Chinese Common Knowledge, 
Tourism 
And Natural Landscapes 

Gazing on 
别有天地 
‘Bie you tian di’ 
‘An Altogether Different World’ 

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This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Murdoch University 
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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

....................................
(Li, Fung Mei Sarah)
Abstract

Tourism in its modern garb is very new to China. Not until 1978 when the bamboo curtain was parted and the ‘Open Door’ policies introduced was international tourism welcomed. It is only 21 years ago, in 1984, that was tourism approved by the Chinese Government as an appropriate form of economic development that could contribute to the modernization of the country.

The form that tourism takes in contemporary China, especially the development and presentation of natural sights and sites, demonstrates qualities that immediately set it apart from western forms of tourism development. While there are similar aspects – all part of the ubiquitous spread of ‘globalization’ – there is much that retains a unique Chineseness that is immediately distinctive. In analyzing the specific qualities of contemporary Chinese tourism it is argued that 4000 years of continuous culture, which has produced a body of understanding known as ‘Chinese common knowledge’, has been fundamental in directing and determining the way in which natural landscapes are utilized for contemporary tourism. The values inherent in this enduring cultural heritage are an amalgamation of Confucian thought, Daoist and Buddhist theology, folklore and an extraordinarily rich literary heritage in which the poem and calligraphy are regarded as the highest art forms. They imbue every natural landscape with a cultural overlay, drawing upon the immense strength of Chinese common knowledge in ways which make many such sights and sites incomprehensible to non-Chinese visitors because no interpretation is provided - since none is needed for their Chinese viewers.

One outcome of this research is the identification of a Chinese tourist gaze that has many elements which distinguish it from the western tourist gaze. It is highly structured through sociolinguistic parameters which feature correlative and relational thinking (in which no individual entity exists in isolation but is connected to all things around it in dynamic relationships), and this has produced what I have termed ‘the relational tourist gaze’. The Chinese value system also includes a degree of anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism that stands in opposition to the western biocentric approach to conservation and maintenance of ‘naturalness’ and ‘wilderness.’ There is a pervasive view that nature is imperfect and ‘man’ has a responsibility to improve on nature to forge a symbiotic relationship, these sentiments summed up in the phrase known to all
Chinese: ‘man and nature in harmony’. A significant component of a Chinese tourist gaze is thus what I have termed ‘the harmony gaze’ that contrast strongly with current western notions about wilderness and pristine nature.

This thesis defines Chineseness and Chinese common knowledge, examines the particularities of the sociolinguistics of Chinese to illustrate the way in which this cultural heritage has been transmitted down through the centuries to the present day, and then analyses the manifestation of this knowledge and its attendant values in incorporating natural landscapes - mountains, caves, rivers – in contemporary tourism in China. The result is - ‘Bie you tian di’ – an altogether different world.
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酒逢知己千杯少
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When like-minded friends meet even one thousand glasses of wine are not enough (time
to share all things)

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乾杯！Gan bei! Let’s drink!
CHAPTER ONE
THE JOURNEY

登高望远
指画山河

Climb high and you can gaze afar
Pointing out all the mountains and rivers

(Xin Qiji 1165A.D., own translation)

Introduction

In 1978, when the former Chinese leader Deng Xiao Ping introduced his “open door” policies, China embarked on a journey of unprecedented growth in tourism development, on a scale unmatched by any other country in the world. With reference to the utilization of natural resources for tourism this development has differed in elemental ways from such contemporary tourism development in many western countries. In examining this use of natural resources for tourism in China I have embarked on my own journey into Chineseness. This thesis is therefore a record of an academic journey and a record of a personal journey I started in 1998, a journey into a familiar yet distant Chinese natural landscape, a journey of discovering the cultural meanings embedded in these natural landscapes, an exploration of the particular forms that tourism development of natural resources in China has taken, their significance in the national Chinese psyche and in the global environment. It is a journey in which I am able to gaze at the landscapes of China with both western and Chinese eyes, through the lenses of both Mandarin and English languages: I am Chinese from the former British colony of Hong Kong but my education has been in both Chinese, in Hong Kong, and
western schools and universities and I have lived in England and Australia for more
than a decade.

When my guide Ms Tong and I went into the cave, we were at the upper
part of the first cavern. There was a cement concrete staircase leading
down to the bottom of the first cavern. On the way down, Ms Tong stopped
at a few levels to show me some features e.g. a formation called the
“Upside down writing brush” 倒吊毛筆, and another called “Ji Gong” 济
公 (a legendary Buddha). I asked her how she interpreted Chinese folklore
characters such as Ji Gong to overseas visitors. She replied: “They don’t
have the Chinese cultural background, there’s no point telling them the
story for example of how the upside down writing brush flew from
somewhere to the cave. But they should be able to see [imagine] the
decoration as a Chinese writing brush. As for the Ji Gong Buddha, they
can’t visualize him. I just simply omit that feature.” She added: “I am not
familiar with Western culture. If I try to interpret the rock features in a
Western cultural context, I won’t be able to do well. So I am better not
doing it.”

This vignette, taken from my field notes on a visit to Ruijing Cave in Zhejiang Province
in China in 1998, highlights the pervasive strength of Chinese culture in all natural
landscapes, but unlike Ms Tong I will attempt to take the western reader on a journey
into Chinese-ness (which I define in a later section).

When we arrived at the bottom of the cavern, Ms Tong switched on the
lights which lit up the staircase in a blaze of lights and presented it as
“The Staircase to Heaven”. I was amused by this 17-level artificial feature
in such a natural environment.
Many Chinese would instantly know, without any embellishment or interpretation from the guide, that the ‘staircase to heaven’ is the term used to describe the steps that were cut into the living rock of China’s sacred mountains for the emperor (the Son of Heaven) to ascend to the heights. Since the staircase provides an essential function for visitors, enabling them to descend from the top of the cave to the bottom, and to view some decorations which otherwise could not be seen, in many Chinese eyes it is an appropriate fixture in this setting, an example of ‘man in harmony with nature’1. My amusement stemmed from the fact that having been exposed to the conservation ethic that guides the management of most western caves, such a huge artifact would be seen as incongruous and completely out of place. The illumination in bright red and yellow lights might be seen by western visitors as environmentally unsympathetic, but to Chinese eyes the colours are symbolic of imperial splendour (red for the emperor/dragon, gold for prosperity), thus enhancing the experience. In this instance I was able to ‘see’ the staircase from both western and Chinese perspectives. I recall that when I had first visited a cave in China, ten years earlier in 1988 (Baojing Cave in Guangdong Province) and was exposed to the rich cultural dramatization, the lights and constructions inside the cave it was perfectly natural to me: that was how caves were presented. At that time I had not studied overseas and I possessed no alternative non-Chinese perspective with which to ‘see’ the Chinese-ness of the cave: amusement at that time could thus form no part of my emotional response to the sight. But now my worldview is more complex.

There were a lot of standard limestone features with labels similar to those I had seen in other caves in China e.g. Xitian Foguo 西天佛国 (the

1 This key Chinese paradigm drawn from Confucian thought and Daoism is explained in detail in Chapter Three. The phrase ‘man in nature’ is not an example of unthinking sexist translation but quite specific to
Western Paradise of the Buddhist), Rulai 如来佛祖 (the Buddha, Tathagata), and Lanhua Miaoshou 兰花妙手 (the Goddess of Mercy’s hand gesture with the tips of the thumb and the middle finger touching and the other three fingers raised – a gesture of delicacy and grace). Ms Tong said that when she was guiding overseas visitors she would describe Xitian Foguo as equivalent to the western Christian Heaven, and Tathagata as equivalent to the western Christian God, because both the Buddha and the Christian God were the holiest/highest in their religions. As she couldn’t find a western equivalent to the Goddess of Mercy, she would only say the feature of ‘Lanhua Miaoshou’ was a hand/ fingers.

Most Chinese will be familiar with all three appellations mentioned above as part of Chinese common knowledge (defined in a later section), requiring no further explanation. They all feature in “Journey to the West”, regarded as one of the four classics of Chinese literature, and possibly the most popular one. The terms are formed by four Chinese characters, a feature which again signals a special message to literate Chinese, (the significance of which will be explained in Chapter Two) as part of Chinese common knowledge.

There was another feature named ‘Waterfall Plunging Down from the Silver River’ 银河飞瀑 (Yinhe Feipu). Ms Tong noted that with western visitors she would use a simpler form of interpretation i.e. waterfall. ‘Silver River’ is the Chinese term for the band of stars that stretches across the night sky, known in English as the ‘Milky Way’. I must admit that ‘Waterfall Plunging Down from the Silver River’ provides a much richer image than that of just a waterfall.

the linguistic traditions of Chinese, and is explained in Chapter Two.
This extract typifies the tension between the duality of my Chinese heritage and the subsequent overlay of western influences, the binary division between my Chinese and western perceptions where these different cognitive domains are juxtaposed. Ms Tong, having no tension to resolve, simply isolates the one from the other according to her audience. My task however is to try to bring the two together in a way that will illuminate my journey across the two cultures. One might say that I occupy Homi Bhabha’s (1994) liminal Third Space, his world of interstitality, of being in between, neither here nor there, since I am living in Australia, one grain of sand in the Chinese diaspora, utilizing western theoretical constructs with which to write this thesis. But I am anchored in my ‘Chineseness’.

‘Chineseness’ is a contested concept often dissected in a binary argument that posits a self-evident natural identity on the one hand against a political articulation on the other (Ogden 1992). Ang (1994, p.74) argues that Chineseness should not be seen as

“a fixed racial and ethnic category, but an open and indeterminated (sic) signifier whose meanings are constantly renegotiated and rearticulated in different sections of the Chinese diaspora. That is to say, what it means to be Chinese varies from place to place, moulded by the local circumstances in which peoples of Chinese ancestry have settled and constructed new ways of living. There are, in other words, many different Chinese identities, not one”.

Meerwald (2004, p.1) suggests that “Chineseness is often viewed in essentialist terms and according to biological marks. Thus, one who looks Chinese is often expected to perform certain cultural practices or speak in a particular manner, for example.”
My own view is that Chineseness relies upon a combination of the above two, underpinned by a third feature - first, being Chinese (an ethnic definition); second, accepting of a melange of ‘traditional’ views about what it means to be Chinese (the myths of Chineseness, or Meerwald’s (2004.p.1) “cultural semantics”); and third, possessing the capacity to access zhonghua wenhua 中华文化 which is generally translated as ‘Chinese common knowledge’. Zhonghua wenhua relates to a broad range of information shared by millions of Chinese about Chinese philosophies, history, religions, literary heritage, art, calligraphy, famous people, and so forth that has been transmitted in a continuous fashion over centuries. Briefly this common heritage is articulated through the Chinese language and in particular through the process of learning how to read and write Chinese, since the act of learning these skills is based upon a common set of templates that stretch back over two millennia. Whether one is in Shanghai or San Francisco or Sydney, in learning how to read and write Chinese, the same form with the same content is utilized. The end result is that a huge amount of information and values contained in the content of those templates is inculcated, absorbed osmosis-like, and common to hundreds of millions of Chinese.

Chinese common knowledge is thus a 're-anchoring’ by each succeeding generation to the origins of Chinese civilization. Chineseness is a view of the world resting on the foundation of Chinese common knowledge. My Chineseness as a construct of ethnicity, shared historical origin and common heritage operates as a source of empowerment, and as a base from which to speak and to be heard, to assess and analyze aspects of contemporary tourism development in China. I will argue that Chineseness and Chinese
common knowledge are essential concepts in any approach to understanding the particular course that contemporary tourism development has taken in China.

My journey is of course a metaphor for the several paths down which my research has led, for the theoretical mountains that I have climbed, the conceptual caves that I have explored and the hypothetical rivers I have crossed in trying to explain to western readers the particularities of contemporary Chinese tourism development.

My research question is in fact a series of questions, like the xiàng-yá-qiú 象牙球 which is a sequence of intricately carved Chinese ivory balls, the one carved inside the other in increasingly smaller sizes, a very complex, highly structured world in miniature. As I explore one set of features and characteristics, another is revealed, and then another, and another.

What, I ask, is the foundation of contemporary tourism development in China? In this context what is the role of China’s cultural heritage in the development and presentation of its forms of tourism based on landscape/natural features? Is Chinese common knowledge a major determinant? How is the Chinese approach distinct from the contemporary western paradigm for tourism to natural areas that is based on the ideal of a sustainable ecological/environmental biocentric model where humans are relegated to observers and are not embedded in Nature but separated from it? Can I discern a dominant anthropocentrism in China? How is modernization manifested in China’s tourism development? And given the paradox that modernization in China has embraced the ‘old’ of cultural heritage for tourism, how can ‘old’ be ‘modern’? What are the tensions between globalization and localization as China charges into
modernization? And if Chinese tourism is different in many ways from western understandings, is there a ‘Chinese tourist gaze’ (as per Urry’s ‘tourist gaze’, 2002)?

In order to investigate these questions, it is necessary to provide a brief summary of some of the key issues and concepts that will be considered in detail in subsequent chapters. But even before undertaking this task I need first to establish my location as a Chinese-yet-western researcher through the methodological approach I have adopted.

**Methodology**

To reveal the complex nature of the xiàng-yá-qiú 象牙球 (carved ivory balls) of contemporary tourism development of natural resources in China I have utilized standard methodological techniques. I have undertaken a library search covering a review of existing literature on the topic, and of a wide variety of sources relating to China’s cultural heritage (history, literature, the classics, Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, and so forth); and this effort is referenced throughout the thesis. But I have refrained from writing the ‘normal’ chapter on ‘Literature Review’ because in the context of a Chinese approach to the topic it finds expression throughout the thesis and does not sit apart.

My methodology has also included extensive field work in China. In Appendix One I have enumerated field visits to natural sites in China (mountains, rivers, lakes, islands, nature reserves) that have been developed as tourist attractions, visits to caves in different parts of China, and counter-point visits to caves in other countries (for example, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, Canada, Vietnam and Korea).
These sites have been supplemented by field visits to ‘built fabric’ cultural heritage sites in China since Chinese common knowledge draws linkages, sometimes generic, sometimes specific, between these places and natural sites. I have visited, among others, the Imperial Forbidden Palace in Beijing, the Great Wall of China, the Yellow Crane Pagoda in Wuhan, and the ancient capitals of Xian (with its terra cotta army) and Hangzhou. While my research is not a thesis in cross cultural studies, in order to explore aspects of Chinese tourism development and whether there is a Chinese-specific tourist gaze I shall touch on my extensive travels and study of tourism development in western countries such as Britain, Australia, Canada and Europe.

