New Zealand’s Chinese Gold-Mining Heritage: (Re) Telling their Stories

Helena Huang
Joanna Fountain
Harvey Perkins

Shantytown, Chinatown, West Coast

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Introduction

- Chinese gold mining history in New Zealand
- Chinese heritage in New Zealand
- Current (re) development of Chinese heritage
- Research objectives
- Reasons for the current (re) development of Chinese heritage
- Case study: retelling the story
  - Arrowtown Chinese Settlement
  - Shantytown Chinatown
  - Who are the audiences
- Conclusion
New Zealand Chinese Gold Miners

- Originally from rural area of Canton province, Southern China
- First arrived in 1865 from Victoria, Australia
New Zealand Chinese Gold Miners

- Mainly mined in Otago and the West Coast goldfield, South Island

- Other employment areas: farm laboring, market gardening, laundering and railway and road building
New Zealand Chinese Gold Miners

- Experienced hardship
- Excluded from New Zealand society
- Discriminated against
  - The Poll Tax
Chinese heritage in New Zealand

- Overlooked
- largely unknown and unacknowledged until recent decades
- Only 4 Chinese sites were registered by Historic Places Trust before 2002

Chinese headstones, Lawrence
Chinese Heritage in New Zealand

- Arrowtown Chinese Settlement in Otago
- Chinatown at Shantytown on the West Coast
- Otago Early Settler’s Museum in Dunedin
Recent (Re) Development of Chinese Heritage

- 2002 government apology
  - Establishment of Poll Tax Chinese Heritage Trust
  - $5 million dollars fund

- 10 sites were proposed to add to Historic Places Trust Register in 2003
  - 8 added to Register

- Upgrade of Arrowtown Chinese Settlement

- Redevelopment of Shantytown’s Chinatown
  - Research project on the Chinese history on the West Coast
Recent (Re) Development of Chinese Heritage – Dunedin Chinese Garden
Recent (Re) Development of Chinese Heritage – Lawrence Chinese Camp
Recent (Re) Development of Chinese Heritage – Chinese Heritage Trail

- Arrowtown
- Lawrence
- Chinese heritage trail
Research Objectives

- To explore the reasons for current (re) development of Chinese heritage sites in New Zealand
- To explore the tourism potential of Chinese heritage in New Zealand to both domestic and international visitors
- To formulate appropriate suggestions for interpreting Chinese heritage to meet the needs of different groups of tourists
Reasons for Current Interest in Chinese Heritage

- Government apology-increased awareness of Chinese history and heritage
- General increase of New Zealanders’ appreciation of history and heritage of which the Chinese are part
- Changing focus of TNZ
  - Tourism Strategy 2010, 2015 – increasing attention on cultural tourism
- Voice of New Zealand-Chinese
Reasons for Current Interest in Chinese Heritage

- Change in New Zealand’s social structure and economic circumstance--improving cultural awareness of New Zealanders
  - More Chinese immigrants
  - Free trade agreement
- Increasing number of Chinese visitors to New Zealand
Re-telling the Story of Chinese Miners –
Arrowtown Chinese Settlement

- After re-development
Re-telling the Story of Chinese Miners — Shantytown’ Chinatown
Discussion: Who are the Audiences?

- Domestic visitors or international visitors?
- Chinese visitors from China?
- Chinese in New Zealand
  - Chinese who live in New Zealand (e.g. Chinese students)
  - Chinese New Zealander
- Visitors from other regions with Chinese background?
Conclusions

- Chinese heritage in New Zealand is now definitely receiving more attention and is thus developing
- There is a mixture of reasons
- To which market it will appeal still remains unknown
- Further research is needed from demand perspective
  - Visitor surveys (domestic and international)