3

RAPID REQUEST

Call # G 155.I4 T64
Note O

ILLiad TN #: 748643

Print Date: April 21, 2015

Borrower: RAPID:WAU

Journal Title: Tourism recreation research
Vol: 29 **No:** 2
Date: 2015
Pages: 59-68

Article Author: Swain and Walsh
Article Title: Creating Modernity by Touring Paradise: Domestic Ethnic Tourism in Yunnan, China

ISSN: 0250-8281

Rapid# -9224421

FROM KKS:
lendserv@k-state.edu

TOURISM RECREATION RESEARCH VOL. 29(2), 2004: 59–68

Creating Modernity by Touring Paradise: Domestic Ethnic Tourism in Yunnan, China

EILEEN ROSE WALSH and MARGARET BYRNE SWAIN

After China's rapid economic and urban shifts, many Chinese tourists now seek out environmental beauty and prefer to travel outside of major urban centres to tour China's periphery. This desire often combines with a desire to tour the 'Others' within China's borders. China's southwestern province of Yunnan has cornered a large share of domestic tourists by successfully marketing itself as a land of exceptional environmental beauty as well ethnic variety. In this paper, we investigate how the practice of domestic ethnic tourism in Yunnan produces a variety of modern Chinese citizens and acts as a vehicle through which Chinese discourses of modernity and tradition come together at a single site. While our primary concern is domestic tourists, we also consider issues of local cultural production in these sites. We focus on domestic tourism at Lugu Lake, home of the 'matriarchal' Mosuo, while drawing on our own and others' research in other Yunnan ethnic tourism sites that combine natural beauty with the allure of a feminized ethnic Other, notably the Stone Forest (*Shilin*) and Banna. The desires of Chinese tourists for nostalgia, exploration, and personal liberation lead them to these locales, where their participation in the wider cultural ethos of consumption and self-identification creates new conditions for authenticity and cultural performance. Through their encounters with tradition and ethnicity, as much as through encounters with other travellers, Chinese domestic tourists create modernity at their periphery and reaffirm their modern Chinese identities.

Keywords: modernity, ethnicity, Yunnan, cultural consumption, identity.

Introduction

In Maoist China, leisure travel was proscribed as decadent, while in the post-Mao reform era, an ethos of consumption and leisure and an increase in disposable income led to an explosion in domestic tourism by the 1990s. For many Chinese citizens, travel is a means of attaining modernity while also reaffirming Chinese identity. Early in the Reform Era, Chinese tourists were drawn to China's large cosmopolitan centres and historic sites. After China's rapid economic and urban shifts, many Chinese tourists now seek out environmental beauty and prefer to travel outside of major urban centres to tour China's periphery. Throughout the 1990's, improved infrastructure and the model of millions of foreign tourists travelling in China made domestic travel quite desirable. Exchange rates as well as increasing restrictions from foreign governments made travel within China much more accessible to most Chinese than travelling abroad.

For many Chinese, the desire to travel often combines with a desire to tour the 'Others' found within China's borders. Han/Chinese, who comprise 92% of the national population, construct their majority identity through comparisons to their past and comparisons to others – including China's own ethnic minorities. Discourse about the cultural uniqueness of being Chinese functions as a national glue during these times of rapid economic transition, social reconfiguration and the disintegration of socialist identities. Chinese-ness acts as an ethnic identity, yet also a national identity shared with ethnic minorities, and this shapes Chinese domestic ethnic tourism. The flow of tourists to more 'backward' parts of China produces modernity in a multiplicity of ways, both for the tourists as well as the toured. Domestic ethnic tourism practice produces a variety of modern Chinese citizens, and through these sites on the 'periphery' tourists enact citizenship and participate in the nation.

This paper investigates how the practice of domestic ethnic tourism produces a variety of modern Chinese citizens and acts as a vehicle through which Chinese discourses of modernity and tradition come together at a single site.

EILEEN ROSE WALSH is Luce Assistant Professor of Asian Studies in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work, Skidmore College, 815 North Broadway, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-1632 USA. e-mail: eileen.walsh@lawrence.edu

MARGARET BYRNE SWAIN is Co-Director Women's Resources and Research Centre, University of California, Davis 95616-8753 USA. e-mail: mbswain@ucdavis.edu

Paradoxically, the structure of ethnic tourism requires locals to perform the past for wealth which both tourists and locals believe will help achieve the modern. Herein, the focus is on domestic tourism at Lugu Lake, home of the 'matriarchal' Mosuo, while drawing from our own as well as others' research in other Yunnan ethnic tourism sites which combine natural beauty with the allure of a feminized ethnic 'Other', notably the Stone Forest (*Shilin*) and Banna. The desires of Chinese tourists for nostalgia, exploration, and personal liberation leads them into these locales, where their participation in the wider cultural ethos of consumption and self-identification creates new conditions for authenticity and cultural performance.