An important component of my methodology has been drawn from the ethnographic approach, particularly participant observation in the field, supported by both structured and unstructured interviews with management personnel of tourist sites and tourism companies, guides, Chinese academics, domestic (Chinese) visitors, overseas Chinese and a limited number of overseas non-Chinese visitors.

For all of the above however, my methodology has been deeply informed by my Chinese inheritance to present an emic as distinct from an etic analysis of the phenomena of contemporary tourism development in China. While ethnographic methodology frames this thesis, it is necessary to note some distinctions from the more traditional approach to such studies and my own perspective. Academic anthropology has been embedded in ‘the quest for the Other’ (van den Berghe 1994), the study of the strange and remote (Palsson 1994). Leach (1982) for example, and Foucault (1972) asserted that while the species *Homo sapiens* in a zoological sense is a unity, the notion
of ‘other’ people or ‘people not like us’ is a universal one (cited in Palsson 1994, p.5). They argue that boundaries have always existed between different ethnic groups.

Chinese people have certainly held this view for many centuries. China was viewed and described by its own rulers and people as ‘the Middle Kingdom’ and people outside its boundaries were ‘barbarians’. The distinction between ‘them’ and ‘us’ has full recognition in the Chinese language. China regarded itself as superior and civilized. The richness and sophistication of its ‘high culture’, honed over centuries, has this value belief in its elevated civilization continuing to underlie much Chinese thought. Yet for western anthropologists, the Chinese were themselves ‘the exotic other’, a part of Said’s (1978) Orientalism, to be subjected to ethnographic study in a systematic appropriation of ‘otherness’.

The authoritativeness of such ‘exotic other’ ethnographic accounts in the field of tourism studies was and continues to be reinforced for the western world, first by the writings of ‘the Grand Tour’ in the 18th and 19th centuries (Ryan 2002). This was that essential component of ‘education’ for young English gentlemen, a tour through the grand cities and cultures of Europe (and thus gender-directed because of the ‘male-ness’ of their accounts) (Cranston 2003). Second, and more recently the proliferation of accounts in the travel genre (both in written and television media) has buttressed the former. In these the emphasis is on contact with the exotic other, with experiences and adventures that often take place in the realm of the primitive or isolated or technologically unsophisticated places and societies (e.g. Michale Palin’s BBC television travel series such as  ‘Around the World in 80 days’, ‘Pole To Pole’, ‘Sahara’, and most recently ‘Himalaya Journey’, 2004). They are often based on specifically
identifying the ‘gaps’ – of whatever kind – between ‘them’ and ‘us’, a dichotomy between the primitive and modern, or at the very least drawing out the contrast between the ‘strange’ and the ‘familiar’.

For this thesis I write from the vantage point of the western world and western scholarship. But I am Chinese and my exploration of tourism development in my own society is not an incursion since I am already ‘inside’ the boundaries that western scholarship would draw. As I examine tourism in China I am ‘journeying’ around my own backyard, and thus I am located emically. Some of what I write about may appear to the western reader as exotic and strange, yet to me it is familiar and often ordinary. Thus while I use ethnographic methodology and techniques of western science, my ‘reading’ of Chinese culture and Chinese society and the way in which Chinese values act as a determinant for tourism development is not ‘translated’ in the anthropological sense, since I am of this Chinese culture, this Chinese society and these Chinese values. Where anthropologists are ‘outsiders’ with reference to the society they are studying (i.e. the etic perspective), then the ethnographic text has been considered as a ‘translation’. It is often argued that anthropology is in fact ‘an art of translation’ (Palsson 1994).

However, my thesis is not an anthropological text (although as stated I utilize in part the anthropological methodology - in this case, of participant observation as one approach to my research question), and I am therefore beyond the boundary of ‘anthropology as translation’. Yet it must be accepted that as a western tertiary-educated Chinese living in the west I am not ‘pure’ and there is a certain tension between my emic Chinese perspective and my western orientation to some things. Metaphorically we could perhaps say that I am undertaking my journey not on a magic carpet but on a trampoline: I can bounce harder and thus penetrate deeper into Chinese society than many western
observers, but as the tension on the net of the trampoline tightens, it can bounce me back out of the Chinese environment to a point where I am able to use my western perspective to analyze situations and issues. I am located in Bhabha’s liminal Third Space where there is no fixed boundary between the two cultures and my trampoline provides me with the flexibility to move back and forth between the two with little regard for etic demarcation.

Edward Said, in his seminal text “Orientalism” (1978), suggests that mis-perceptions can occur when western scholars delve into non-western cultures because there is no simple one-to-one correspondence between reality for those ‘inside a culture’ and the way in which reality is represented by ‘outsiders’. He argues that this is so since “all representations, because they are representations, are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions and political ambience of the representator” (Said 1978, p.272). In this view ethnocentric distortion is inevitable, and Said’s ‘orientalism’ has become popular among Chinese intellectuals as they construct various discourses that oppose western paradigms (Zhang Kuan 1994; Wang Mingming 1995; Zheng Yongnian 1999). However while some ethnocentric distortion may always be present in representing the details of an ‘other’ culture it is possible to minimize such distortion. In approaching this attempt to analyze and assess the directions of tourism development in China I therefore draw upon my ‘Chinese-ness’ and utilize the same four distinct characteristics of a China-centred approach which Cohen (1984, pp.186-187) employed when writing about Chinese nationalism. I apply these four characteristics in modified form to draw out their relevance for tourism development in China.
This approach begins Chinese tourism history in China rather than in the West, and adopts internal Chinese rather than external western criteria for determining what is historically significant in the Chinese past that may have relevance for the current time and approach to contemporary tourism development in China. For example, Chinese history elevates poets to a point that is often above generals in recording its past, and it will be the poet’s works not the general’s victories that may be regarded as the defining point in a particular era. Many European histories on the other hand are bereft of poets who tend to be separated out and found only in a history of the literature of a country. As will be seen in the ensuing chapters, poets tend to feature more prominently in China’s contemporary tourism development than generals.

Following Cohen’s line of enquiry, China is disaggregated “horizontally” into regions, provinces, prefectures, counties and cities, thus allowing regional and local case studies and examples of individual tourism sites to be incorporated into a generalized national picture. In other words, the specifics can reveal their relevance for the broader national configuration of how tourism development is approached in contemporary China.

Thirdly, this approach disaggregates Chinese society “vertically” into a number of discrete levels, facilitating the inclusion of lower level histories, both ‘folksey’ or popular rather than imperial, formal and official, into an understanding of prevailing values that contribute to determining appropriate forms of contemporary tourism development. This is particularly apparent when we examine sociolinguists and the different forms of formal and popular language and literature that find expression, through Chinese common knowledge, in contemporary tourism development.
Finally this approach welcomes the theories, methodologies and techniques developed in a range of disciplines rather than just economics when coming to grips with contemporary Chinese tourism development which, particularly in terms of natural heritage, follows different patterns from those in many western countries. Disciplines such as history, philosophy, socio-linguistics and cultural studies are all central and need to be integrated into analyses of contemporary Chinese tourism theory and practice.

In general, Chinese are energetic entrepreneurs, and a shallow analysis could lead one to allege that profit-making is the major determinant in terms of tourism development. I suggest however, that many Chinese tourism developments will seek to draw upon and ‘fit’ in with a range of non-financially oriented values, especially those of deeply held cultural significance. Only a multi-disciplinary approach can reveal the interplay of such values on Chinese tourism development.

While some western observers perceive China’s tourism development and modernization in the light of western development theories, my Chinese voice requires an approach to analyzing China’s new tourism development that explains Chinese concepts of what constitutes appropriate change for modernization, and therefore to “dig out” Chinese internal forces of development and modernization. It also requires identifying the major themes of the specific form that China’s tourism development has taken, and examining how those themes were fashioned. This does not mean that some western approaches cannot be used to understand the phenomena of contemporary tourism development in China, but that western approaches may not be directly ‘translatable’ in constructing a Chinese reality.
In other words, there is a ‘gaze’ about China’s tourism development that is Chinese not western; and for Chinese visitors to the newly developed and newly accessible, if ancient, tourism sites all over China there is a Chinese tourist gaze that is different from the predominantly western-oriented Eurocentric tourist gaze(s) that Urry proposes (2002). In looking further into this Chinese tourist gaze, while I find support for Urry’s basic notion that there is a tourist gaze that is distinct from the ‘everyday gaze’ of work and home (p.2, 2002), I would suggest that for much travel by Chinese in China in contrast to travel to destinations outside China, this binary distinction of gaze for Chinese is not as great in my view as Urry proposes. Travel for recreational purposes by Chinese in China is indeed ‘away’; but it is also to ‘home’ in the sense of connecting with the homeland, the motherland, the very roots of Chineseness. In the western world the terms ‘homeland’ and ‘motherland’ are frequently used only when one is ‘away’: but in China, both terms are used in everyday expressions based on a centuries’ old tradition of such usage. They are also used equally by overseas Chinese as by domestic Chinese since the terms are not dependent upon the physical location of the person. For overseas Chinese, traveling to China is not going away, it is going home in more senses than one, it is re-anchoring their Chineseness through Chinese common knowledge. There are aspects of a Chinese tourist gaze that do not exist in Urry’s construct of the tourist gaze, and there are significant differences between his romantic gaze and what I have termed the ‘harmony gaze’ to describe the relationship between humans and nature that pervades Chinese cultural heritage. I believe that we can thus draw a distinction between a western gaze and a Chinese tourist gaze and I will expound more upon this in my final chapter.
I wish to oppose the discontinuity that is the historical assumption underlying much western anthropological enquiry. In this context the boundary between the world of the subject people and the ‘expert’ (anthropologist) is the point of departure for studying and writing about those people. I am a kind of ‘cultural broker’ on the inside, interpreting the Chinese environment for non-Chinese. I am an “interface” between the dichotomy, a bridge “where-in the interactions between actors become oriented around the problem of devising ways of ‘bridging’, accommodating to, or struggling against each others’ different social and cognitive worlds” (Long 1989, p.232). The concept of interface, while it assumes a dichotomy that needs to be bridged, nevertheless “also represents an attempt to understand cultural continuity, the flow and exchange across boundaries” (Palsson 1994, p.12, my italics), hence the building of bridges. In a modest way I therefore hope that this thesis might be seen as fulfilling this role of bridge building, given my reflexive approach which emphasizes the trilateral inter-relationship between the investigator (the ‘I’, me), Chinese society, and non-Chinese readers. The concept of ‘cultural continuity’ is particularly relevant to the study of tourism since in a globalizing world, the travel of people across those boundaries is a key agent in constructing continuity. Tourism and tourists help to narrow the gaps and differences and reduce the exotic since there are few places and peoples (if any) now left to be discovered. Prior to modern communications and modern travel technologies, cultural dissemination was often slow; but cultural elements are now exchanged around the world at a faster rate than ever before. Indeed, Hannerz (1994) suggests that one of the better ways anthropologists could contribute to an improved understanding of the modern world would be to study “the bridgemakers” such as journalists and tourists. He advocates taking an oblique approach (looking ‘sideways’, he calls it) instead of across the boundaries between cultures (Hannerz 1994, p.48).
While some anthropologists and others are increasingly concerned with ‘continuity’ rather than discontinuity between cultures, the emerging realization of continuities does not necessarily constitute a scenario for cultural homogeneity in the processes of globalization. There is undoubtedly cultural expansionism from the centre to the periphery (‘Macdonald-ization’, ‘Disney-fication’, ‘Coca-cola-ization’ as per Ritzer, 1993, and Ritzer & Laksa, 1997); but as Hannerz (1994, p.56-57) notes, “the shift from the global mosaic” of multiple cultures “to the global ecumene” or universal meeting place of cultures, means little more than that discontinuity has become relative. As cultures come into increasingly greater contact than ever before “new [social and cultural] shapes, new cultures and new differences are continuously generated in this tumultuous world.” Palsson (1994, p.38) suggests that “the futuristic image of the global village” is not necessarily “a particularly realistic one” and “we should not underestimate human capacity for reinforcing existing barriers, inventing new ones, or re-inventing those from the past.” In my exploration of tourism development in China, Palsson’s view has validity since Chinese culture, however defined, may be viewed as a force of and for localization despite the globalizing tendencies of much tourism.

In pursuing this thesis, my role as bridge-maker is important because, in the words of the great Chinese linguist, Roger Ames: “With the different western and Chinese traditions the world views that separate them make them arguably the most remote and exotic high culture from each other’s perspective” (Ames, Chan & Ng 1991 p.xii). If I turn this notion to a specific tourism conceptualization, that of ‘the tourist gaze’ as mentioned above I can find both connectivities and discontinuities from a Chinese perspective. This is not to refute Urry’s concept of a tourist gaze, but rather to argue that
in China there is a distinct Chinese tourist gaze. I shall attempt to delineate some of the
different nuances as they crop up in the following chapters and enter into a more
detailed discussion of this line of reasoning in my final chapter.

**Other Concepts and Issues**

In returning to the various research questions I have posed, in order to explore the
foundations of contemporary expressions of China’s cultural heritage in its development
of tourism, I need to preface a summary of each of the following chapters with a brief
outline of tourism development in China today.

Chinese society has a recorded history of more than 4000 years of ‘touring in the
countryside’, and its literary, calligraphic and linguistic heritage has extolled the merits
of different sights and sites for centuries. The Chinese understanding of what to expect
at a specific site is far deeper than the words of a guide book or the images of a
travelogue. It draws upon far more substantial works than those listed by Urry (2002,
p.3) and is not confined just to various contemporary print, visual and electronic media
that may be currently available. Rather it is foundational. That is, the very essence of
being Chinese has inculcated in virtually all educated individuals much the same wide
range of knowledge from many different sources, combining them all in what we
Chinese call “zhonghua wenhua” or ‘Chinese common knowledge’. This means that the
Chinese tourist gaze captures *invisibles* as well as *visibles*, and so moves beyond the
purely visual. As I proceed through the ensuing chapters I will try to identify the
invisibles for westerners that are embedded in each and every touristic experience for
Chinese in the landscapes of China. Accepting Urry’s notion that there are different
culturally determined tourist gazes, it would be logical to suppose that some other
societies may have similar specificities, especially those that result in religious pilgrimage. The pilgrim would certainly see their sacred sites differently from a recreational visitor to the same sites, and thus there would be ‘invisibilities’ for the latter. However, my focus is on China and I wish to argue that Chinese common knowledge provides a much broader base across a very wide spectrum of sites and experiences – well beyond a religion, although that is a significant part of the foundation of Chinese common knowledge - for allowing Chinese visitors to decipher sites in ways that non-Chinese cannot.

