index.php/home/index/show/catid/33/id/28.html> for more details.

Archery Ritual of the Shires with historically accurate costumes and ritual utensil on the Third International Symposium on Ritual Studies in 2014 and on the First International Symposium on Ritual Archery in 2017.⁷⁹ All these re-performance activities marked the evident revival of Chinese archery, making its presence felt within the international community of archery; the consistent promotion efforts so noticeable that the World Archery Federation was compelled to send its camera team to shoot their live performance which it featured in its YouTube video promoting the Shanghai 2018 Hyundai Archery World Cup.⁸⁰

Reenactment performance can also be a possible booster in helping the promotion of Ritual Archery. Even in Korea and Japan where the traditional form of archery is consistently practised under the name of Guk Gung and Kyudo, traditional archery is still considered a fairly minor practice. Although there is strong public awareness of traditional archery in these countries due to their consistent promotion and well-structured training system, the actual amount of people who study and practise traditional archery is still in the minority. Similarly, one of the underlined obstacles of Ritual Archery is how the movement popularizes such a minor practice to change public perception and increase its reach in contemporary Chinese society. This is not an easy task that can be achieved rapidly, for it requires general public acceptance of the value of practising archery and recognition of its ritual value concurrently. Nevertheless, restoring rituals through forms of multimedia based on academic and artistic best practices has remarkable research and educational value to make a significant contribution to an ongoing heritage-related research work that can spread across the social fabric at a rapid pace. Another worth-mentioning point is, while the major underlying motif of the reenactment project is to draw attention to and enhance public attraction to “reviving Confucian Rites”, this multimedia production and visualization also creates a new platform for active scholarly debate, for digital restoration enables viewers to trace and study precise bodily motion and gesture, as well as a thorough investigation of the ritual-related costumes and the

⁷⁹ See

<https://www.tsinghua.edu.cn/publish/shss/1839/2017/20170507154706391533591/20170507154706391533591.html> for more details.

⁸⁰ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvzoeLtisWo> for more details.

ritual utensil. By releasing DVD and online video, it can also be a handy educational resource for students and scholars within academic circles.

Deriving sustenance from these efforts, there has been increasing awareness of and interest in Ritual Archery from public and policy managers. A growing number of Ritual Archery courses have opened in schools and institutions. In view of China's ongoing strategy of enforcing cultural modality to strengthen the nation's soft power, the current wave of re-performance of cultural heritage to construct and promote its idealized vision seems to actively shape the understanding of cultural heritage within contemporary China. Reenactment to represent a historical activity in the most authentic way possible is an effective approach suited to the Chinese political climate and social context. Its proliferation also signifies the growing political importance of culture and heritage in China, indicating that cultural heritage preservation and its implication will be encouraged going forward for its future sustainable scenario. However, Chinese soft power is not merely achieved by the political narrative, but also by the portrayal of consistent practice. Reenactment can thus function as a useful framework to revive traditional Chinese value, for its vivid social and cultural ramifications. Moreover, China's top-down approach in its policy delivery and management also streamlines the process of dissemination on a national scale.

Nevertheless, the reenacted past constitutes a complex temporality since "it is not entirely present or completely constructed in the here and now, but neither does it, obviously, allow access to an unmediated past."⁸¹ Moreover, performing history in the form of reenactment can be paradoxical because "it is both 'bound by the past', obliged on the sceneries and scripts it seeks to recreate, and also necessarily forcing participants to experience that past from the position and reflexive hindsight of the present."⁸² There is a possibility that reenactment can falsify history and therefore distorting heritage when not carefully managed and executed, and is being manipulated for the politics of traditionalism. While

⁸¹ Daugbjerg, Eisner, and Knudsen 2014, 682.