Tourist Typologies in China

Officially, the state divides the Chinese tourist market along the lines of both citizenship (International/Domestic) and ethnicity (Chinese/Foreign). 'International' tourists are all tourists without Chinese citizenship, which includes 'foreign' tourists (those without Chinese ancestry), overseas tourists (*huaqiao*, diasporic Chinese), and 'compatriots' (tourists from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan). Official categories of tourists in China are crosscut by global typologies (Smith 1989) yielding numerous tourist types such as the domestic ethnic tourist, compatriot sex tourist or overseas ecotourist. The number of 'foreign' tourists has grown dramatically over the past two decades. Of the over 10 million foreign visits in 2000, Japanese comprised over 20%, followed by Koreans, Russians, and Americans (CNTA 2004a). The biggest growth sector, however, is in ethnically defined Chinese tourists –which includes compatriot tourists (from wealthier 'Chinese' areas), overseas tourists, and domestic tourists. In 2000, compatriot visits were over 70 million (CNTA 2004b), while domestic tourists numbered over 700 million (CNTA 2004c). Compatriot visits are often business people crossing into China from Hong Kong. In 1997, Jenkins and Liu (107) observed that foreign tourists stay longer and bring in most revenue to a tourist industry; as a result, policy-makers and the tourism industry focus on them. However, tourism planners are now well aware of the enormous growth in domestic, as well as compatriot and overseas tourism and revenue, and some tourist sites in China have clearly shifted their attention from foreigner-focused to Chinese travellers.

For Chinese tourists at ethnic tourist sites in China, ethnicity comes into play in specific ways. At times, overseas and compatriot Chinese are seen by locals as part of Chinese tourism, yet acknowledged as outsiders because of their greater purchasing abilities and perceived different characteristics. While domestic tourists are "native" tourists in China (Ghimire 2001), they are not generally 'native' to the ethnic tourist sites they are visiting. Both locals and visitors see ethnicity as separating the two and it is the difference of 'native' ethnics that makes these sites so attractive to Chinese tourists. Complicating this picture further is the occurrence of ethnic minority domestic tourists visiting other minority sites for comparative marketing tips and personal enjoyment.

In Yunnan, emerging discourses compare foreign and Chinese travellers. The following generalizations are an amalgam of opinions voiced by those working in Yunnan's tourism industry. For these guides, service workers, entertainers and vendors, Chinese tourists are more demanding while foreigners are more courteous than Chinese tourists, or of a higher 'quality' (*suzhi*). Although Peterson (1995) discusses how Chinese tourists may have a deeper relationship to landscape and natural scenic areas than outsiders, Yunnanese report foreign tourists being more appreciative of natural environments and more careful of not polluting them. The contrast of foreigners travelling in groups and foreign backpackers has led to contradictory statements that foreigners are fat and less fit than Chinese, yet that wealthy foreign travellers are more able to *chi ku* (endure hardship) than wealthy Chinese, while foreign backpackers are imagined as super-fit. Foreigners are believed more willing to travel in 'backward' (*luohou*) areas because of their interest in seeing 'primitive' (*yuanshi de*) or 'genuine' (*didao de*) culture. Foreigners are also thought more willing to purchase higher-priced embroideries and antique crafts (which may be soiled or damaged, and so are not as 'attractive'). In addition, because of language limitations, foreigners do not understand' and so can be easily overcharged. Service workers and providers perceive Chinese travellers as more demanding and critical of food and services as well as prices, yet believe that wealthy Chinese are more willing to lavish money on banquets. Discourses have also developed contrasting 'Chinese' tourists. According to these, overseas, and especially compatriot tourists score higher in categories such as courteousness, interest in local culture, and cleanliness than domestic Chinese tourists.

The Paradises of Yunnan

Within China's ethnoscape, ethnic minorities represent 'color' and their sites are imagined as remnants of paradise on earth. Minority costumes, architecture, food, festivals, and different ways of life and family and love, all hold the promise of escape from Chinese-ness into uncharted territory, yet it is through this 'escape' that Chinese-ness is established. During the policy shifts and economic reforms of the 1980's, official representations of ethnicity changed as the state shifted from portraying China as a bold socialist

paradise to embracing an image of China as a modern, multicultural nation. The 'Others' within China's borders were embraced as well, and ethnic diversity has been rehabilitated and celebrated as part of the cultural bouquet of China.

The southwestern province of Yunnan is marketed as an ethnic and ecotourism destination, and imagined as a veritable treasure trove of exotic peoples, with their song, dance and environments as a spectacle, and their handicrafts as souvenirs. Yunnan is located at a crossroads between China proper, Tibet, Southeast Asia and India. Its extreme landscape of high altitude snow capped mountains and lush tropical valleys make it an area rich in micro-environments and ethnic and linguistic diversity. As every tourist who comes to Yunnan hears repeatedly, 25 of China's 55 ethnic minority groups live in Yunnan, comprising a third of its population. By 2000, Yunnan was receiving over 40 million domestic tourists annually (People's Daily 2001), and had thus become the premier destination for Chinese domestic tourists, and is ranked as first choice among over 7000 surveyed Chinese urbanites (People's Daily 2000).

Yunnan's regional tourism boards compete with each other to convince tourists and travel agencies of the superiority of their destinations. One obvious example is the competition between Lijiang and Zhongdian for media and government recognition as 'Shangri-La', with both insisting that Hilton's novel was based on their location. Zhongdian recently won the national government's recognition as 'Shangri-La'; however, even the Mosuo territory of Yongning has been called by this moniker. The most successful tourist spots in Yunnan are those that combine a scenic wonder with a specific colourful minority. Synergy between eco- and ethnic tourism acts as a primary factor in a very ambitious transnational tourism development project in Northwest Yunnan, undertaken with the support of the State and The Nature Conservancy.