In order to explain the continuities of “zhonghua wenhua” my second chapter examines the sociolinguistics of Chinese because this is the medium by which Chinese common knowledge has been transmitted, sustained and maintained through centuries. While all aspects of sociolinguistics contribute a range of cultural factors to the contemporary development of tourism in China, the literary heritage (especially poetry) and their expression through the art of calligraphy, shufa, has very specific linkages which I shall explore. Templates of shufa, based on ancient texts, literary classics and poetry, are utilized for teaching students in schools all over China, thus reinforcing sociolinguistics as a major conduit for Chinese common knowledge. If read in isolation, this chapter may perhaps appear to be too detailed and some of the information not directly relevant. However, the detail is important because it captures elements that are necessary to understand the significance of many points in later chapters. Without the information presented in Chapter Two the flow in subsequent chapters would have to be interrupted with numerous diversionary explanations.
From examining the sociolinguistics of Chinese my thesis moves on to outline in Chapter Three some of the key aspects of the major philosophies and religions – fundamental paradigms of the Chinese world view, Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism, and the study of *feng shui*. These have formed the basis for much of the content of Chinese common knowledge and the values pertaining to the ‘nature of the natural’. Out of these paradigms, philosophies and religions have come some of the great classical literary works and poetry that are also part of Chinese common knowledge. The continuing influence of the ancient paradigms, philosophies and religions provides shape for the structure of what China is today. For example Confucius (even though he was criticized as feudal by the New Culture Movement in the early 1900s and was targeted at as one of the four ‘olds’ that needed to be destroyed during the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s) is still upheld as a role model for 21st century Chinese. Similarly many aspects of Daoism and Buddhism pervade contemporary society in China, underpinning a number of its values despite the attempt by Mao Zedong to destroy “the four olds” (tradition, religion, feudal superstitions, and reverence for imperial heritage and culture).

One of the crucial characteristics to emerge from this outline in Chapter Three is the prominence of anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism in the Chinese value system as they relate to nature based tourism. These values can be summed up in the comment made by the head of the science research division of one of China’s world heritage site listed national parks (Jiuzhaigou) in dismissing the western ideal concept of ‘wilderness’: “Without humans nature is meaningless”. A human/nature relational association or indivisibility between the two is assumed as simply the way of things; in general terms it does not raise its head as an issue, and so is not questioned. This
prevailing attitude provides a contrast to the ideals of wilderness ecotourism based on a biocentric philosophical approach that is espoused by some in the west, one which has increasingly been adopted, through the principles of ecologically sustainable development, as the guiding mantra for how many natural sites in western countries are managed. This is especially common in western countries for those natural resources that are under government control such as national parks and reserves, and many governments support the concept more broadly through conservation legislation and regulatory planning mechanisms such as compulsory environmental impact assessments. However, I have no intention in this thesis of embarking on a comparison between western and Chinese values concerning the anthropocentrism/biocentrism dichotomy. I shall restrict my analysis to an exploration of Chinese values and leave the larger debate for others to pursue.

Chapter Three does not attempt to map the content of Chinese common knowledge: such an attempt would be far too ambitious and fill books. It does take as a foundation however, the fact that all Chinese stakeholders in China’s tourism, from government to developers to Chinese visitors, draw upon the same pool of common knowledge which encompasses the same range of facts, stories and values. Very many aspects of Chinese common knowledge therefore find their way into how Chinese approach the question of natural heritage and tourism development.

Chapter Four provides a focus on the importance of mountains in the travel ethos of China over the centuries. The Chinese tourist gaze could be encapsulated in a famous saying about them: “You shan ru du shi” - “Touring in the mountains is as if studying history”. Over centuries as the mandarin scholar class assumed a central role in the
administration of the state, it became accepted at some point of their lives for them to spend time, perhaps even several years, touring the Motherland in pursuit of greater wisdom and knowledge. The Confucian ethic implored them "to seek ultimate truth from the landscape" (Ge 1991, quoted in Petersen 1995) and their creative talents went into poetry, prose, paintings and calligraphy inspired by the rural landscapes. The courtier/poet as travellers became familiar figures throughout China and their philosophical interpretations of the Chinese landscape have become part of Chinese common knowledge (Yin Yang Petersen 1995, p.143). As the life of the Tang Chinese poet, Li Bai (701-762A.D.) typifies, travel in China was a socially-sanctioned way of life for thousands of its scholars and creative artists over several millennia. The biographical note about Li Bai in Illustrated History of China's 5000 Years (Chinese History Museum 1992, p.259) records that this renowned poet once from the court of Emperor Li Longkai "travelled around all the most famous mountains and rivers of China, and his poetry stands as testimony to his passion for the landscapes of China and the daily life of the people."

In this context it is to be noted that mandarins were restricted to males since by royal decree only men could sit for the imperial civil exams. Historical records suggest that until the late nineteenth and early twentieth century very few women were educated. However, there were rare exceptions: for example, Li Qing Zhao 李清照 (1084—circa 1151A.D.), a scholar’s daughter and Zhu Shu Zhen 朱淑珍 (circa 1150A.D.), also a mandarin’s daughter, are acknowledged as poets of merit, although their subjects were related to home and family life. Society also placed great restrictions on the ability of women to travel, except as accessories to male travellers, and independent female travel
was basically non-existent. The lack of education and travel experience combined to prevent the emergence of female *shan shui* poets or artists. Thus as this thesis progresses the absence of references to females is not be interpreted as unthinking gender bias on my part but rather accurately reflects the society of the time; and this understanding is also incorporated into Chinese common knowledge.

As a part of this common knowledge, the works of Li Bai and other Tang dynasty poets and artists such as Wang Wei (700-761 A.D.) have influenced generations of Chinese and continue to be taught in Chinese schools today. Some Chinese have come to revere Li Bai as 'the Doyen of the poets' (Lin 1935, p.241). Overseas Chinese who may never have visited China, will without prompting describe Li Bai as such - simply one more manifestation of the breadth of Chinese common knowledge. This knowledge is multi-layered and built on levels of every-day familiarity with the past: and the past is part of the present and shows the way to the future. This is relevant to the discussion about a Chinese tourist gaze since it leads in my view to a partial deconstruction of the binary divisions between work/home and away, and the past and the present.

Thus when we apply 'Chinese common knowledge' to the tourist gaze and contemporary Chinese visitation to sites around China, we find that the binary division between 'home' and 'away' is blurred, and much travel constitutes "a voluntary cultural decision … to validate the poetic knowledge of places" such as the 72 peaks of Huangshang, Yellow Mountains (Ying Yang Petersen 1995, p.150).

*To the Chinese people, visiting a scenic spot or a historical place is always attached to sentimental expectations. In order to watch the sun rising over Mt Tai (see Plate 5.1, Chapter Five), for example, many old and young Chinese*
wait in the chilly darkness for hours. What they are really looking for is not simply the scene of the sun rising from the clouds but the experiences and reflections with which they are familiar and which have been memorialised again and again in Chinese poetry (Petersen 1995, p.149).

Petersen suggests that such experiences are “akin to a religious pilgrimage” (1995, p.150) but in writing this she does not explore my contention that the experience is a connecting to and a joining with an unbroken present-past continuum. Petersen’s comment does however highlight the role of poetry as perhaps the highest art form of not just literary excellence but of all art forms in China, and this elevation of poetry and associated familiarity with a range of knowledge about poetry, poetic forms and poets – as well as the content of numerous poems which embrace fundamental values of Chinese civilization - is itself part of Chinese common knowledge.

When western tourists look at the Yangtze they see a river; the Chinese see poems replete with philosophical ideals and human emotions. Part of the "common knowledge" of Chinese-ness is to recognize a very large number of oral, pictorial, calligraphic and written representations of places all over China - the picturesque hills of Guilin, the ‘sea of clouds’ of Wushan (Wu Mountain), the Three Gorges and the Red Cliffs of the Yangtze River, the waterfalls of Lushan (Mount Lu), and the elegant gardens of Suzhou. Well-educated westerners may be able to ‘see’ a number of sites in their own country in a similar, profound, way: but probably few will have any in-depth knowledge and sites will require signage and interpretative material for most visitors to gain a deeper appreciation of that sight/site. But there will not be the ‘institutionalized’ characteristics of the Chinese gaze, an institutionalization of knowledge shared in detail by millions of Chinese, and an institutionalization which is fundamental to Foucault’s clinical gaze.
These shared images of Chineseness bring spiritual unity even if the people have never visited them; but when they do visit, the importance of the imagery and symbolism is reinforced (Petersen 1995, Sofield & Li 1998). This is exemplified by the traditional saying known to Chinese all around the world: "If you have not been to the Great Wall your life is not complete". The implication is that one is not really a Chinese until one has personally experienced this "most powerful, multi-valent symbol of Chineseness" (Waldron 1990, p.226). But note that the Chinese phrase is NOT based on the visual: it does not say – “If you have not been to see the Great Wall …”. Rather a mix of senses and emotions are encapsulated that is quite profound. The Chinese tourist gaze does not just see the sight/site: it sees history, culture, religion – a host of invisibles. It encapsulates a series of emotions – pride, awe, patriotism, love of country, of ‘ownership’ of such an edifice. In ‘seeing’ they are actually ‘experiencing’. ‘Seeing’ without experiencing is insufficient. One can see the Great Wall from a distance. One can see it from the car park built for tourists. But for Chinese, one has only ‘been’ to the Great Wall if one has climbed it. In the same way, visits to sites all over China move beyond the visual. Famous mountains must be climbed, not just looked at. If one is old or frail, then there are palanquins and carriers ready to transport the infirm all over the site. And in climbing them, one must visit all the different sites embedded in Chinese common knowledge through visits by emperors, mandarins and the poets over the centuries to corroborate the understanding of the experience. In looking at the Yangtze the average Chinese could spend several hours expounding on what they ‘see’ – whereas westerners will have difficulty moving beyond the visible. Thus the Chinese tourist gaze has more in common with Foucault’s clinical gaze (1975) than Urry’s tourist gaze in that the clinical gaze also opens up invisibilities; doctors can ‘see’ inside a body by observing externally visible signs. Interpretation, a standardized approach that is
provided for many western sites, will reveal only a fraction of what the Chinese ‘see’. Without having been nurtured in the Chinese cultural milieu it is difficult for foreign visitors to enter Chinese landscapes and encounter the same experiential understanding.

The religious and philosophical values with which mountains in China are imbued provides the basics for the next chapter, Chapter Five, which commences with an explanation of the role of cultural (human) artifice in the design and planning of mountain trails and similar sites for travel and visitation. The template for such planning and design is more than 1300 year old and emphasizes the dominance of the anthropocentric model, where wilderness trekking and an emphasis on wildlife conservation and maintenance of biodiversity of the kind that attracts increasing numbers of western tourists each year (WTO 2004) is non-existent. Five cases which each exhibit different forms of anthropocentrism (humans first) and several which also feature anthropomorphism (attributing human characteristics to non-human features, animals, plants, etc) demonstrate the ways in which the entire philosophy of humans and nature in China are translated into contemporary mountain and natural landscape tourist attractions. Each case in its own way also provides further examples of how and why a Chinese tourist gaze may be differentiated from a western tourist gaze, with the underlying theme that all natural sites in China are first and foremost cultural sites/sights and access to Chinese common knowledge is necessary for understanding them.

Chapter Six explores multi-dimensional aspects of cave tourism in China. It is illustrated with a series of vignettes from my field notes which describe the varied experiences available in a range of caves in China. The Chineseness of the cultural content of cave tourism in China is so strong that it is impossible to describe cave
tourism as ecotourism or possibly even nature based tourism in the western sense. Daoism, Buddhism and classical literature constitute much of the foundations for development and commentary. These factors make a visit to a cave in China as first and foremost a cultural experience, and its development and presentation is predicated on the possession of Chinese common knowledge by its visitors. The tour guide’s commentary will be coded culturally, indecipherable to non-Chinese. Westerners will find virtually no scientific, geological or environmentally oriented interpretation nor will the complexity of the Chinese presentation be explained in a coherent form to non-Chinese.

My penultimate chapter (Chapter Seven) is a departure to some extent from the previous chapters because of its detailed outline of powerful commercial and politico-economic attempts to commoditize a cultural event based on a natural phenomenon – the Qiangtang River tidal bore, or Guan Chao 观潮. It is consistent with my central theme that cultural forces in Chinese society, supported by the strength of Chinese common knowledge, exert their own influences over contemporary tourism development and in this chapter I explore the successive mythologizing, de-mythologizing, re-mythologizing and selective de-mythologizing of this natural phenomenon. The tidal bore occurs ten times each month but for more than 2000 years there has been only one special day each year – the 18th day of the 8th lunar month, the mythical birthday of the dragon king – when the bore has attracted the attention of emperors and millions of viewers. In the last decade, political and commercial forces were marshalled in a sustained, concerted and ordered way with expenditure amounting to millions of dollars to re-fashion the annual festival into a more-or-less continuous 120-times-a-year spectacle in order to take advantage of the tidal bore’s actual manifestations. But
passive resistance to this commoditization by unordered, unmarshalled, un-led public sentiment, based on the well-spring of Chinese common knowledge, has resulted in an almost complete failure to deconstruct popular mythology. People simply stay away, with the multi-million dollar investment lying idle for 362 days of the year. More than one million visitors stream onto the banks of the Qiantang River over the three-day period around the 18th day of the 8th lunar month. Less than 300 on average turn out on the other 117 days when the tidal bore is visible. It is in my view a graphic example of the dominating influence of culture that permeates most natural sites in China, an influence that is able to determine the parameters of commercial tourism development. I argue that it encompasses a Chinese tourist gaze, and that its influence if ignored can court commercial disaster.