⁸² Daugbjerg, Eisner, and Knudsen 2014, 683.

reenactment inevitably calls authenticity into question, and the concept and practices of reenactment can be interpreted as mere celebration of past events that are “part of a carefully crafted resuscitation of lived experience within the frameworks of politicized commemoration, cultural heritage, and the commodification of the past,”⁸³ the adoption of reenactment for cultural heritage promotion creates new platforms and initiatives for vivifying the past and staging Chinese tradition to achieve the higher levels of appreciation and heritage significance. Situated as a means to manage the past to serve the present, when claiming the current revival of Ritual Archery is a socio-cultural phenomenon, a culturally and socially contingent entity, this sort of revival through reenactment, namely an interactive engagement with culturally significant history, takes an active stance in promoting traditional values to advance the present-day cultural heritage discourse.

Hitting the Mark: Ritual Comes Before Shooting

While Ritual Archery stresses great emphasis on the ritual protocol of the shooting and moral striving of the archer, this embodied notion of Ritual Archery may not be totally appealing and convincing for practitioners who engage in a traditional form of archery in the field. The way Ritual Archery propagates itself in connection with the reenactment of the Archery Ritual of Shires likewise generated criticism of Ritual Archery among many practitioners, perceiving it as a performance-like activity. With the view that the importance of carrying out the ritualized process of archery can even supersede the actual practice of shooting, some practitioners argue that traditional archery should focus more on the skill training and not become too flowery in its ritualized form.⁸⁴ It is that, while there is a need to appreciate the

⁸³ Schauble 2019, 199.

⁸⁴ There is an existing debate between practitioners of traditional archery forums regarding the Ritual Archery and its ritual-orientated notion, namely targeting-hitting Verses ritual archery. These discussions and debates can be seen from the following links.

<https://www.zhihu.com/question/36948172?sort=created>

<http://tieba.baidu.com/p/5000366795?pid=104701803464&cid=0&traceid=#104701803464>

current effort at reviving the archery tradition, when archery is carried out in ritualized forms, it inevitably brings up the issue of authenticity. In other words, it leaves a question mark over whether this ritualized version of archery is both an effective and authentic way of preserving and inheriting Chinese archery. Thus this sort of pursuit in Ritual Archery can arguably be interpreted as "traditional-style culture". Traditional-style culture differs from traditional culture as it is often purposely reconstructed to fulfill the needs and preferences of their target audiences. Moreover, the movement is also argued to be steered purposely in the direction where ritual plays a key role in archery only because people who evolved in the movement have a background in ritual studies. This tendency in selecting ideas to fit their messages and concept likewise brings up the issue of subjective authenticity⁸⁵, unveiling a rather unique feature in China's overall heritage management. This tendency of subjectivity in interpreting what is considered as "Chinese heritage" thus generated a set of contradictions in the present-day heritage discourse that "praise for Tibetan civilization but not Tibetan society and promotion of the Imperial Palace of Beijing as a prime tourist destination while selectively representing the regimes that produced it."⁸⁶ In other words, archery should better understand primarily as practical skills by practitioners, not a method for moral adjusting or the time-honored Confucian-related activity or events. These marked discrepancies in opinions and the way practitioners encounter traditional form of archery also lead to a controversial debate regarding archery's ultimate goal, target hitting.

http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_62507e8a0102wfsg.html,<http://tieba.baidu.com/p/4973792746?pid>
<https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/32166860> =103815574324&cid=0#103815574324

⁸⁵ In short, subjective authenticity is "the subjectivities of people in constructing authenticity in the interaction with heritage in a certain socio-cultural, economic and political environment." (Su 2018, 920.) A rethinking of authenticity has emerged among heritage field, for past theoretical studies on authenticity have long been bounded up with tangible aspect of heritage. With the growing disputes over materialist and constructivist perspectives on authenticity, relatively recent studies begin to bring attention to the necessity of highlighting this new concept.

⁸⁶ Silverman and Blumenfield 2013, 4.



FIGURE 3⁸⁷. Practitioners perform Ritual Archery on the First International Symposium on Ritual Archery in 2017. Practitioners grasp their bows without any arrows in hand, salute to the targets before shooting.