Most of China's ethnic minorities are painted with a brush of romantic feminity, and represented by coy young women, but differences between the minorities become part of the marketing and imagining of specific Yunnan sites. The Mosuo of Lugu Lake and the Sani of Stone Forest, our primary research sites, are part of the 'lumpen ethnic proletariat' of China represented as poor, quaint folk whose women wear cumbersome but colourful and pleasing costumes, and their sexualized allure attracts national attention for various reasons. Unlike most minorities, the Dai in Banna are represented as highly cultured and esthetically developed while portrayed as essentially feminine. Their 'Peacock Dance' has been performed in nearly all national celebrations of the 1990's, usually by an elegantly thin and exquisitely trained Dai female dancer.

Lugu Lake and the Mosuo

> *The Mosuo people who live by the lake are the pet of nature. They love freely as in heaven, so it's called women's kingdom and becomes spectacular.*
>
> – 'Lugu Lake' postcard package, produced by the Lijiang District Post Office.

Lugu Lake is a new comer to the domestic and international tourist scene. Tourism started as a trickle in the 1980's and then exploded in the mid 1990's. Within this impoverished high-altitude area, tourism has become virtually the area's only industry outside of agriculture. Clear and alpine Lugu Lake is ringed with mountains, but the main attraction to this site is the matrilineal Mosuo (population 40,000). The Mosuo have become famous for their unique traditional lack of marriage. *Zouhun* ('walking marriage') is the Mandarin translation of a Mosuo term *sese*, which describes relationships which are made and kept voluntarily, of indeterminate length and largely free of economic binds[1]; in China, this has come to be interpreted as 'free love' (Walsh 2001a).

Media has greatly increased Chinese recognition of the Mosuo, and tourists coming to Lugu Lake are often armed with travel literature that tells of a 'romantic', 'matriarchal' Mosuo society on the edges of a 'mysterious' and 'beautiful' lake. Photographs in tourist materials are overwhelmingly of young women, often posed beside the lake as waiting for a lover, while photos that do include men are usually of courting. Books and documentaries stress the harmonious 'simple life' which the Mosuo live in what are described as peaceful and cooperative matriarchal households. These materials appeal to the nostalgia expressed by many urban Chinese. Virtually all tourists to Lugu Lake have been exposed to these images; the images and the fantasies they incite lure tourists to Mosuo territory.

Mosuo are not 'Othered' in a single coherent way, but are paradoxically imagined as both controlling matriarchs and frolicking maids, as both backward and needy, and yet instructive in their pure and loving relationships (Walsh 2003). Visitors to Lugu Lake include those (usually Han men, but not always) who wish to be sexually titillated or fulfilled in this lovers' paradise and those who hope to find a land of wise old mothers and harmonious sharing families. However for domestic tourists, the romantic marketing images combine with communist rhetoric about 'primitive' (*yuanshi*) minorities and helping them to 'progress' (*fazhan*). This Maoist frame has shifted in the reform era to a discussion of

rural poverty as a result of the 'backwardness' (*luohou*) and 'low quality' (*suzhi di*) of the people[2]. These perspectives surface among domestic tourists at the lake, yet at times are mediated by discussions of cultural sensitivity and ethno-survival. Increasingly, domestic tourists also bring with them a contemporary nostalgia for the pure pastoral life, a longing for an escape from modern troubles to a land of harmony, simplicity, and honesty.

Chinese Tourists at Lugu Lake

The village of Luoshui, the primary tourist site of Lugu Lake, has a permanent population of about 500 predominantly Mosuo and Pumi residents, and receives over 80,000 tourists annually. According to locals, gatekeepers, and observational estimates, well over 90% of the tourists to Lugu Lake are Chinese, and most of these are domestic tourists. The vast majority comes as part of a tour group – either on a tour sponsored by their work or government units, or, in growing numbers, signing on to a tour starting in Lijiang, the regional transportation hub which is several hours drive from Lugu Lake and just 45 minutes by air from the provincial capital of Kunming. Other tourists come independently or in small groups, the wealthier often hire private transport, while others use local buses and minibuses.

Tour groups to Lugu Lake generally stay only one day and one night, just enough time for a boat ride on the lake, a horse ride in the hills, a cultural introduction to a Mosuo household, and an evening song and dance performance. Village-organized teams run these activities, so frequently visitors only come into contact with professional handlers and their similar methods of answering queries and bantering with guests. The group's schedule allows little time for exploration and investigation, and few of the members of tour groups visit the entertainment district outside the village. Tour groups tend to stay in several of the largest guesthouses in Lower Village, near the shore of the lake, and these guesthouse owners jealously guard their relationships with tour companies. Guides, usually not Mosuo, accompany these groups from their destinations in Lijiang or Panzhihua, and arrange entertainment and dining.

Those tourists not coming as part of a commercial group generally fit in several categories. Cadres (officials) may come in smaller groups of four to twenty. 'Businessmen' (wealthy and not so wealthy) often come alone or in twos or threes. Cadres and businessmen have access to private vehicles and greater freedom in schedule and exploring the area. Businessmen often stay about a kilometer outside of the village in the entertainment district that includes karaoke bars and brothels. 'Businessmen' are marked by their appearance and accessories: starched dress shirts and suits, gold watches, and mobile phones. Their motivation for coming to the area is primarily entertainment, and they stay several days, passing an afternoon gambling with locals and other visitors, or an evening in karaoke or pursuing the *xiaojie* ('misses') who work in the karaoke bars and beauty parlours of this small entertainment district. Some hire a *xiaojie* to accompany them during their entire visit, and stay in private cottages built recently behind the entertainment district.