My final chapter rounds out discussion on the key points which emerge from the preceding chapters, with a focus on my argument that there is a distinctive Chinese tourist gaze, that it has its foundations in Chineseness and Chinese common knowledge, and that it has a capacity to order the form and structure of much tourism development of natural sites in China. I argue that zhonghua wenhua anchors China’s tourism to localization allowing it to resist much of the pull of the tide of globalization.

I wish to conclude this introductory chapter by drawing once again on Chinese common knowledge and quoting a poem very famous in Chinese common knowledge called “At Heron Pagoda” by the Tang Dynasty poet, Wang Zhihuan (688-742 A.D.):

登鹳雀楼
白日依山尽 黄河入海流
欲穷千里目 更上一层楼
At Heron Pagoda

The horizon ends at mountains silhouetted by the westering sun
The Yellow River flows into the unseen ocean
But you can widen your view one thousand li
By climbing up one flight of stairs

(own translation)

The last two lines of this poem have become part of accepted Chinese wisdom, used in a variety of ways such as exhorting students to study harder. And just as Wang Zhihuan urges his readers to expand their understanding of their world by climbing higher to look beyond the mountains that otherwise limit the view and to see the ocean, so in the ensuing chapters I wish to expand the reader’s understanding of how Chinese landscapes and natural phenomena are utilized as resources for tourism.
PLATE 1.1

You can broaden your horizons by climbing up an extra flight of stairs.
Entrance to the study of an ancient scholar’s house in the 12th century village of Xi-di, Anhui Province.
CHAPTER TWO
SOCIOLINGUISTICS AND CHINESE COMMON KNOWLEDGE

In order to explore the research questions posed in this thesis, it is necessary to range over some fundamentals of what in terms of Chinese culture, zhonghua wenhua 中华文
化, has become known as ‘Chinese common knowledge’ or ‘Chinese-ness’ (Ogden 1992), before narrowing the focus to tourism development per se. As noted in Chapter One, the foundations of Chinese common knowledge and Chinese-ness exist in specifically Chinese philosophies, religions, literary heritage, art, calligraphy and so forth; and in this context the values of its ‘culture’ have been transmitted through millennia embedded in the sociolinguistics of its written and spoken words. This chapter will therefore examine aspects of the Chinese language against a backdrop of its sociolinguistics. It will end with an overview of Chinese calligraphy, the contribution that it makes to Chinese common knowledge, and its significance at tourist sites all over China. A wide range of linkages into tourism development will be drawn as the chapter progresses. Chapter Three will then look more closely at relevant content of Chinese common knowledge as it relates to Chinese philosophies and religions, although this chapter must unavoidably refer to aspects of those philosophies in a sociolinguistic context.

Definition of Culture

A starting point for this discussion is to adopt a working definition of ‘culture’. Anthropology has attempted to come up with a definitive meaning which would
“authorize” the concept of ‘culture’ for use as a technical term for the discipline (Ingold 1993, p.210). However, there are so many different emphases given to the concept that Ingold (1993, p.210) states that: “‘Culture’ has continued to swim with the tide of intellectual fashion, leaving behind it an accumulating trail of discarded significances not unlike a pile of old clothes.” More than five decades ago the famous anthropologists Kroeber and Cluckhorn tried to sort out the different definitions and compiled a list of no less than 161 of them (Kroeber & Kluckhorn 1952). A similar attempt today would end up with many more. Early definitions, e.g. Tylor 1871, focused on culture as synonymous with ‘civilization’ since the Victorian age anthropologists were convinced of the inevitability of social progress, of humanity’s rise from primitiveness to ‘being civilized’. In the 1930s the cognitive aspects of culture came to the fore as anthropologists accepted from psychologists the role of learning in the make-up of culture. In the 1980s ecology entered the debate and some definitions emphasized culture as a response to the bio-geo-physical environment, for example Howard (1988, p.4), who defined culture as “the customary manner in which groups learn to organize their behaviour and thought in relation to their environment.” However, one definition which has weathered the years and remains as foundational is that of the distinguished American anthropologist Robert Lowie. In his History of Ethnological Theory (1937, p.2) he defined it thus:

By culture we understand the sum total of what an individual acquires from his society – those beliefs, customs, artistic norms, food-habits and crafts which come to him not by his own creative efforts but as a legacy from the past.

This definition raises the question of the relationship of ‘society’ to culture, and the discourse on this remains open. Some anthropologists and philosophers maintain that societies give rise to culture but others such as Drummond (1987, p.220) are equally
unequivocal in the opposite direction: “Groups or societies don’t generate culture: culture brings forth societies.” For Chinese culture there is no deep discussion about which comes first: they are simply accepted as being ‘together’, creating a ‘one-ness’, and this approach is reflected in Chinese sociolinguistics. The Chinese word for ‘culture’ – *wenhua* – consists of two roots, *wen* meaning ‘literate’ or ‘civilized’, and *hua* meaning ‘change’: i.e. humans, society and culture all change as part of the same process. Similarly, the Chinese word for ‘nature’ – *ziran* - is translated literally as “everything coming into being” and expresses the totality of mountains, rivers, plants, animals, humans, all bound up in their five elements – metal, wood, water, fire and earth (Tellenbach & Kimura 1989). The underlying philosophy of this ‘one-ness’ is an integral component of Chinese common knowledge.

For the purposes of this thesis, Lowie’s definition will suffice – although there are elements of Tylor’s linkage of culture with civilization in the Chinese approach to the question. This is because China has for millennia identified itself as a superior to its neighbours, and used disparaging terms such as ‘barbarians’ to describe them and differentiate its ‘higher civilization’ from their ‘lower’ forms of society. In fact, ancient Chinese texts e.g. Sima Qian’s *Records of the Historian* (92B.C.) describe some of these neighbouring states as having no culture.

**Sociolinguistics and the Chinese Language**

Language is a fundamental of all cultures: it both influences and reflects the development of the society in which it is used. According to linguists, among all aspects of culture language is the one highly developed component in a very early stage of that culture, and the perfection of a language is the prerequisite for the development of that
culture (Zhou Weiquan 1988). In exploring Chinese cultural heritage as a crucial determinant for contemporary forms of tourism development, it thus becomes necessary to examine the role that China’s language has played over the centuries. Such an examination will help to demonstrate the contribution that language has made to ‘Chinese common knowledge’. To begin this examination I start with a brief history of the development of the Chinese language. This will be followed by details of the two main forms of writing that developed over the centuries and became standardized. These are ケンヤン, which had its genesis more than 2,200 years ago; and 白話, which dates back to the tenth century A.D. These sections are then followed by a short section on the adoption of an official pronunciation system, 普通话, which dates back to the time of the Manchu Qing Dynasty in the sixteenth century. With these sections as necessary background, I then turn to explore in more detail the role of 文字, Chinese script, and its art form, 番, calligraphy, which has made a distinctive threefold contribution to Chinese common knowledge. While all aspects of sociolinguistics contribute a range of cultural factors to the contemporary development of tourism in China, the art of calligraphy has very specific linkages which I shall probe.

A Brief History of Chinese Language

China's recorded history begins almost four thousand years ago with the Shang Dynasty which ruled much of what is present day China. A series of divinations scored into tortoise shells and the shoulder blades of cattle revealed a recognizably Chinese civilization (Plates 2.1 and 2.2). It had an elaborate writing system - 甲骨文 - which had moved well beyond ideographic picture writing; a sophisticated religious system; and a patrilineal, hierarchically-structured society. Writing was sacred: it was the means of communicating between the worlds of the living and of the gods and ancestors...
PLATE 2.1
PLATE 2.2

(Chang 1986). This sacred element has been a key value associated with learning and mastery of writing that has prevailed for centuries since it accorded elevated status to ‘educated people of letters’ (hereinafter referred to as ‘the literati’), a sentiment that still finds expression in contemporary China. For example, tourist sites will use the calligraphy of famous persons such as Mao Zedong or former president Jiang Jemin to extol aspects of their attractions.

Chinese is not written with an alphabet-based script but with a symbol (‘character’) for each word. Many characters are made up of components, some of which can also stand on their own. Often characters can be broken down into two major parts, one which indicates the general meaning of the word, and one which indicates the sound. The characters that make up the Chinese script as a well-developed system date back at least to 1400 B.C., although some individual characters have a significantly longer history (Jiang 1987). The tortoise shell and ox blade inscriptions (jiaguwen) mentioned above have been dated at more than 2000 B.C. These evolved into the jinwen (bronze script) during the Zhou Dynasty (1100-771 B.C.). When China was unified for the first time by Emperor Qin Shihuang in 221 B.C., there were a number of dialects and scripts in use. One of Qin’s first initiatives was to unify the writing system, using as his template the script then common for wax seals, the xiaozhuan, which was largely derived from the jinwen script. He ordered the burning of all books and materials written in other scripts, and executed any scholar who disagreed with his policy and refused to use his xiaozhuan script as the standard. In 213 B.C., his Prime Minister Li Si, drew up an official index of characters called the Zhuan-shu which contained more than 3,000 characters. Subsequent dynasties continued Qin’s policy of a single script and cemented the standardization of the written language throughout the country. Over a period of
several centuries under the Han dynasties (206B.C.-220A.D.) a modified form with a simpler graphic structure, lishu, became the norm. In turn this evolved into the kaishu script during the Southern and Northern dynasties (420-589A.D.) which remains as the standard Modern Chinese script. This evolution demonstrates that the Chinese script constitutes “one of the oldest writing systems in the world and the only one that has been in continuous use for more than three thousand years” (Chen 1999, p.131). This continuity has contributed to Chinese common knowledge in highly significant ways which will be outlined in later sections of this chapter. Additionally the different styles of scripts are still used as the basis for calligraphy-based souvenirs at many tourist sites because of their perceived artistic merit. There is an echo of this in some heritage sites in western countries which will use Gothic font or Victorian copperplate writing for example in an attempt to add ‘authenticity’ to their heritage values. In China however, calligraphy stands as an art form in its own right that is so highly appreciated it does not have to reflect any intrinisic relationship to a particular site, although its content will have some relevance to the site.

**Wenyan - Classical Literary Language Style**

Prior to the standardization of the script an accepted norm for writing - wenyan, meaning ‘classical literary language style’ – evolved. The wenyan style of writing originated with grammatical and lexical norms that developed during the centuries stretching from the Eastern Zhou Dynasty to the end of the Warring States period (ca.770B.C.-221B.C.). Emperor Qin standardized wenyan as an integrated part of his standardization of the script. It was, and remains, very formal and was quite detached from the idiomatic speech of the time. Generally speaking, in all languages speech and writing differ to varying degrees, with the latter more compact than the former. But
“what makes Chinese outstanding in this respect is that for 2000 years, its standard written language, wenyan (‘classical literary language style’) was almost completely divorced from the contemporary speech of its users” (Chen 1999, p.67). This lack of direct association between sound and graphic forms is known as ‘logographicity’ as distinct from written forms of languages which follow sound more closely, i.e. a phonographic system.

Several centuries later, during the Han dynasties, schools of learning based on the teachings of Confucius were established which used the standardized script and the standardized wenyan form of literary classics of the earlier periods as the bases for their curricula. Out of these schools came the scholars or mandarins to run the imperial civil service. For the next 1500 years the most enviable career for Chinese scholars was to be appointed to the imperial civil service after success in the state examinations – keju. Success in the examinations was largely dependent upon proficiency in their knowledge of the pre-Qin classics, and on their ability to write both essays and poems modelled on the form and style of those classics. The writings of the pre-Qin period were thus elevated to iconic classical status and no student could aspire to the high status of a scholar or Mandarin without mastering them in schools and demonstrating their competency in the imperial examinations. Keju was retained up until 1905. Chinese common knowledge retains these classics within its cornucopian scope.

In the context of sociolinguistics and culture, under Confucian thought, literature of an ethnic race was considered the concrete manifestation of that race’s general cultural image, a concrete reflection of the social reality (Li Zhonghua 1994). Thus, through this form of thinking which describes individual behaviour, spirit, psychology and feelings,
it directly captures the society’s psychological consciousness and its common characteristics which is the reflection of the culture of that race. In this approach, literature is not only an element of culture but a mirror of it.

The most developed Chinese classical literature form is the poem. In the Confucian view, “shi yan zhi” 诗言志, that is, “poems are manifestations of the authors’ sentiments, aspirations, ethics, and so forth” (Li Zhonghua 1994, p.57). Thus Confucists see that the reflection of aspirations and interests of a person is the nature of poems. Such poems mainly reveal the ‘person’ not the ‘art’. According to Confucius, an individual’s personality which should be the union of good and beauty is shown through poems, and he instructed his disciples to study poems. The philosopher Zhu Xi (Ming Dynasty) further explains how poems achieve the function of ethics: the language in poems is easy to understand; while reciting, the pause and transition in rhythm is touching; for beginners, it is easy to arouse their longing for goodness and discard evil. Poems can not only inspire goodness in human hearts/nature but link up and strengthen the sentiment/feeling between human beings that would bring harmony to all sorts of human relationships. In other words, the Confucian view of literature is that the function of poems is completely an ethical and moral one. An author has to have integrity before one can write a great literary work. As will be illustrated many times in the chapters which follow, poems and poetry are often key elements of the Chinese approach to tourist sites, a significance that is often hidden from non-Chinese eyes because their value systems do not elevate this literary form to such prominence.

Combined with the knowledge of how to write the thousands of Chinese characters and use them in approved literary styles was a move to standardize pronunciation. In terms
of spoken language, as early as the western Zhou period (ca.1100-771 B.C.), the Zhongzhou dialect won recognition as the standard spoken Chinese for administrative, diplomatic, cultural and military exchanges between the central government and local states, and among the states themselves. It was called yayan, the literal meaning of which is ‘elegant speech’. Proficiency in the approved standard for spoken Chinese was an important part of the attainments of scholars, since the ability to compose rhyming poetry was a significant component of the required literary skills. Non-standardized pronunciation would have led to inability to use the characters to produce rhyming stanzas. Confucius customarily used yayan for educational and diplomatic purposes even though he himself was a native speaker of the Lu dialect (Chen 1999). However, yayan was restricted to only a very small elite and all over China a large number of regional dialects, often mutually incomprehensible, flourished. Communication by the spoken word was thus often difficult. But since all the dialects used the same standardized script, they could communicate effectively in writing. It is this feature that allowed Chinese common knowledge to be transmitted across the boundaries of spoken dialectical differentiation across China.