As discussed in previous chapters, Ritual Archery stands for “not-primarily-about-hitting-mark” archery. Nevertheless, “not-primarily about-hitting-mark” does not mean the ritual aspect supersedes the target-hitting purpose of archery. Those practitioners who embraced traditional archery as a recreational or competitive sport may assign their highest priority to hitting the target and point-scoring, thereby prioritizing or being concerned only with the techniques of striking the target. Those who encounter traditional archery through the concept of Ritual Archery give greater weight to its ritual knowledge, thus skill development and mental training are equally important for them in the course of practising archery. Stating Ritual Archery is a not-primarily-about-hitting-mark archery does not mean that practitioners of Ritual Archery do not consider target-hitting as archery’s fundamental goal. Penetrating the target is the common pursuit of any archer and practitioner when shooting the arrow.

⁸⁷ Picture source:

https://www.tsinghua.edu.cn/publish/shss/1839/2017/20170507154706391533591/20170507154706391533591_.html

Archery had ideally been practised to observe one's virtue.⁸⁸ Although moral striving of self-reflection and self-cultivation does not stand alone or is achieved merely through supporting the ritual protocol of archery, in Confucian ideas, "gentlemen did not compete against each other in terms of accuracy; archery was a means to display cultivation and to seek inner development within oneself."⁸⁹ On the other hand, in a practical sense, practitioners who give too much weight to the point-scoring in the competition may contract of bad shooting habits in a long run. To recall Mencius's passage regarding the practice of archery, "Benevolence is like archery: an archer makes sure his stance is correct before letting fly the arrow, and if he fails to hit the mark, he does not hold it against his victor. He simply seeks the cause within himself."⁹⁰ It implies that whether an archer can hit the mark depends completely on the archer's own discipline, thus shooting is rather a competition with oneself. Although it is difficult to define whether accuracy in archery equates to virtue, and there is no more necessity to fetishize archery contests to demonstrate one's superior status and moral qualities as the knightly class did in the old days, formalized routine and practice indeed helped practitioners in both skill development and mental training.⁹¹ In a sense, target-hitting comes along with correct manner of shooting, for consistent target hitting is highly likely derives from an authentic way of practising.

In addition to this, Peter Lorge, the author of *Chinese Martial Arts: From Antiquity to the Twenty-First Century*, argued that Confucius considered that proper upbringing and cultivation can be reflected by the correct performance of archery while the practice of archery itself was not a route to a higher mental state. He used Liezi's⁹² anecdote of archery practice to illustrate that the practice of archery can lead to "an elevated state of mind where perfection of the skill creates perfect mental

⁸⁸ Lorge 2011, 126.

⁸⁹ Lorge 2011, 126.

⁹⁰ Lorge 2011, 42.

⁹¹ Lorge 2011, 56.

⁹² Liezi 列子 (fl. ca. 400 BCE) is a Daoist philosopher.

focus.”⁹³

Liezi wanted to show off his skill of archery to a friend. He drew his bow and placed a cup of water on his left forearm. Then he notched an arrow and let it fly. Before the first arrow hit the target, he had let off the second and the third. When he saw that all three arrows hit the center of the target, Liezi was quite pleased with himself. So steady was his hand and so focused was his concentration that the water in the cup did not spill. His friend, however, was not impressed. He said to Liezi, “What you showed me was merely the skill of eye and hand, and not the state of mind of the true archer. Let’s go up to the mountains and stand on the edge of a cliff. If you can shoot accurately under those conditions, then I shall be convinced of your mastery in archery.”

The two went up to the mountains, and when they reached the top of a peak, Liezi’s friend walked toward the edge of a cliff that dropped a thousand feet below. Standing with his back to the drop and with half of his foot over the edge, he invited Liezi to join him.

Liezi was already trembling when he saw his friend walk toward the edge of the cliff. Now, at the thought of standing with his back to an abyss, he fell on his face and broke into a cold sweat.