Besides cadres and businessmen, increasing numbers of Chinese come individually or in small groups, staying in smaller guesthouses, and branching out beyond Luoshui. A very few hike in, but most either pool resources to hire a jeep or van, or navigate local public transport. These more independent tourists are primarily urbanites in their late teens, 20's or 30's, on break from school, taking extended vacation/ travel time, and sometimes between jobs. Those over the age of 40 tend to have greater resources for hiring private transport, and are frequently involved in writing, journalism, or education, or are wealthy Chinese not travelling as "businessmen". These older tourists often see travel as a means of personal growth or education as much as or more than entertainment, while younger independent tourists may have come for entertainment, adventure, education, or personal growth. The experience of these travellers parallels that of those in tour groups. They will join in the boat or horse rides, go to evening shows, and leave within a day or two. During their extra time, they may relax in teahouses near the lake, hike around part of it, or climb nearby mountains. However, as in other rural tourist areas of Yunnan, independent travellers are more likely to seek experiences with locals, make time to sit around a household fire, ask locals about their lives, or try to hire locals as guides for hikes.

Tourist Profiles and Cultural Production in the 'Daughters' Kingdom'

To move beyond the perception of Chinese domestic tourists as a monoculture, examples of the emergent alternative subcultures of travel are presented while looking for commonalities across these groups within the experience of ethnic tourism. During the encounters of ethnic tourism in Yunnan, identity is performed on both sides, on the part of the tourist as well as the toured. Included below are brief 'profiles' of domestic tourists encountered at Lugu Lake, followed by a discussion of cultural production and tourist responses to their visit.

Lin and her friends took the local bus for a four-day visit to Lugu Lake. Like all urban Chinese travellers in their 20's, they wore new jeans and brightly-coloured jackets, and toted backpacks. Happy they had made the trip, they felt

grateful to have experienced 'true' Mosuo life and were sure that the Mosuo were just on the verge of being 'spoiled'. They had stayed with a 'real' Mosuo family, not at a hotel, and had sat around the fire with the family members and, they reported, 'even eaten with them'. They felt they had experienced true Mosuo life, and were grateful and respectful of the people they had been privileged to visit. It had rained one of their days at the Lake, so they asked 'Big Mother' to sing for them. She had taught them a very 'moving' song about the sacrifices a mother makes, and loving Mother forever.

Min, a Hong Kongese medical student in Guangzhou, would have been unexceptional in many backpacker crowds with his longish hair, unwashed jeans and dull-coloured jacket. He liked Mosuo territory enough to stay for nearly a month. He hiked around the lake (which few visitors do), tramping from one small village to another over the course of several days, then spent the rest of his time in a tea house by the lake, reading or writing letters and poetry, and contemplating the lake. His plan was to combine local transport and trekking to leave the area and travel up through western Sichuan.

From Beijing, Tan and her husband brought their daughter Mei to Lugu Lake, arriving in a privately rented Landrover. Mei was about to begin college, and her parents wanted her to know her own country and the differences within it. Their itinerary had included several minority sites, but a summer mudslide closed the road and forced them to spend almost an extra week in Mosuo territory. They did not complain about this time at the lake, though, as they felt in this special place their daughter could see people who were the 'most primitive', and learn about early human (Chinese) origins.

Nuobu was a Mosuo official working at the county level, and had the task of hosting Tibetan officials visiting from Zhongdian, the main city in the Tibetan district of Yunnan. He was to help introduce the Tibetans to minority customs in Yongning, and as the 'local' was under added pressure to make sure that they enjoyed themselves. After an evening performance, the women cadres returned to the guesthouse while the men went to a karaoke bar. There, Nuobu arranged for professional escorts for each of the men. These costumed women sat by each of the officials, drinking, joking, and singing, and later paired up with some of them.

Chen was a history teacher in his fifties from Chongqing. He and his wife had read nearly all the scholarly reports they could find on the Mosuo, and came to see them. They did not join a tour, but came in on their own, using public transport, and stayed for two days. Because their salaries were rather low, they had done little travelling, but had especially come here to see the Mosuo because they were the least developed of China's peoples. The Chens did find the Mosuo primitive, and were glad that they had had this chance to see a 'matriarchal' society, although, paradoxically, they felt that it should be developed.

A cheery and outgoing single woman of about 25 from Chengdu, Su was travelling alone. She was not rich, but saved her earnings from bartending to travel for two weeks. She had planned to go to many places, but after arriving at the lake decided to stay there. She thought it was wonderful – the people, the romance, the ways in which women were valued. In fact, she believed a local who said Mosuo give birth to more girls than boys, because they value women so much. She enjoyed the excitement of being in this place of the Mosuo, where love was all around her, but also worried should someone try to climb in her window at night (during her week or so at the lake, no one did).