According to linguists (e.g. Chen Duxiu 1917; Chen Ping 1993; Tan Bi’an 1956) the logographicity of the writing system is the crucial linguistic factor that facilitated the maintenance of wenyan over such a long period. The lack of direct association between sound and graphic forms in the Chinese writing system largely insulated wenyan from changes in the vernacular language. Had Chinese adopted a phonographic system from the beginning, there would have been a substantially higher propensity for the written language to follow actual changes in spoken language more closely. This logographic capacity enabled wenyan to serve as the medium whereby Chinese literary heritage
which comprises the bulk of Chinese common knowledge was preserved and a quite extraordinary level of accuracy with little variation from the original was transmitted across many generations, and the same information was disseminated across a land of great dialectal diversity. As a written language encoded by such a writing system, wenyan facilitated a level of accessibility across time and space. Even today, contemporary literate Chinese in Hangzhou, Hong Kong, Hobart or Helsinki can read the 2000-year old texts. By contrast, when a language is phonographically oriented, the written word follows the spoken form much more closely so that as English for example has changed over the centuries, Chaucer’s “Canterbury Tales”, only six hundred years old, is virtually undecipherable for contemporary English language speakers (see Appendix Two for the Prologue of Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales).

If logographicity was the crucial linguistic factor that facilitated the maintenance of wenyan, the crucial cultural factor in maintaining ancient knowledge through wenyan was the keju. The imperial examination system was responsible for the transmission of the same body of knowledge for generation after generation of Chinese scholars, i.e. the literati, over a period of two millennia. While keju was abolished 100 years ago, its contribution to the transmission of Chinese common knowledge was immense. However, wenyan and keju were not the only mechanisms for the transmission of ancient knowledge and lore and the development of Chinese common knowledge. There were at least three other linguistic factors at work: baihua, putonghua, and wenji.

**Baihua – Vernacular Literary Style**

Baihua was a parallel stylistic form to wenyan which appeared during the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220A.D.). ‘Baihua or ‘vernacular literary language’ (literally ‘unadorned
speech’), differed from wenyan in that its style of expression was less formal and was much closer to ordinary spoken Chinese, i.e. the contemporary vernacular of the day. By the end of the Tang Dynasty (960 A.D.) a large number of baihua writings had been published. These included transcripts of Buddhist mantras, scripts for folk stories and plays, novels and poetry. Many of these achieved high standards and became classics in their own right, for example, the works of Tang Dynasty poets such as Li Bai, the Ming Dynasty novels Journey to the West, The Investiture of the Gods, The Plum Flower in the Golden Vase, and the Qing Dynasty novel Dream in the Red Mansion. Many of the earlier wenyan classics were also transposed into baihua, thus making them accessible beyond the ruling elite and literati. *Baihua* was not a currency for the career advancement of bureaucrats but in the rest of society, literature in *baihua* was immensely popular. Historical records indicate that it was read and enjoyed from one dynasty to another by emperors and children alike (Chen 1999). Understandably, writings aimed at the masses required a written language that closely reflected the way common people spoke (Mair 1991), so while *wenyan* remained as written form for all official correspondence, used by the literati for virtually all their correspondence, and essential for the *keju* (imperial examinations), *baihua* served all ‘low-culture’ functions. Being easier and quicker to write than *wenyan* since it flowed ‘naturally’ from the spoken word it became the favoured style for diaries, records of meetings, travel journals and for specific occasions which required a text that approximated as far as possible what was actually being said, as in the recording of court proceedings. It has been argued that one of the most important factors to bind the different dialect speaking population groups into using one standard form of written Chinese is the strong
influence of the exemplary literary works in traditional baihua (Chen 1999)\textsuperscript{1}. Speakers of different dialects had to conform to the baihua standard if they wished their work to be accessed across dialectal boundaries. Inevitably a dichotomy arose between wenyan as representing ‘high culture’ and baihua as representing ‘low culture’. Scholars, mandarins and other members of the ruling elite regarded wenyan as refined and elegant, while baihua was coarse, vulgar and ‘slangy’ - which meant that in the context of how Chinese common knowledge was nurtured and transmitted over the centuries, baihua reached many more people than wenyan. The nineteenth century scholar, Qiu Tingliang, highlighted the relevance of the written language to the general education of the population when he suggested that there was no more effective tool than baihua for making the whole populace wise (cited in Tan 1956).

Following the 1840 Opium War which saw China humiliated by western powers and forced to concede the inferiority of its technology, Chinese intellectuals argued that the ancient and complicated language system, and wenyan in particular, stood as the main obstacle to greater modernization. It blocked the way to a higher literacy rate in the country which was perceived as essential to modernization. Therefore, one of the major goals of the literary revolution that followed in the twentieth century was to replace wenyan with a written language that was much closer to the daily vernacular so that learning and using the written language would be made much easier for the masses. The irony of this situation is that whereas in most other countries language has been one of the key patriotic forces in national identity, in China in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the Chinese language as a whole was treated by some academics and political leaders more as a culprit that should be held responsible for the misfortunes of the

\textsuperscript{1} Since baihua reflected common spoken usage, as the vernacular changed over time so baihua reflected those changes. As a result a distinction is drawn between ‘modern baihua’ as written today, and the forms it mirrored several centuries ago: hence ‘traditional baihua’.\textsuperscript{43}
nation (Chen 1999), instead of being looked upon as a sacred symbol of statehood. This was at extreme variance with the traditional reverence reserved for its literary and linguistic heritage.

With the abolition of the imperial examinations in 1905, the overthrow of the imperial system of governance in 1911, the inauguration of a republic in 1912, and a belief among many decision-makers in the new China of the early twentieth century that language reform was essential if China was to modernize, the use of wenyan was officially replaced by baihua in 1920 by the Ministry of Education for use in primary and secondary school text books (Chen 1999). The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) on assuming government in 1949 also vigorously supported baihua, and the use of wenyan on the mainland was greatly reduced. In 1956 the CCP Government decided that baihua would be simplified and standardized as Modern Written Chinese to tackle the illiteracy rate in China. It based Modern Written Chinese upon the contemporary Northern Mandarin written vernacular, while at the same time absorbing elements from Old Chinese, that is, both wenyan and traditional baihua, other Chinese dialects and foreign languages. In the context of ‘other foreign languages’, the CCP Government introduced a parallel phonographic form using the 26 letters of the Roman alphabet – ‘pinyin’ – as part of its modernization programme to make Chinese more accessible nationally and also globally. Students in contemporary China now learn both pinyin and the simplified Chinese script of Modern Written Chinese.

Despite the amended CCP form of baihua officially replacing wenyan, the latter has not died. As early as 1942 Mao Zedong, in a speech given at Yenan, Northern China, said:

“We must learn to adopt what is still alive in the language of the ancients. Because we have not exerted ourselves to learn language, we
have not made full and reasonable use of much that is still alive in the ancient language. It goes without saying that we are resolutely opposed to the use of expressions or classical allusions that are already dead, but what is good and useful should be taken over” (cited in Newnham 1971, p.136).

There are sound functional reasons for the continued use of wenyan. According to Chen (1999, p.84): “The syntactic, morphological, and lexical features of Old Chinese or wenyan are extensively preserved in words, phrases, sentence patterns, and the numerous so-called si zi chengyu (‘four-character set expressions’) that are in active use in Modern Written Chinese or baihua.” He ascribes this situation to merits of Old Chinese that are unmatched by the vernacular-based baihua.

“First, owing to its continuous use for more than two millennia, wenyan had accumulated a richer repertoire of morphemes, words, and expressions than was available in baihua at the beginning of the twentieth century. As a result, writers of Modern Written Chinese regularly turn to Old Chinese as a fountain-head of linguistic resources. Second, wenyan is superior to baihua in terms of compactness and terseness, capable of conveying more information than the latter in the same space of text, often resulting in a highly refined style. Finally, wenyan’s remoteness from actual speech, and its function as the medium used in Chinese classics, help to impart a tone of formality, derivatively an aura of authority, to present-day readers” (Chen 1999, p.84).

Thus constituents of Old Chinese make an essential contribution to Modern Written Chinese, especially qualities like succinctness, refinement, and formality. According to Chen (1999, p.84) wenyan writings still make up from one third to half of the content in the textbooks of the Chinese language subject in high schools in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore; and a good knowledge of Old Chinese is considered to be vital for mastering the whole range of styles in Modern Written Chinese. Wenyan remains as the preferred medium of many with literary pretensions, conferring status on those who are its master. Thus despite the moves to use simplified forms as standard language media in modern China, Mao Zedong, former President
Jiang Jemin and other CCP leaders utilized both the complex Old Chinese characters and the wenyan style to express themselves on many occasions. They particularly favoured the use of *si zi chengyu*, ‘four-character set expressions’ and *si zi ciyu*, ‘four character phrases’, when demonstrating their prowess in calligraphy (Plate 2.3).

Examples of such calligraphy, imbued with the authority of the author, are a feature of hundreds of tourist sites all over China and I will return to this matter specifically in Chapter Five (the development of Huangdi Yuan) and Chapter Six (presentation of caves for tourism in contemporary China). *Si zi chengyu* always describe or cover historical or folkloric events in an unchanging set expression and are part of Chinese common knowledge. *Si zi ciyu* are four character phrases which are fluid in their composition and application, often imaginatively so. For example, ‘dragon flying, phoenix dancing’ 龙飞凤舞 could apply to describing sarcastically some-one’s handwriting as illegible, or descriptively the shape of a decoration in a cave, or appreciatively of an admired example of calligraphy. The use of *si zi ciyu* is equally part of Chinese common knowledge even if a specific composition or application may be new. Many tourist sites use *si zi ciyu* in new applications that immediately draw an approving response from visitors, for example, as a label for a particular landscape feature; and this aspect will also be referred to in later chapters.

As a footnote to the sociolinguist heritage of China, it is necessary to mention the use of gender specific terms. In Chinese the term *ren* 人 is used generically to refer to ‘man’ as representative of both sexes. The two words, 人类, *ren lei*, are used for ‘humanity’, ‘humankind’, ‘people’, and ‘the human race’. Because of the need for succinctness as
PLATE 2.3

Former President Jiang Jemin was a keen calligrapher and his work – in traditional script – adorns many sites. In this example, he is photographed writing the name of a new tourist site: “Hua Shan Mysterious Grottoes” (top). His calligraphy has been reproduced in giant billboards erected on the site (centre). And a book on the grottoes has his calligraphy represented on the cover (bottom). (Source: top and bottom photos, Huashan Mysterious Grottoes Tourism Development Co, 2002)
characterized by wenyan and the balance that Chinese perceive in four-character phrases, an accurate translation of some Chinese uses of ren will therefore not allow the two character phrase ren lei to be used as a replacement. Thus ‘man in harmony with nature’ is a four-character phrase, 天人合一, but ‘humankind in harmony with nature’ consists of seven characters, 人类与自然合一, which transforms the elegant wenyan four-character phrase into a modern baihua phrase with an obvious loss of brevity. The sound balance – phonetic aesthetics - of many phrases is important in Chinese in a way that is irrelevant in English, and to Chinese ears the seven character phrase is ‘ugly’ and ‘clumsy’ and loses its balance. Thus, western concerns about non-gendered language cannot always be transferred accurately into Chinese without the Chinese language losing its integrity, and in an attempt to retain that accuracy I have on appropriate occasions persisted with the Chinese approach even if it cuts across western sensibilities.

Language as cultural heritage is hard to break. Over the past ten years my own observations indicate that wenyan is in fact becoming more public in mainland China as the country moves to a more capitalist and open society because its economy of expressions lends itself to commercial use, for example in signage. Official instructions, street-signs, formal inscriptions, and artistic writing all benefit from the terse economy of wenyan with its ‘one idea, one character’ structure. Much of the wenyan usage is also written with traditional script, attesting to the elevated status it continues to enjoy over the simplified script introduced by the CCP Government. The tourism sector is at the forefront of both such usages (this will be expanded on later in the thesis).
In summary it is important to note that *baihua* uses the same written characters as *wenyan* and many of the classics were transposed into the more free-flowing form of *baihua*, thus extending their access to many more people. For more than one thousand years the two forms of written Chinese, *wenyan* and *baihua*, have coexisted side by side, both contributing to the transmission of ‘Chinese common knowledge.’

**Putonghua – Standardized Pronunciation**

With the current form of *baihua* being utilized as the standard written form of Modern Chinese, albeit with much dependency upon, and direct content drawn from, Old Chinese or *wenyan*, the Communist Party moved to standardize pronunciation. In 1956 it chose the northern Mandarin dialect *putonghua*, geographically associated with Beijing, for this purpose. Modern Mandarin may be said to date from the Manchu overthrow of the Ming Dynasty in 1644. The new rulers, a non-Chinese race, spoke many dialects among themselves and lacked a unifying language with which to rule. The dialect of Chinese spoken in and around Beijing was taken for this purpose, and because the new dynasty was strong, Mandarin quickly spread as ‘official speech’, that is, the speech of officialdom and of the court. It was not at first, nor was it intended to be, the speech of the people as a whole. But after the fall of the Manchus and the start of the Chinese Republic in 1912, it was necessary for the new China to have a national language and again the choice was Mandarin. This was confirmed by the CCP Government with its decision to embrace Mandarin or *putonghua* in 1956.

Recent surveys suggest that up to 75% of the entire population of China can now communicate in *baihua*/*putonghua* despite the resilience of spoken dialects such as Cantonese, Fujien, Hakka, Wu and others (Chen 1999). These developments have thus
facilitated the transmission throughout China of the pool of cultural heritage referred to as Chinese common knowledge.

**Wenji and Shufa: Chinese Script and Calligraphy**

**Wenji: Chinese script**

Underlying the different stylistic written and spoken forms of Chinese has been a more or less standard set of characters making up the script of Chinese – *wenji* – many of which have remained unchanged in their basic form for more than 2000 years.