Liezi’s friend then said, “The master archer can fire an arrow under any condition. Whether he sees the clear sky or faces the yawning abyss, he can still shoot with the same state of mind. He is not affected by conditions of life and death, for nothing can move the stillness of his mind. Look at yourself now. You are so scared that you can’t stand up or look straight. How can you even begin to demonstrate the art of archery?”⁹⁴

As seen from above, an archer should be able to shoot regardless of his physical circumstances. In order to achieve it, rigorous training merely on skill is never sufficient as Liezi’s state of mind was flawed when he was about to shoot over the edge of the cliff. Furthermore, Lorge brought up a concept of enduring value to highlight the importance of moral and intellectual performance in the course of

⁹³ Lorge 2011, 43.

⁹⁴ Lorge 2011, 42. The text is translated by Eva Wong. *Lieh-Tzu*. Boston: Shambala, 2001, 58.

practising archery. He asserted that aging will eventually diminish the physical abilities of any practitioner, thus physical perfection is temporary and “if the only value produced is the simple correct repetition of a task, then it has taught the performer nothing.”⁹⁵ Confucian scholar Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200 CE) also indicated that archery competitions were connected to the measure of virtue.

The ancients engaged in archery in order to observe a person’s virtue, and therefore were concerned with hitting the center of the target rather than piercing its hide [T]he saying in the Record of Ritual, “After King Wu defeated the Shang, he demobilized his troops and held an archery contest outside the city walls, and the practice of shooting to pierce the target came to an end,” refers precisely to this. Once the Zhou declined and ritual fell into disuse, however, the various states turned again to military strife, and the practice of shooting to pierce the target was revived. Hence Confucius’ lament.⁹⁶

In line with this lament, Ritual Archery is not only sought to fill a gap, namely the break in the physical transmission of traditional archery in China caused by the Cultural Revolution, it also seeks to reestablish the diminishing significance of archery in relation to moral striving and inner cultivation since the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD).⁹⁷ In consideration that archery should not be interpreted as a matter of playing-to-win, practitioners who practise archery in an authentic and accurate manner with a calm mind will benefit substantially in the course of learning traditional archery. In the scope of archery, both moral and physical capabilities are

⁹⁵ Lorge 2011, 43.

⁹⁶ Lorge 2011, 39-40. This is Zhu Xi’s later explanation regarding the following saying of Confucius. The Master said, “It is said, ‘In archery, one does not emphasize piercing the hide of the target, because people’s strengths differ.’ Such is the ancient Way.” Translated by Edward Slingerland. Confucius, *Analects*, 23.

⁹⁷ This is due to the political and social environment of that time, there were very few Song literati practiced martial arts of any kind. “Warring States period thinkers thought there was a direct connection between martial arts practice and inner cultivation. [...] That connection was attenuated and finally broken in practice by the Song Dynasty, at the latest, leaving educated elites without an identity-affirming martial art. Some Confucian thinkers in the Song advocated “quiet sitting” as an appropriate form of Confucian meditation (and some modern writers have classed quiet sitting under the rubric of “Confucian daoyin”). In the Ming Dynasty, the long sword became an acceptable gentleman’s weapon, and this association continued through the Qing and after.” See more details in Lorge 2011, 199.

central to any practitioner. Therefore Ritual Archery argues that archery is not primarily about hitting the mark, but rather both a practical and performance skill to improve one's mental state, reflecting proper conduct of archer and the way of shooting. In light of this view, Ritual Archery seeks to revalidate its appropriateness and make a clear and significant statement on archery's practical, performative, and spiritual value.