All of these tourists interacted with locals both during structured events and, in limited ways, outside of them. The most obvious interactions which locals have with tourists play off of outside images of the Mosuo as casually engaging in sex and Mosuo territory as a site of romance (Walsh 2001a). Local professional handlers jokingly ask outsiders if they want help to *zouhun* ('walking marriages) and in these exchanges *zouhun* acts as an undisguised euphemism for sex. This focus on sexual titillation is especially noticeable at the primary activities offered to the tourists, such as the boat rides, horse rides, and evening song and dance. Costumed locals row tourists on the lake while singing them love songs and joking about romantic troubles with multiple partners. Horse rides end with wrestling performances, first matches between local entertainers, then eventually cross gender between locals and guests. After the evening performances, insinuating banter may continue at small barbeque stalls set up along the lake. Locals present tourists with an enacted 'backstage' of Mosuo culture through cultural introductions to their houses and families. Interestingly, these do not directly include references to matriarchy, and downplay sexual relations to stress the unity (*tuanjie*) of the large families (*da jiating*) (Walsh 2001a). Locals discuss the love and care family members show for one another, the high position of the mother in the family, and the love children feel for the mother, or sisters for each other.

Chinese tourists are often unaware that there are other ethnic groups in the village and the area. Most domestic tourists (excluding those interested solely in sex tourism) value the opportunity to experience and learn about Mosuo culture as an important part of their trip. Their statements about the Mosuo echo many of the romanticized

representations of the Mosuo as simple, with large loving families, and as especially romantic because of their different system of sexual relations. Primitiveness/simplicity, sex/romance, and mother/family show up in many of the statements outsiders make about the Mosuo. Excerpts of conversations with tourists to the area, illustrate some of the more common responses which Chinese have to the Mosuo.

> *The Mosuo, they are like other minorities. As long as they can sing they are happy; it doesn't matter how their lives are or what they are doing. I watched one as she was working... as long as they can sing they are happy.*
>
> - Female Chinese tourist (age 45) travelling with a tour group of over forty.
>
> *Haven't you tried* zouhun? *...When you travel to a new place you have to taste the women, just like you taste the food.*
>
> - Male Chinese tourist (age approximately 40) travelling with two companions.
>
> *They, the Mosuo people, are so simple. Their emotions are so simple and honest.... Not so worried like us, not so complicated lives.*
>
> - Female Chinese tourist (age approximately 45) travelling with tour group.
>
> *They can truly love. Mosuo women aren't selfish; they aren't looking for money in love. They aren't just looking for rich men.*
>
> - Male Chinese tourist (age approximately 30) travelling with a tour group.
>
> *Mosuo people... their big [extended] families are the most important things in their lives... their families are like ours used to be. Family members help each other, have deep feelings for each other. ... They love their old people.*
>
> - Male Chinese tourist (age approximately 25) travelling in group of six.
>
> *They [Mosuo] really love their mothers... love them and stay with them their whole lives.*
>
> - Female Chinese tourist (age 26) travelling with small group.

Chinese tourists to Lugu Lake sometimes talk about the liberation from urban life that they have found in the simple and loving families, or the freedom from sexual constraints. Some of these visitors experience such an 'epiphany' (Adams 1996) of self-realization at the lake that they decide to stay. This parallels similar sites in Yunnan that have acted as retreats for international tourists, such as the Stone Forest and Dali in the past, and now Lijiang and Deqin. At Lugu Lake, there are recent tales of urban Chinese who came and spent a month, or several months, because the area was so special to them, some leaving behind their poetry painted on the walls of a guesthouse room. Others, such as a young writer from Beijing, lived in the area two years because it provided him with peace and a more 'primitive' way of life to reflect on as he read classical philosophy (he plans to write a romantic novel about the area). Yet another was a young graduate from Guangdong who decided to teach kindergarten for a year in a poorer Mosuo village.

In their encounters with tourists, locals not only negotiate desire, but manage to negotiate often conflicting and contradictory desires –to see women in charge, or to find a land with women easily available as sex objects (Walsh 2003). Chinese visitors generally leave satisfied, believing they have found a 'matriarchy' with 'free love' yet some also leave questioning why Mosuo women do much more work than men (Walsh 2001a). Those who come for sexual titillation easily find it in songs, or wrestling with Mosuo women in a pasture, yet if they want more they may be disappointed and need to resort to the professional escorts. Compared to the Stone Forest and Banna, Lugu Lake is relatively new to the tourist scene, operates on a much smaller scale, and is neither as developed nor worn as a site of interest. Both the Stone Forest and Banna are almost clichés among younger or more cosmopolitan tourists, while still receiving enormous amounts of domestic as well as international tourists. Indeed, the 'over'-development which makes them passé to some allows them to receive with ease the millions of tourists who visit them annually.