Under imperial rule all Chinese peoples residing within the ambit of the Emperor’s authority regardless of their dialect or geographical location used the same standardized system of writing, the distinctive characters known collectively as *wenji*. The 130 different dialects identified throughout China, such as Cantonese, Hakka, Mandarin, and Wu, may be mutually unintelligible and they each pronounce the same character quite differently. But through the written word educated Chinese from all over the nation can communicate effectively with each other because of the standardization of characters. A comparison may be made of the way in which Arabic numerals are common to European languages. The numerals mean the same in say England, Poland and Italy despite the totally different pronunciations with which they are read; and this holds for the characters of Chinese script over all of China (Newnham 1971, p.33). Chinese traditional written script is thus often praised as a significant unifying factor for the nation.
Chinese script has evolved with six distinctive categories based on their origins. These categories are “pictographs, indicators, associative compounds, determinative-phonetic compounds, deflectives and borrowed forms” (Pritchard 1998, p.24). From an historical starting-point, the earliest characters on the tortoise shells and ox blades were pictures and all subsequent developments of the script have incorporated pictorials. Since pictures could only serve for very concrete and widely familiar objects: e.g. man, moon, river, it was necessary to extend this pictorial basis into more abstract or symbolic strokes. The main category represented in the current script for *baihua* - picto-phonetic - incorporates a meaning category known as ‘radical’ combined with a pronunciation guide known as ‘phonetic’. This form accounts for nine-tenths of modern Chinese characters (Newnham 1971, pp.35-39).

As noted, all Chinese writing is grounded in calligraphic forms and the best examples of different styles were utilized as templates for others to learn from. Prior to the invention of printing in China, hand-drawn copies on paper and silk were made for passing on texts. The Chinese developed the first form of tracing paper so that copies could be lightly traced then transferred in outline to a harder form of paper where the characters were inked in. More skilled calligraphers made free-hand copies of originals. Students had to learn how to reproduce the optimal shape for each character, constant repetition resulting in penmanship that became automatic as a character’s outline was impressed onto the student’s subconscious. Mechanical printing was invented during the Tang Dynasty with bamboo stencils, and this was followed later by a form of typeset reproduction in the eleventh century. One of the earliest books with an exact date of publication was a collection of Buddhist sutras printed in 868 A.D. (Chinese History Museum 1992). Mechanical printing aided the more widespread dissemination of
language studies and this contributed to the spread of Chinese common knowledge. Under the *keju*, budding mandarins had to master about 10,000 individual characters. A mature scholar after perhaps thirty to forty years of study, would be master of more than 25,000 individual characters. Only the most persistent scholars, after a lifetime of studying, were able to learn all 56,000 extant characters (Chen 1999). In terms of contemporary standards, at the end of six years of primary education a student would master knowledge of about 3000 individual characters. University graduates would have a stable of about 6,500 characters.

A template approach to learning how to write continues to this day as standard practice in contemporary classrooms, using the same examples that have been in use for centuries. Primers will have the original text on one page, and a few sets of identical script, very lightly drawn, on the opposite page. Students first familiarize themselves with the characters by writing over the top of the light copies, and then, in the space remaining, reproduce the text in freehand (Plate 2.4). Students cannot learn to read and write without memorizing *wenji*. Through the content, i.e. the classical texts, of their templates they are thus exposed to their cultural heritage and become the latest link in absorbing the unbroken chain of Chinese common knowledge that stretches back through the centuries.

Placing all of the above sections into a framework of sociolinguistics we can see that ancient China surmounted the risks of internal unrest that were generated by ethnic and cultural pluralism through resorting to “the contextualizing force of the Chinese language itself as means of transmitting culture. A class of literati developed; a canon of classical works was compiled and instituted which served to translate and perpetuate the
Students learn to write using templates of classical works, in this case two of the best-known poems of all time the first by Li Bai (701-762 A.D.)：“Thoughts on a Still Night” (Seagull Press, nd, vol.1, pp3-4) and the second by Ciu Hao (704-754 A.D.)：“Yellow Crane Pagoda” (Source: Seagull Press, nd, vol.3, pp27-28).
doctrines of these classical works; an examination system based upon these texts was introduced in the early Han period and persisted with relatively little change for two thousand years, being abolished only as recently as 1905” (Hall & Ames 1998).

**Shufa: Calligraphy**

The topic of Chinese language and its script cannot be abandoned without enlarging on its drawing – *shufa* or calligraphy. This is because significant elements of Chinese culture emanate from it, are bound up in Chinese common knowledge, and are manifested in contemporary tourism development all over China. As far back as the Spring and Autumn period (770-476 B.C.) Confucius taught calligraphy as one of the six recognized arts that all educated persons aspired to (the other five were archery, chariot riding, ritual, music and computation).

Calligraphy is categorized as a branch of learning that is rich in content which includes the evolution of different writing styles; the development of technique and rules that go with those techniques; the history of calligraphy, calligraphers and their inheritance in art; and evaluation of calligraphy as a work of art (Ebrey 2003). “This branch of learning is wide ranging and deep, forming an important part of Chinese culture.” (“What is calligraphy?” n.d.). There are three main components:

a) The art of calligraphy itself, which every Chinese learns about in the same way that western students of art learn about style, composition, harmony and balance in paintings and different techniques of applying paint to paper, e.g. brushwork, different mediums such as pencil, oils, water colours, etc;

b) famous practitioners of calligraphy; and
c) the content of famous examples of calligraphy which were and continue to be widely disseminated through a range of different applications.

a) The art of calligraphy

The Chinese believe that the drawing of the characters of the Chinese script is not simply a practical, mechanical technique for communicating. Rather the cultivation of a beautiful handwriting style is regarded as ‘high art’. Calligraphy, perhaps better than any other art form, is in Chinese eyes able to bring out for the viewer the spiritual world of its maker. In essence, calligraphy, *shufa*, is abstract art.

Calligraphy first began to flourish as an art form during the Later Han period (25-220 A.D.), by which time the main script types had been established, no new types were added, and the first writings to evaluate calligraphic style appeared. These commentaries began the process of looking beyond the mere literary and communicative merits of texts towards seeing an expressive artistic quality in the actual writing of the characters themselves. By the beginning of the Tang Dynasty (618 A.D.) calligraphy as a ‘high art’ form was firmly entrenched, combined with the view that the style of an individual writer communicated not only meaning but revealed essential qualities about his or her personality, intellect and abilities. The brush was considered to act “like a seismograph in recording the movements of arm, wrist, and hand” (Ebrey 2003 web site p.2). “Through the medium of form, way of handling the brush, presentation, and style, calligraphy as a work of art for educated Chinese conveys the moral integrity, character, emotions, esthetic feelings and culture of the artist to readers, affecting them by the power of appeal and the joy of beauty” (“What is calligraphy?” n.d.). Throughout the centuries calligraphy has continuously possessed a high status.
among the arts, and is practiced today by millions of people, including school-aged children all over China (Plate 2.5). It is a universal supposition even today that one can ‘read’ the inner person through his or her handwriting.

There is an important distinction to note with reference to copying in the history of both Chinese painting and calligraphy, and its European counterpart. Copying in the western tradition generally carries negative connotations because the copy is seen as inferior or subsidiary to its original. In China, however, copying is viewed as an essential and valuable educational tool. It allows the aspiring calligrapher “to model his writing stylistically, and more importantly, himself, on the character and intellect of the master calligrapher whose mode of writing he practices” (Ebrey 2003, website p. 7). This issue of copying raises questions which extend into the general area of authenticity, for which there is no exact equivalent Chinese word.

b) Famous calligraphers

The roll call of pre-eminent Chinese cultural figures - emperors, generals, civil service officials (mandarins), literati, monks - includes many whose presence on the list is the result of their artistry in calligraphy. There is no similar roll call of calligraphers in any western country’s encyclopedia of its famous persons. Westerners do not – cannot – associate their writing styles with any particular practitioner. Even before the introduction of equipment such as typewriters, then word processors and now computers and text phones, writing was viewed almost entirely as a practical exercise. Neatness and legibility rather than any ‘high art’ trappings were all that was required. The current widespread use in the west of mechanical means of writing has divorced the
Calligraphy is an art form, not ‘just writing’, and from an early age students are taught the correct way to hold the brush and how to form each stroke (Source: Seagull Press n.d.). Calligraphy sets are one of the most treasured gifts to give. They are available as souvenirs at sites all over China, because calligraphy in many forms is integral to virtually all sites.
personal elements even more from the act of writing. In contrast, part of Chinese common knowledge is the widespread familiarity with which the famous calligraphers and the chief attributes of their artistry are known. While mechanical and electronic means of writing are increasing in China, because writing is an art and the ability to write is essential to the definition of an educated person, it survives in its own right. At the highest level in Chinese society, represented for example by Chairman Mao and former President Jiang Jemin, as noted above, proficiency in calligraphy is practiced and publicly displayed. Examples of their calligraphy grace tourist sites where they can be absorbed and admired by Chinese visitors – a manifestation of a Chinese tourist gaze that is beyond the ken of western visitors to such sites who may often view it as graffiti.

Each generation of Chinese produced calligraphers of note, and the court records of successive emperors identify the status and rewards that were bestowed on them. It became a recognized imperial practice for emperors to become avid collectors of calligraphy and the walls of their palaces and temples were adorned with calligraphy much more so than other forms of art. Many of the best examples by well-known calligraphers were buried with the emperors – a tradition continued in the mausoleum of Mao Zedong. Since the paper and silk on which calligraphy was produced could not last, their works were meticulously inscribed in stone. The carving of the inscriptions was expensive, and it is believed that it cost as much as 30 taels (1.14 kilograms) of silver to carve a character the size of a fist during the Ming Dynasty (Tang Tao 2001).

A succession of emperors from one dynasty to the next engaged craftsmen to transfer the best calligraphy of their day to stone steles thus saving the artwork for posterity. The
stone inscriptions could then be copied as templates for use by scholars, and such use continues in the present day for school students in order to learn how to write.

In each of the former capitals of China – Xi’an, Hangzhou, Beijing and other historic cities - there are today ‘stone tablet museums’ where the collections of steles have been preserved for display. Chinese visitors to Xi’an may spend equal time admiring the works of famous calligraphers in the comprehensive collection of steles in its ‘stone tablet museum’ as at the site of Emperor Qin’s ‘underground terra cotta army’. The latter is internationally renowned and has been accorded World Heritage Cultural Site Listing, and is a ‘must-see’ site for foreign tourists; but for Chinese the record of its calligraphers in the Stone Tablet Museum is probably regarded as highly. They will tour through the display of stone steles, exclaiming as they recognize the originals from which the copies transferred to their school primers were made and from which they learnt to write. They can stand in front of stone stele after stone stele and recite word for word the texts in front of them. They will take photographs, and buy rubs or printed copies of their favourite texts as souvenirs. Most educated Chinese visiting Xi’an would try to visit its stone tablet museum as well as Emperor Qin’s terra cotta army (Plate 2.6).

Four main styles of writing script have been recognized – standard, running, cursive and individualistic. All students of calligraphy must start by learning standard script. As writers mature, so they may move into cursive script or individualistic signature expression, but all start with the acknowledged masters. The Chinese art of writing is based on the style of three famous Tang calligraphers - Liu Gongquan, Ouyang Xun, and Yan Zhengqing. From thousands of calligraphers, their work has been acknowledged as the best and most representative of all that is to be admired in the
The Stone Tablets (Stelae) Forest Museum, is housed in a former Confucian temple in the ancient capital, Xian. It contains more than 1000 stone tablets, most ‘mounted’ on the back of a hand-carved giant stone tortoise. Many of the inscriptions have been used for the past one thousand years as templates for learning the art of calligraphy.
standard script style. The way they formed the characters has been adopted as primers for learning how to write for centuries and so all Chinese primary and secondary school students are familiar with their style because they must copy each of numerous individual words of these masters’ one by one, until they can reproduce the specific characters without reference to any text.

As noted, the calligraphic representations are allied to personal attributes of the individual, and as an illustration of the way in which calligraphy and historic persons and values are all part of Chinese common knowledge, the story of Yan Zhengqing (709-785 A.D.) brings the different themes together. He was a general and brilliant military strategist in the court of Emperor Tang Taizong. Despite a series of personal tragedies arising from machinations within the court by illegal aspirants to the throne, he remained steadfastly loyal to the emperor. His style of writing was noted for its solidity and strength and “because of his reputation as a staunchly moral and principled individual, Yan Zhengqing's forceful and majestic individual style [of calligraphy] assumed the heroic proportions of his own life” (Ebrey 2003, web site p.10). His name and his style have since been synonymous with ‘writing with an upright brush’, a phrase which carries an especially strong tone of moral approbation. This phrase itself is part of the common knowledge of all Chinese about calligraphy because one of the requisite techniques is to hold the brush in a vertical (upright) position in order to transfer more directly and powerfully the flow of energy from hand to paper. It should be noted that Yan Zhengqing’s fame rests on his brushwork above that of his military prowess: he is known as a calligrapher before a general. This of course attests to the need to follow Cohen’s (1984) approach, detailed in Chapter One, of understanding Chinese history by prioritizing Chinese values above western values of how history should be recorded.
Ouyang Xun, who also lived in the Tang Dynasty period, has been categorized in a similar way. His writings and his character are both infused with sentiments such as strong, tightly structured, and as steadfast as the lone pine tree clinging to a high mountain cliff buffeted by winds and storms (Fan Yunkuan 1996). Thus Huangshan and its famous pine trees clinging to the sides of vertical slopes are adorned with calligraphy written in the Ouyang Xun style and Chinese visitors are immediately able to recognize the underlying symbolism of the calligraphy (Plate 2.7; and see Case 5, Chapter Five on Huangshan World Heritage Site’s development as a tourist site). It is the ability to see invisibilities such as these which help to differentiate the Chinese tourist gaze from Urry’s western tourist gaze that in contrast is so deeply centred on the visible, or what one can see physically. Indeed, some western visitors to Huangshan have been overheard talking disparagingly about the calligraphy as so much graffiti, their Eurocentric values blinding them to the intrinsic merits and rich cultural heritage of what they see but cannot see.