Along with Ritual Archery's principal notion of "assessing one's virtuous conduct"⁹⁸ through shooting, under the concept of Ritual and self-cultivation, the movement expects that practising Ritual Archery can motivate even instruct young people to Chinese humanistic value. As an extension of this, the Ritual Archery Propagation Movement moves beyond the limitations of such framing to set up a far more ambitious goal – the implementation of old values into contemporary society by looking at the past to explain and design the present and future. In this sense, unpacking and exploring old values are not merely about the past, it is about the present day and the future of Chinese people. The Movement has also propagated the ritual components of archery through its active engagement with the press and media, strives that young Chinese would be able to accept the concept of Ritual. By practising Ritual Archery, investigate and appreciate their core culture, not simply through classical texts that often considered as abstract and ambiguous concepts, or even a backward notion that no longer suitable to contemporary Chinese society. In a similar vein, it seeks to strengthen Chinese people's appreciation of the Chinese traditional value, and this process of appreciation can possibly enrich understandings of traditional value, for valuing the legacy of the past, and inherit the valuable idea from it, is a seemingly manageable option with state's support. The Ritual Archery Propagation Movement reminds people of the roots of Chinese etiquettes and appeals the concept of Ritual in order to play a significant role in the process of promoting Chinese traditional values. The whole idea beyond Ritual Archery includes the embodied notion of "ritual comes before shooting," is the way of conduct. Besides an attempt to establish authentic Chinese Way of archery which is sought to be distinguished from neighboring Korean and Japanese archery, the

⁹⁸ It also means to observe virtue from the shooting.

conception that lies at the heart of the movement is that Chinese people should rebuild their contemporary daily etiquette which will improve the overall social discourse in contemporary China for both present and future generations.

Conclusion

This chapter looked into stakeholders' tremendous efforts at encouraging and disseminating Ritual Archery to the general public. In exploring the impact and the significance of hosting and organizing international events and performing the reenactment project, it argued that there is a recent tendency in considering ritual demonstrations and ritual ceremonies of traditional archery as intangible cultural heritage. Thus a revival through reenactment is a fairly feasible approach to foster the value-making and promotion of Ritual Archery. This chapter likewise outlined challenges and feasibilities in promoting the concept of Ritual Archery to the general public and to people who practise traditional archery in the field. These challenges are still awaiting further developments that would imbue Ritual Archery with great significance. It also engaged with the existing debate between the prioritization of archery's target-hitting purpose and the ritual aspects in the course of practising archery. Ritual aspects of archery lie at the very core of the movement. Within this context, Ritual Archery Propagation Movement has further gained its authority and power to be widely disseminated.

Conclusion

The overall number of enthusiasts learning traditional archery across China has grown rapidly. This recent trend towards archery revitalization is the combined effort of individuals who consider in a purist manner traditional archery as an extension of practising an authentic Chinese traditional martial art, and the collective movement from scholars grounded in Ritual Studies to propagate traditional archery through its ritual aspects to contribute to the formation of a harmonized China. Under the umbrella of cultural governance and China's signature policy of Chinese Dream, if the current Ritual Archery Propagation Movement is to be investigated, it is most adequately understood in terms of China's official desire to promote traditional values to strengthen its soft power in order to establish a culturally advanced China. Embedded within this discourse is an implied notion that Chinese traditional value is positive and worth spreading, and should impel Chinese people to not only realize the value but also to inherit and preserve it in a way of undertaking action in their daily practice. Given these circumstances, Ritual Archery, with its distinct mental focus and the notion of assessing one's virtuous conduct through practising archery, is propelled as a new platform for Chinese people and the global world alike to connect and rediscover the relevance of traditional values to our era. Together with the appealing approach of revival through reenactment, situated as a cultural practice, the Ritual Archery Propagation Movement is a sociocultural phenomenon in contemporary China prompted by groups of people who aim at disseminating Chinese traditional values, namely Rituals, through a format and construction of archery. The movement thus contends that Ritual Archery can participate and contribute to enhancing social cohesion through the development of moral values within Chinese people. Just as archery and archery competitions were of great significance and value in Confucian ideas and conception, so the movement plays a part in the contemporary Confucian Revival to shape a new level of understanding and appreciation that can propagate Chinese traditional value by targeting Chinese youth specifically. Would Ritual Archery be a material and spiritual bridge that connects Chinese people and Chinese traditional values? While the answer to this question is beyond the scope of this paper, it would nevertheless present an insightful attempt to explore the so-called Chinese

traditional values and Chinese cultural heritage management more broadly.

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