Other Paradises

The Stone Forest

The Stone Forest attracts tourists for its distinct natural karst topography and local Sani minority culture. The name and romantic girlish image of the famous Sani folk heroine *'Ashima'* brands everything from cigarettes to local hotels to tour guides (Swain in Press). Seventy thousand Sani Yi constitute one third of the Stone Forest Yi Autonomous County's population. Tourism-generated income has brought wealth to a few, while improved infrastructure for tourism has significantly affected the whole county, especially formerly isolated rural Sani villages. The limestone terrain is difficult for living and farming, but good for tourism. Situated in eastern Yunnan, the Stone Forest's status as a tourism landscape began in the 1950's when a state hotel was opened near the main entrance into a designated park site, which became a national scenic protected area in 1982. A government master plan was begun in 1986 for the county's local modernization and economic development, using tourism as a 'central pillar'. With infrastructure improvements, travel to and from the provincial capital of

Kunming changed dramatically in the 1990s, taking less than two hours one way, with links by super highway and deluxe train. By the mid-1990s some 1.5 million visitors, including over 100,000 international tourists, annually visited Stone Forest scenic attractions. Local researcher Shi (2000), reports that two million tourists (1,930,700 domestic and 132,700 foreign) visited the Stone Forest during 1999. During this time income from Stone Forest tourism increased steadily. By 1999, 30% of the Stone Forest County tax income was from tourism (Shi 2000:232).

Villages near the park are filled with locally owned and operated guest-houses, handicraft manufacture and sale, and restaurants. Some are run by community cooperatives, while others are family affairs. Outsiders have moved in too, predominating in handicraft production, and some services. Domestic tourism supports private trade, while international tourists and elite business and government travellers stay and eat at state run facilities in the park. Tourists take guided walks in the park, hike on maintained paths, attend ethnic cultural shows, and purchase an array of goods and services. The local government in the Stone Forest actively discourages sex tourism, but sex trade persists in the region, fed by a constantly changing stream of tourists.

Banna

Banna (*Xishuangbanna*) became a domestic tourist destination in the 1980's, drawing from its already well-established reputation as an exotic subtropical site. Bordering Laos and Myanmar, even domestic tourists had to have special permits to visit until the early 1990's. Since then, with the advent of commercial air travel, the region has opened up, with a strong emphasis on Dai ethnic culture as one of the primary staged tourist attractions in Banna's tourism industry (Li 2003). Dai comprises about a third of the population in this very ethnically diverse region. As the only ethnic group practicing Theravada Buddhism in China, the cultural distinctiveness of the Dai is used by the tourism industry for advertising in Kunming, the transit stop for most domestic Banna-bound tourists travelling by air (45 minutes) or bus (12 hours). More than 1.5 million tourists were arriving annually in Banna by 1995, and of those more than 90% were domestic tourists (Hyde 2001). Within Banna, several sites are on most tourists' agendas: the regional transportation hub of Jinghong, the borderlands, and Dai tourism villages. The Dai Garden is the prime government-sanctioned ethnic destination in Banna for displaying Dai culture, consisting of five Dai villages managed by a state-supported tourism enterprise. The enterprise controls many aspects of village life such as renting villagers' fields, re-packaging village scenes, recruiting villagers as tour guides, and staging dance performances. This destination is 30 kilometers away from Jinghong, along the south side of the Lancang River. Li (2003) describes how during the daytime, villages give over their space to crowded tourists, colourful dance performers, and busy business-soliciting village women. Local women run the Dai-house visits as privately operated tourism businesses. In Jinghong, outsiders run much of the tourist trade, especially the sex tourism in Jinghong's thriving brothels (Hyde 2001).

'Sexed' Sites / 'Sexed' Others

A recent work, (Swain in Press) in tourism studies has discussed how tourist landscapes become 'sexed'. The people, history, arts, mythology and topography that constitute tourist landscapes maybe presented to tourists through images of gender, sex or sexuality, and linked to primal desires and their satisfaction. Tourist consumption practices feed back into performances of place. The connection of hot tropics with the potential for hot sex has become commonplace. Lugu Lake and the Mosuo, Shilin and the Sani, Banna and the Dai act as sites of desire (Jolly and Manderson 1997), as well as sites of encounter between cosmopolitan Chinese and the ethnic 'Others' within China's borders. These desires include sexual titillation or romance, as well as the romance of the primitive and an exotic, beautiful Nature. In these sites, a few visitors of either sex do occasionally find romance with locals outside of the sex industry, but it is the exception, rather than the rule. The marketing and imagining of these ethnic groups and destinations incorporate different elements of desire and gratification, but the allure of each is strongly influenced by issues of gender and sexuality and the relationship of tourists to experience is often gendered and sexualized in similar ways. This sexualization of geography and culture adds to the appeal and interpretation of the places in which these groups live, creating 'sexed' sites in which reside 'sexy' minorities.

While there are varying degrees of sex trades at all of these places, the majority of tourists are coming to experience the site and people as sexed, but not to engage in sex with locals. The consumption of national landscapes and national ethnics in the periphery by domestic tourists reinforces the Chinese-ness of both the tourists and the toured, and in Yunnan this is played out along the fault lines of gender. Domination as well as commonality is written into the performances of sexualized, gendered relationships between tourists and locals. This may in fact be performed across or within ethnicities. Han Chinese and other ethnic local or migrant women frequently act as the 'desired' minorities in the tourist trade. Faux-Mosuo hostesses (Walsh 2001a), Mock-Sani handicraft producers and tour guides

(Swain in Press), and Dai-by-Dress urban prostitutes (Hyde 2001) enact the commoditized, gendered and sexualized identities within the context of ethnic tourism.