Different dynasties became associated with different styles of calligraphy. In contrast to the standard ‘upright’ style of the Tang Dynasty, the style of the subsequent Five Dynasties period is typecast with cursive and running scripts. In a mirror image of the lyric expression in poetry during this era the calligraphic style emphasized resonance and harmony (Fan Yunkuan 1996). In addition to the three famous Tang calligraphers there are perhaps thirty others whose artistry is widely known and whose histories are part of Chinese common knowledge. For example, Wang Xizhi (307-365 A.D.) was the leading calligrapher of the Eastern Jin period, and is venerated today as ‘the Sage of Calligraphy’. Reinforcing the value Chinese give to a man of letters over a man of
Examples of calligraphy engraved in cliff sites and landscapes: Huangshan

**Examples of 4-character phrases**

**Photo Above**
Top left (dull red) characters: *The rock is simple but it is profound*
Centre (gold) characters: *The splendid scenery of Heaven (tian)*
Right (red) characters: *The peaks are touching the Heaven (tian)*

**Photo centre right:** *The deep gorges are secluded, mysterious*

**Photo bottom left**
Top (green) characters: *A cool heaven away from worldly cares*
Left (gold) characters: *When mists shroud the peaks and valleys the scenery is so exquisite that you are not sure if they are real (solid) or ephemeral.*
action, Wang’s military career in which he rose to the rank of general has been almost forgotten. His most famous work was the “Preface to the Orchid Pavilion” manuscript. When serving as Governor of Guiji (Zhejiang Province) in 353 A.D., Wang invited forty individuals to celebrate the Purification Rites Festival with him at the Orchid Pavilion. A stream flowed beside the pavilion, and Wang organized a poetry contest in which his guests had to compose their poem before a cup of wine, placed in the current above the pavilion by his servants, floated by. Anyone who failed to finish his poem by the time the cup arrived was ‘penalized’ by having to drink the wine. All the poems were compiled in the volume known as “The Orchid Pavilion”. Wang’s gathering achieved legendary status, and references to it occur throughout the poetry and painting of later eras (Ebrey 2003). Wang Xizhi, his anthology of the poems, and his merrymaking entered the cornucopia of Chinese common knowledge. The Orchid Pavilion in Guiji has been re-built, there is a stone tablet recording Wang’s Preface in his own distinctive style of calligraphy (his Preface has become a standard template for learning how to write), the site is now a favoured place to visit, and the revelry itself may be interpreted as the precursor of the modern Chinese picnic.

Ask any Chinese ‘Who is Su Shi?’ and they will respond that his is a household name, also known as Su Dongpo; that he is one of the most famous scholars of all time in China (1036-1101 A.D.); and one of the four great Northern Song calligraphers along with Huang Tingjian (1045-1105 A.D.), Mi Fu (1051-1107 A.D.), and Cai Xiang (1012-1067 A.D.). He had a self-proclaimed title ‘Dongpo-jushi’ – ‘Dongpo The Recluse’, such self-proclaimed titles a common occurrence throughout the history of China’s men of

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2 The Purification Rites festival dates back many centuries. It was held annually in Spring (the third day of the third lunar month) as people emerged from the confinement of winter when various ills and ailments were common. By custom, people travelled to a site of pure clean water to get out into the fresh air, to exercise and eat – the precursor of the modern picnic.
letters. ‘Recluse’ indicated his preference for avoiding politics and not pursuing his original career as a mandarin because of the conflict he felt between the ideals of serving the country and the reality of court intrigue. He studied calligraphy mainly from Wang Xizhi and Yan Zhengqing but his distinctive style is quite separate from his masters and indicates Su Shi's complicated feelings and deep spirituality. His most famous poem, instantly recognizable to most Chinese, Reflections on Red Cliff (which is translated in Chapter Four), recalls the lives lost in a famous battle and the enduring flow of the Yangtze River beating against the cliff and carrying away so many of the Motherland’s valiant sons (Plate 2.8). Su Shi’s Red Cliff near Huang-gang City is today a significant tourist site and a pavilion contains examples of his calligraphy, with many calligraphic souvenirs for sale. The original Red Cliff which is located near where the famous naval battle on the river took place has not been enshrined as a battlefield site. In other words, the calligraphy of Su Shi, combined with his poetic interpretation inspired by looking at another Red Cliff, has made this Red Cliff the object of the Chinese tourist gaze, rather than the original. In semiotic terms and following MacCannell (1976), Su Shi’s poem has become a marker for the site which is not the authentic sight/site.

**c) The content of famous examples of calligraphy**

In the context of the contribution made by calligraphy to Chinese common knowledge, the content of famous examples of the art was disseminated widely through a variety of applications. Many of the same templates that were utilized during the imperial dynasties continue to be the standard used in primary and secondary schools throughout China in both pre- and post-communist China education, and amongst the Chinese
PLATE  2.8

The Red Cliffs of the Yangtze River and the nearby pavilion (upper left, partially obscured by trees) which contains examples of Su Shi’s calligraphy, artwork and poems (lower photo). These Red Cliffs are not the site of the original battle but have become the object of the Chinese tourist gaze because of Su Shi’s poem.
diaspora (Chinese communities resident in countries around the world) whether in San Francisco or Singapore or Sydney. Both wenyan and baihua works - essays, poems and excerpts from the classics – are used to teach students how to write, and in the process they are exposed to the same literary heritage, the same inherent values, the same wisdom of past philosophers, teachers and literati, the same history of events and people, as generations of students before them. Much of the content of the templates is profound; some is commonplace; some evokes emotions; some imparts specific knowledge of events and places and people from the past. This content provides one of the strongest links with past events over centuries so history, myths and legends, poetry and the classics, folklore and other cultural material embedded in the texts is passed on absorbed osmosis-like down the generations. They become part of the present.

One result is that literate Chinese all over the world share the same ‘common knowledge’. They can quote the adages of Confucius; discuss the teachings of Dao; are familiar with the five sacred mountains and the four sacred rivers of ancient China; can recite the same 8th century poem written by Li Bai as he saw his friend off at the Yangtze River city of Hubei (“Farewell at Yellow Crane Pagoda”); or share the same feeling of homesickness when looking at a full moon because as 9-year olds they have learnt how to write the characters from another poem by Li Bai called “Thoughts on a Still Night” (see Plate 2.4). They know about literally hundreds of places all over China although they may never have left their own county or if overseas never have visited ‘the motherland’. They are conversant with numerous events that have occurred and people who have lived throughout their continuous history of several millennia. At a Chinese New Year function in Launceston, Australia, in February 2005, about twenty Chinese from several different provinces in China, from Malaysia, Singapore and Hong
Kong, ranging in age from about 20 to about 45, spontaneously as a group recited Li Bai’s “Thoughts on a Still Night” when the title was mentioned, and at the end spontaneously said: “Oh, I feel homesick.”

But the learning-to-write process is only one application by which knowledge of the past is disseminated. During the Five Dynasties period, important texts like the Confucian Classics and the Buddhist canons were engraved on the rock faces of sacred mountains like Mount Tai. The Chinese landscape “came to reflect the appreciation of calligraphy, as stones inscribed with the calligraphy of admired artists were erected at famous sites” (Ebrey 2003, website p.10). Often metres in height, such writings have been engraved in hundreds, perhaps thousands, of landscapes sites all over China. The Huangshan range, 72 peaks in 130 square kilometres of national reserve which has been granted World Heritage Listing status, for example, has several hundred such engravings dating back more than 1000 years, as noted above (see Plate 2.7). Caves have also been at the forefront of calligraphic decoration. The rock inscriptions are often touched up with coloured paint and where western visitors might regard them as graffiti, the colours in fact add greater significance to the calligraphy for we Chinese viewers. Yellow (gold) symbolizes prosperity, red represents good fortune, and blue for longevity are the main colours utilized. This melding of calligraphy with landscape is a practice which continues today, and as more and more sites are opened up for tourism development, new calligraphic engravings capturing ancient sayings are an integral part of all of them. Calligraphy thus forms an ever-present part of China's visual culture. Chapters Five and Six explore this phenomenon in more detail.
Religious calligraphy was of great importance during the Tang Dynasty and both Buddhist and Dao texts were copied in great numbers by monks or by individuals until printing made their task much easier. According to Ebrey (2003, website p.8): “Copies of the entire Buddhist canon were undertaken by imperial decree, and often the work of many individual calligraphers went into the completion of various sutra texts, which could be quite long. When sutra texts were commissioned, it was common practice to have the most talented calligraphers do the first and last scrolls, with the work parcelled out to other scribes in between.”

The content of famous examples of calligraphy gained further exposure and contributed to Chinese common knowledge because of the tradition, which continues to this day, of such examples being engraved above the entrance door lintels of houses, ancestral halls, temples, public buildings (including railway stations and airports), or painted on walls of all kinds (houses, fences, bridges, etc). Millions of entrances to houses all over China will have couplets of paper or bamboo scrolls with famous calligraphy hanging on either side of the door. These are temporary and are replaced usually every Chinese New Year or on special occasions such as weddings or festivals. The interiors of buildings, whether public or private, are similarly adorned with examples of calligraphy. Such artwork will be hung before pictures and in most buildings will greatly outnumber other forms of decoration. Mao Zedong’s mausoleum in Tiananmen Square, for example, is decorated with a 10-metre long framed poem above his coffin. It is one of his own poems, written in classical calligraphy, which extols revolutionary action but uses traditional poetic forms, capturing for Chinese viewers the essence of the man (Plate 2.9). Wherever one looks in China, one see famous sayings, or individual character words, the imprint in effect of several thousand years of cultural heritage.
Where in many western countries one might have to devote several years of specialist study to familiarize oneself with similar cultural heritage, it is available openly and absorbed every day as part of simply living as Chinese in China.

**Calligraphy in Modern China**

As mentioned above, *wenyan* and complex traditional script have enjoyed something of a comeback in the last three decades in China, despite the State Language Commission issuing a series of directives against the trend (Chen 1999). The Commission has re-stated standing policy that the complex characters can be used only in the publication of classics in *wenyan*, and that the standard form of simplified characters as determined by the Commission should be followed in all publications and other writings for public display. School children in China now can only learn complex script and calligraphy in private tuition as extracurricular activities which normally only an affluent family can afford. The Commission’s commands have been less than effective, however. In Beijing, a survey of 48 state universities fifteen years ago revealed that 25 of them were using complex characters in their signage; and of a random survey of 51 restaurants, 43 used complex characters in their signs (Zhong 1990). The percentage was even higher in southern Chinese cities such as Guangzhou (Dai 1991). Personal observations as recently as May 2004 suggest that current usage is much higher again. This phenomenon is attributable to several factors. “First, the renewed interest in the complex/traditional script is closely related to the widespread assumption that users of the complex script are more learned, cultivated, or simply more affluent than users of the simplified script. This assumption is presumably derived from the fact that it is the complex script, rather than the simplified one, that was used in the myriad of Chinese
PLATE 2.9

Mao Zedong followed the tradition of all famous people of China by practicing the art of calligraphy. His Mausoleum in Tiananmen Square is decorated with one of his poems in his own calligraphy, and the cover of the May 1968 issue of “China Pictorial” depicted Mao giving orders for the final assault on the Guo Mintang with his brush and command written in his own calligraphy.

(Source: China Pictorial, May 1968)
classics” (Chen 1999, p.191). Secondly, the linguistic forms derived from a time-honoured literary heritage imbue the complex script itself with an aura of prestige that has been embraced by a society recovering from the devastation of the Cultural Revolution and rediscovering its identity. Thirdly, “the association of the complex script with the prestige of tradition is further reinforced by the fact that most highly esteemed scholars and eminent calligraphers are more accustomed to writing in the complex script, as most of them finished school well before the promulgation of the simplification scheme in 1956” (Chen 1999, p.192).

During the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the social and political uses of calligraphy have been radically changed (Chen 1999). No longer is it an art form reserved primarily for the traditional scholarly elite. It has become popular among people of all walks of life, and it has become a tool of revolution (revolutionary wall posters and banners being a major feature of the earlier decades of Communist Party rule). The general style also changed under Mao, with bold, block-like forms that displayed no resemblance to characters written with a brush. Mao’s simplified script for Modern Chinese lacks the form and physical structure to be ‘artistic’. It is scorned by those seeking art in writing, so the complex traditional characters, bound up in calligraphy, still are a potent force. Interestingly, Mao and other leading revolutionaries wrote in styles much closer to traditional calligraphy (Plate 2.9). Leadership of China, its status and prestige, has always been associated with literary pre-eminence; and despite the elevation of peasants and workers in the PRC and the aversion to the ‘four olds’ (Mao’s attempt to destroy tradition, religion, superstition, and reverence for past imperial dynasties, in order to modernize China as quickly as possible) he and other leading party members continued to execute calligraphy in traditional style with
traditional brushes. An example of his poetry and calligraphy are on display in a special pavilion constructed on the banks of the Qiantang River – see Chapter Seven.

The cover of the May 1968 *China Pictorial* in many ways captures the enduring status and role of calligraphy in Chinese culture (Plate 2.9). The picture commemorates Mao leading the final battle for the Revolution in 1949. He is not depicted brandishing a gun over his head or charging forward with a platoon of soldiers armed to the teeth. Rather he is pictured in his familiar tunic holding only a large writing brush. He is standing in front of a ‘big character poster’ on which he has written in his own calligraphy the command – “Start to bombard the enemy Headquarters.” His artistry with the brush is as much admired as his military prowess (Plate 2.9). It is hard to imagine a similar depiction of Napoleon Bonaparte or Horatio Nelson or any western military hero, a Lord Montgomery, a General MacArthur, or a Fidel Castro, in similar pose.

There is still work today for skilled calligraphers, and a substantial market for calligraphy scrolls produced in the traditional manner exists. Much of this is for local consumption to adorn buildings, houses and doorways, as outlined above. But a huge amount is for tourist consumption. Every tourist site, regardless of whether it is rural or urban, will have examples of calligraphy for sale, together with brushes and ink stands (also works of art in their own right). Often calligraphers will be on site ready to write a personalized inscription, or make a personalized ‘chop’ (seal) for the tourist. Before the invention of paper, documents were often written in vertical columns on strips of bamboo. The strips were then bound together with string. Today these can form highly prized souvenirs. For example, in the historic village of Hong-cun, near Huangshan in Anhui Province, calligraphy continues as a highly regarded art form. The village is
famous for producing many scholars who passed the imperial exams and joined the Imperial Civil Service, including at least one who rose to the rank of Prime Minister. Hong-cun was granted World Heritage Cultural Site Listing by UNESCO in 1996 and currently receives more than 60,000 tourists per year although less than 100 westerners ‘discovered’ the village in 2003. Current ‘sons of Hong-cun’ reproduce famous calligraphy on bamboo strips for sale in the market place as souvenirs (Plate 2.10).