The Modern Traditional

One effect of the paradoxes of ethnic tourism (Swain 1989) can be seen as the creation of the 'modern traditional' (Walsh 2001b). The discourses of modernity and tradition come together in a single site, a single ethnic body that fuses the past and the present, and holds the hope of future wealth (for the ethnic), or moral superiority. Within the frame of ethnic tourism in China, Chinese and other tourists look for a mirror into the past in which they can see alternatives to the 'modern' lifestyles which they, the tourists, are living; ethnics enact the past for and in the present. Ethnics cannot be modern for the tourists; they must represent a traditional past, an otherwise lost way of life that has continued into the present because of the imagined remoteness of these areas. Tourists embark on ethnic tourism with their packs full of desire, and unwavering intentions to find their fantasies. Locals of ethnic tourism sites are usually able to gratify some if not all of these varied desires, in part because the desire for fantasy is stronger than the desire for accuracy. In turn, locals at some sites see their hopes for local modernization through tourism revenue succeed, but not all sites. In our research areas, Lugu Lake and the Stone Forest, locals are holding their own in negotiating control of resources, and yet identity may prove something that is more slippery, and under continual re-negotiation between tourists and locals.

At these sites of ethnicity and encounter in China, both the tourists and the toured are products of globalization, and both see themselves as achieving modernity through this act of touring and being toured. Sold at these sites are commoditized versions of the Mosuo, Sani, Dai and many others that have been created from the many layers of representation through which outsiders have come to know them and that act as stand-ins to address modern desires. Chinese tourists not only engage in the global pursuit of validating the self through travel for the sake of travel (MacCannell 1999) but also confirm their modern selves vis-à-vis the 'primitives' they visit. Meanwhile, those Chinese ethnic minorities whose incomes have increased dramatically because of ethnic tourism are now able to create more 'modern' lifestyles, and more fully engage in education and travel themselves.

Meethan (2001:163) notes that binary oppositions often emerge within the literature on tourism analysis, the non-modern and the modern, the authentic and the inauthentic. From his perspective, the moral and condemnatory tones in tourism analysis are often "the result of seeing modernity as an end product or a steady state, as being that which 'we' have and 'others' should avoid" (Meethan 2001:165). The domestic tourist's view of ethnic tourism in China is often not so straightforward. While many Chinese tourists talk about how fortunate they were to have seen the Mosuo before they 'changed', and many urge ethnics to preserve their culture, few would argue that the Mosuo and other ethnic groups should not progress. Domestic tourists seem ready to engage in discussions of backwardness and development rather than simply difference when talking about Mosuo or other ethnic cultures. Attitudes correlate roughly with generational cohorts, although there are many exceptions. Older tourists (over 40) appear more likely to discuss cultural difference as inferiority while younger tourists (under 30) are more likely to romanticize the pastoral and try to speak in terms of cultural relativity.

Many Chinese domestic tourists exhibit some of the characteristics of the 'post-tourist', which Urry (1990:83) describes as the tourist who enjoys tourism as a game, and not as a quest for authenticity. We have found that while domestic tourists may be on a quest for authenticity, many recognize that the structure of tourism produces engagement as 'play' and performance. Additionally, bolstered by strong discourses of development within China, domestic ethnic tourists are less likely to see all change as negative. (Ironically, this occurs at a time of public concern over changes in Chinese national culture from 'foreign' influences.) While foreigners travelling through ethnic areas are frequently disappointed by what they perceive as commercialization and development, many Chinese tourists, although they might regret the loss of simplicity, do not categorically dismiss progress as negative. Fewer Chinese seem to expect a completely untouched paradise, and most accept that the dance performances are just that – performances. So, while there is a temptation to think of Chinese tourists as 'more naive' than foreigners for believing the romantic visions of matriarchy and free love sold as authentic culture, one might argue that Chinese tourists are 'more sophisticated' in that many accept that minority areas, like others, change and that cultural displays at tourist sites are performed for tourists. However, domestic tourists' acceptance of performance, frequently accompanied by an insistence on 'development', may not show the ironic distancing to correlate to 'post'- anything. Rather, these Chinese tourists engagement with varying discourses of the modern may simply show the dangers of oversimplification in classifying tourists, modern or post-modern subjectivities, and their responses to cultural encounters and production.

Conclusion

A discussion of domestic ethnic tourism in Yunnan must be positioned within the issues of ethnicity and encounter in China. This larger context is necessary to understand the desires and expectations many Chinese tourists bring with them to their southwest, as well as the role travel is now playing in constructing the national body. Chinese-ness is built through the intersection of multiple identities, of a Han or modern national tourist, of compatriot outsider tourists, and of ethnic Others (and those pretending to be), complicating official lines drawn between Chinese ethnicity and citizenship. Tourism acts as a vehicle of modernity for Chinese domestic tourists, and ethnic minority tourism producers. Just as Chinese tourists are a varied and divergent group, so, too, are their motivations for travel. These include nostalgia, exploration, and personal liberation, as well as the desire to participate in the wider cultural ethos of consumption and self-identification as modern or post-modern subjects. We have found common themes in the expectations of many Chinese tourists at ethnic tourist sites in Yunnan, despite the different histories of tourism at these sites. In these instances, tourism marketers have developed discourses of attraction and mystery around both the people and the sites that make them effective lures to Chinese domestic tourists. During ethnic tourism encounters, cultural production occurs through acts of public creation of ethnicity. Aspects of minority culture that do not threaten the state, and themes of primitivity, sex, and family, are performed as the 'traditional' hospitality of ethnics in a modern paradise. Through their encounters with tradition and ethnicity, as much as through encounters with other travellers, Chinese domestic tourists create modernity at their periphery and reaffirm their modern Chinese identities.

Endnotes

1. If a couple agrees to have relations, the woman receives her lover at her residence in the evening, and he leaves to return to his in the morning. Both remain socially and economically attached to their natal households, and children are considered part of their mother's household.

2. The government blames the 'backwardness' (*luohou*) and 'low quality' (*suzhi di*) of the people for the resistant poverty of China's hinterlands.

Acknowledgements

Walsh acknowledges with gratitude the financial assistance for field work given by the American Council of Learned Societies, as well as support from the Council on East Asian Studies, Yale University.

References

ADAMS, V. (1996). *Tigers of the Snow and Other Virtual Sherpas: An Ethnography of Himalayan Encounters*. Princeton. Princeton University Press.

CHINESE NATIONAL TOURISM ADMINISTRATION (CNTA) (2004a). Foreign Visitor Arrivals by Region and Nationality 2000. http://www.cnta.com/lyen/2fact/foreign%20visitor-2.htm Accessed on 14 February, 2004.

CNTA (2004b). Annual Visitor Arrivals 1978-2000. http://www.cnta.com/lyen/2fact/annual.htm Accessed on 14 February, 2004.

CNTA (2004c). Major Statistics of Domestic Tourism 2000. http://www.cnta.com/lyen/2fact/9-4.htm Accessed on 14 February, 2004.

GHIMIRE, K. B (2001). *The Native Tourist: Mass Tourism in Developing Countries*. London. Earthscan.

HYDE, S. (2001). Sex Tourism Practice on the Periphery: Eroticizing Ethnicity and Pathologizing Sex on the Lancang. In Chen, Nancy and Constance Clark, Suzanne Gottschang, and Lyn Jeffreys (eds.) *China Urban : Ethnographies of Contemporary China*. Durham and London. Duke University Press: 143-162.

JENKINS, C. L. and LIU, Z. (1997). China: Economic Liberalization and Tourism Development - The Case of the People's Republic. In Go and Jenkins (eds.) *Tourism and Economic Development in Asia and Australasia*. London. Cassell.

LI, J. (2003). Playing upon Fantasy: Women, Ethnic Tourism and the Politics of Identity Construction in Contemporary Xishuang Banna, China. *Tourism Recreation Research* 28(2): 51-66.

JOLLY, M. and MANDERSON, L. (1997). Introduction. In Manderson, L. and Jolly, M. (eds.) *Sites of Desire, Economies of Pleasure: Sexualities in Asia and the Pacific*. Chicago. University of Chicago Press: 1-26.

MACCANNELL, D. (1999). *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. Berkeley. University of California Press.

MEETHAN, K. (2001). *Tourism in a Global Society*. New York. Palgrave.

PEOPLE'S DAILY ONLINE (2001). 8/26/01 Holiday Tourism May Bring 100 Million Yuan to Yunnan Daily. http://www.china.org.cn/english/TR-e/18170.htm Accessed on 14 February 2004.

PEOPLE'S DAILY ONLINE (2000). 5/20/00 Yunnan becomes Top Tourism Spot for Chinese Travellers http://fpeng.peopledaily.com.cn/200005/20/eng20000520_41258.html Accessed on 14 February 2004.

PETERSON, Y. Y. (1995). The Chinese Landscape as a Tourist Attraction: Image and Reality. In Lew, Alan A. and Yu, Laurence (eds.) *Tourism in China: Geographic, Political, and Economic Perspectives*. Boulder. Westview Press: 141-154.

SHI, J. (2000). Ashima: Yongheng de meili yu xiaoying-Shilin xian da luyou xiandai de wenhua gainian (Ashima: Effects of Eternal Charm-Modern Notions in Shilin County Tourism). In He Yaohua and Ang Zhiling (eds.) *Shilin Yizu* (Shilin Yi People). Kunming. Yunnan Jiaoyu Chubanshe: 231-244.

SMITH, V. (1989). *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism* (2nd ed.). Philadelphia. University of Pennsylvania Press.

SWAIN, M. B. (1989). Developing Ethnic Tourism in Yunnan, China: Shilin Sani. *Tourism Recreation Research* XIV (1): 33-39.

SWAIN, M. B. (In Press) Desiring Ashima, Sexing Landscape in China's Stone Forest. In Cartier, Carolyn and Lew, Alan (eds.) *Seductions of Place.* London. Routledge.

URRY, J. (1990). *The Tourist Gaze : Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies.* London. Sage.

WALSH, E. R. (2001a). Living with the Myth of Matriarchy: The Mosuo and Tourism. In Tan Chee-Beng, Sidney C.H.Cheung, and Yang Hui (eds.) *Anthropology, Tourism, and Chinese Society.* Bangkok. White Lotus Press.

WALSH, E. R. (2001b). The Mosuo – Beyond the Myths of Matriarchy: Gender Transformation and Economic Development. Ph.D. dissertation. Department of Anthropology. Temple University.

WALSH, E. R. (2003). From *Nu Guo* to *Nu'er Guo*: Negotiating Desire in the Land of the Mosuo. Paper presented at Yale University Council on East Asian Studies Postdoctoral Lecture Series. February, 2003.

Submitted: January 23, 2004
Accepted: March 7, 2004