In short, there is a thriving calligraphy industry in modern China. As literacy has increased with universal schooling, more people have learned to read and write. Art schools have professors of calligraphy who train calligrapher-artists. There are hundreds of calligraphy clubs where amateurs can attend after-work calligraphy classes, often run by the local Workers' Cultural Palace or city administrations, in order to perfect their skills. Many newspapers, (e.g. the China Daily and China Youth Daily), publish columns on calligraphy. For copying practice, book stores carry hundreds of booklets reproducing the works of well-known calligraphers. These works of course contain poems and stories from China’s past, texts from Confucius and Buddhism, aphorisms from Daoism, and so on (see Plate 2.4). Despite computer technology taking China by storm (just one element of globalization in the modernization of China), the art of calligraphy flourishes in a pervasive manifestation of localization, and thus continues to make its own unique contributions to the socio-cultural phenomenon that is Chinese common knowledge. Through its use of sociolinguistic heritage in a variety of ways tourism in China is a significant contemporary player in this phenomenon.
The materials for calligraphy, and calligraphers offering their skills, are common-place at tourist sites all over China.

Many inkstones are works of art in their own right. Specialist carvers sculpt delicate and intricate pictures, following the different colours and textures of the stone. These are displayed for sale in Hongcun village, Anhui Province.

Calligraphy brushes and inkstones for sale, Hongcun. Famous for one of the highest rates of success of any community in the Imperial examinations over a 500 year period, the ancient Hongcun South Lake Academy and the historic houses of its imperial scholars are major attractions for Chinese tourists.

Scholar’s ancestral house, Hongcun.
In exploring the question of tourism development of natural sites in China, it is necessary to start with an outline of how natural heritage is perceived by Chinese. There are four key areas that need to be examined:

i) the fundamental paradigms that govern the Chinese world view, and specifically the nature of the natural;

ii) the Confucian school of thought;

iii) the Daoist schools of thought including an exploration of feng shui; and

iv) the influence of Chinese forms of Buddhism.

Entire books have been written about these topics and my intention here is to provide a brief overview of each topic only and then focus on those aspects of each which relate to natural heritage. Linguistic specificities run through these four spheres of intellectual endeavour, providing further insights into the Chinese approach to touristic functions of landscape and natural resources. An end result of the synthesis of the ideas and values which emerge from these themes is that Chinese culture as a majority philosophical stance takes an anthropocentric approach to nature which in a number of ways is distinct from western views about ecologically sustainable development, the conceptualization of ecotourism as an ideal, and values relating to ‘wilderness’ that are common to many in western countries. These views tend to be dominated by an eco- or bio-centric approach. The anthropocentric world view with its attendant anthropomorphism and consequential aesthetic values about humans and nature are also central to Chinese
common knowledge and I argue that this common knowledge produces a tourist gaze that is specific to Chinese travelers in China.

**Fundamental Paradigms of the Chinese World View**

Hall & Ames (1998) in probing Chinese philosophy in the authoritative *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, state that: “The relative unimportance of cosmogonic myths in China helps to account for the dramatically different intellectual contexts from which the Chinese and Western cultural sensibilities emerged.” According to them, Western thinking about the origin of the world and humankind from the time of Egyptians, Greeks and Hebrews through to the Indian pantheon of gods, postulated the triumph of an ordered cosmos over chaos. Greek philosophers such as Plato contributed to the Western tradition of thinking about the order of things with questions such as ‘What kinds of things are there?’ and ‘What is the nature (*physis*) of things?’

Metaphysics, as this enquiry is labeled, was aimed at interpreting the order of the cosmos. It took two main forms. One looked at the essential features of things, the *being* of beings (fundamental building blocks), and was labeled *ontologia generalis* (general ontology). The second form looked at trying to organize the world around us in a systematic way based on discovering universal principles that governed processes - *scientia universalis* (universal science). The underlying assumption of both approaches is that by unlocking the general characteristics - the being of beings, and universal principles - will lead to an understanding of the natural laws that govern the order of the world (Hall & Ames 1998).

Neither of these approaches gained much traction in classical Chinese thinking. Chinese scholars took a contrary view. The cosmos was simply composed of ‘Ten Thousand
Things’ 万事万物 (wanshi wanwu – literally ten thousand things, meaning both happenings/events as well as physical things) and the aim was to understand and appreciate the way in which they were (are) harmoniously correlated. There was no presupposition “of essential features or antecedent-determining principles serving as transcendent sources of order” (Hall & Ames 1998). In other words, individual things were put into context, into a relationship with surrounding things. “Classical Chinese thinkers located the energy of transformation and change within a world that is 自然, autogenerative or literally ‘so-of-itself’, and found the more or less harmonious interrelations among the particular things around them to be the natural condition of things, requiring no appeal to an ordering principle or agency for explanation” (Hall & Ames 1998). This did not mean that divine beings were excluded from the general presence of things that existed, rather that they ‘were around’ as part of the general order, in relationships themselves with different things. They had the ability to keep things in harmony or to destabilize things. They could therefore be propitiated by humans to increase harmony (this will be expanded further especially in discussing Daoism). According to Li Zhonghua (1994), because Chinese do not have a strong sense of religion, belief in an omnipotent god does not occupy an important place in much of their philosophical musing. Thus most ancient thinkers focused on studying and theorizing the issues of society and humankind but not god or creator. Influenced by such a strong humanistic historical and cultural background, ancient Chinese thinkers in general fully affirmed the position and function of humans as having a higher value than all other Ten Thousand Things in the universe/cosmos. This is an important element of a Chinese tourist gaze, and it will be discussed in more detail in succeeding chapters.
While this difference between Chinese and western philosophies may be true historically, it can also be argued of course that western societies today are fundamentally anthropocentric in the sense that there may be a god and a focus on metaphysics but humans and their short term welfare are what drives capitalism and much of contemporary globalization: science is increasingly subservient to globalized values of profits, wealth and economic growth. In China no such apparent contradiction exists because without an omnipotent god a range of otherwise competing or opposing values are absent. However, my focus is on China and Chinese values and so I leave an exploration of this premise for others to ponder.

There is a fair degree of ambiguity in the classical Chinese understanding of ‘order’. In western science, order is approached through perceiving and then deciphering uniformity or patterns or regularity, a ‘logical’ or ‘rational’ ordering of the cosmos based on causal laws and formal patterns. “Rational order depends upon the belief in a single-ordered world, a cosmos” (Hall & Ames 1998). In western philosophy and science, mathematical order is considered the purest: at its highest levels it is completely abstract. But in China “any notion of order which abstracts from the concrete details of this-worldly existence has been seen as moving in a direction of decreasing relevance” (Hall & Ames 1998). This begs the question: Relevance in terms of what or who? And we immediately find humans at the centre, with all things ordered around them. But this ordering speaks of the world in much less unitary terms than the western assumption. In China, tian 天, sometimes translated as the ‘cosmos’, is simply ‘the Ten Thousand Things’ (itself a euphemism for what the western world would probably refer to as ‘the universe’) accompanied by a belief that the things of nature may be ordered in any number of ways. This is the basis of Chinese philosophical thinking as *ars contextualis*
or ‘the art of contextualizing’ as Hall & Ames (1998) have called it. But ‘tian’ is
difficult to translate directly because its meaning is ambiguous and dependent upon
context. It can begin to equate to “cosmos”, or “universe”, but note that the Chinese
have no body of cosmological theory about the origins of the universe. It is often
translated as Heaven, but it does not have the connotations of the Christian heaven, or
the paradise of Islam, or even the nirvana of Buddhism. Sometimes tian will be used to
refer to the Immortals. Carousing by immortals who play all sorts of tricks on
themselves and on humans and for whom imbibing alcohol is a major past-time, is part
of this concept. They inhabit a parallel ‘fairy’ world - tian - that is part of the one
organic Whole not separate from it. At times tian can refer to Nature. Harmony is
essential between tian and humans. And at other times tian will refer to the Ten
Thousand Things which can be interchangeable for ‘the Whole’. As will be seen in later
chapters, the different meanings attached to tian are important because in approaching a
Chinese understanding of nature and the use of natural resources for tourism we find
that ‘tian’ is integral to many places, with references to Immortals and ‘heaven’,
amongst other things, to characterize aspects of the features of those places.

Emphasizing harmony results in the fusion of different conceptual domains and thus
blurs the difference in forms and nature of the various domains (Li Zhonghua 1994).
Even the Mohist School which was strong in logical analysis amongst its
contemporaries proposed this statement: “Killing a thief is not killing a person.” A thief
is a person with low moral standards but to be ‘human’ as defined by Confucius,
Daoism and Buddhism is to have high moral standards so a thief is not a human. Since
animals do not have morals, killing a thief was regarded as killing a ‘thing-not-human’.
Here the value in the moral domain merges with the ontological. It also results in different concepts lacking a clear meaning such as the concept of *tian* mentioned above.

Chinese philosophies put the emphasis on investigating the ‘Whole’ so that only through intuition it is believed will one be able to grasp the whole in its entirety. The whole is so detailed, so complex, so immense that language cannot provide a complete definition. This is summed up in the famous Chinese saying: *ru ren yin shi, leng nuan zi zhi* – “Only you will know if the water you have drunk is cold or hot.” In other words, scientifically the temperature of the water may be determined as being 26.6 degree centigrade, but only you can determine whether to you it is hot or cold (this saying is part of Chinese common knowledge). Hence to the Chinese one cannot put into words the totality of meaning for the ‘Dao’ (the ‘Way’) or ‘Nirvana’. This intuitive cognitive learning method produces wisdom but not knowledge in the western scientific paradigmatic sense because it neglects logical deduction and induction and concept analysis. Thus Chinese philosophies tend to be weak in epistemology but strong in ethics (Li Zhonghua 1994).

The famous classical encyclopedias or compendia of ancient China (*leishu* 类书 or classificatory works) reveal the differences between the western and Chinese world views very clearly. Where the western classificatory system is based on defining essential features and formal class membership\(^1\) based on “principled scientific explanation grounded in the canons of reason and logic” (Hall & Ames 1998), Chinese

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\(^1\) See for example, the biological classificatory system of the Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778), which categorized all living things into descending order based on common shared characteristics – kingdoms to classes to orders to genera to species to sub-species. Its philosophical underpinning assumed a Creator and that there was order in God’s creation and science could proceed from that basis. Linnaeus is referred to as the “Father of Taxonomy”.
categories focus on relationships between unique things and invariably entail the human subject and social and cultural (human) values. Authority in argument and dissertation is derived from the earliest reference in the canons of Chinese classical literature, rather than scientific logic. There is little interest in these ancient texts in scientific description of natural phenomena. Thus the Chinese texts focus on astrology not astronomy, and on *feng shui* (geomancy) rather than geology, extrapolating from the natural to their application for human use or other value to humans. The predominance of the human element in all things means that in effect all ‘natural’ sites in China are, in the Chinese tourist gaze, cultural sites first and foremost and, often, only. The sites frequently have no significance beyond the cultural. Hence anthropocentrism which places humans first and anthropomorphism which is the act of attributing human values, emotions and sensual characteristics to non-human things such as mountains, rocks and trees, are invariably present.

Perhaps the most famous of all of the compendia are the four encyclopaedias written during the reign of the Song Emperor Taizong (r. 976-997 A.D.), to collate the whole knowledge of the new empire. The four books, called *Song si da shu* ("Four Great Books of Song"), were mostly compiled under the guidance of the eminent mandarin scholar Li Fang and each had a different purposes. The *Taiping yulan* 太平御览

( "Imperial Overview of the 'Great Peace' Era, 976-983") is a general encyclopedia that covers 54 themes such as Heaven, Imperial Worship, Rulers, Military, Officialdom, Human affairs and People, Ancestor Worship, Time, Earth, Music, Literature, Politics, Penal Law, Buddhism, Taoism, Etiquette, Medicine, Ships, Precious Stones, Money and Production, Grain, Fire, Furry Animals, Feathered Animals, Scaly Animals, Crawling Animals, Trees, Fruits, Herbs & Medical plants, and so on. The *Taiping guangji*
("Reports of Strange Things") is a collection of ‘ghost’ stories or accounts of miracles and magic. The Cefu yuangu is an anthology of political essays; and the Wenyuan yinghua is a literary anthology (Ulrich c2003).

Where rational or scientific thinking emphasizes the explanatory power of physical causation, the Chinese modality of thinking depends upon perceiving correlations between different things. ‘Correlative thinking’ is found in all the classical Chinese texts such as the Shijing, “Book of Songs”, the Yijing, “Book of Changes”, and in Daoism and the Yin–Yang school; and the validity of a position/argument is based on shared patterns of culture and tradition rather than assumptions about causal necessity (Hall & Ames 1998). It is largely, although not exclusively, anthropocentric. According to Hall and Ames (1998) “Correlative thinking is the primary instrument in the creation, organization and transmission of the classical curriculum in China, from the Book of Songs to the Analects to the Yijing.” The Han period (206B.C. – 220A.D.) provides many examples of correlative thinking when a vast amount of effort was expended to draw up tables of similar entities/things in the natural and social worlds which were considered able to supply a meaningful context for one’s life. One such set of tables, called ‘Tables of Five’, compared ‘the five fundamentals’ (metals, wood, water, fire, earth), ‘the five directions’ (east, south, west, north and centre), ‘the five colours’ (red, yellow, green, white, black), ‘the five notes’, and so forth (Hall & Ames 1998).

In tourism planning in China, the correlative approach will be evidenced in the analysis of a site’s potential for tourism development. A place will be characterized as ‘Five mountains, two rivers’; or a region will be characterized as ‘Five ancient towns and eight famous temples’. In one planning exercise in Yunnan Province in which I was
involved, the planning team applied the Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) to a series of waterfalls in a national park to classify their potential for tourism development. We utilized western scientific, classificatory objectivity to assess the biodiversity of the environment around each waterfall, and their touristic appeal according to another set of criteria (height, volume of flow, seasonality, scenic setting, aesthetics, accessibility, etc). From these data we developed a chart which graphed a hierarchy in terms of which waterfalls could be developed for mass tourism, which for restricted visitation (ecotourism), and which protected for scientific research. Conservation of the natural resource was the main criterion to be utilized for the management regime of the park and for those waterfalls assessed as being suitable for tourist access. We called the proposal “An Application of the ROS for Ecotourism Development” (Sofield, Li & Kang 1999). By the end of the presentation to the Chinese authorities i.e. Forestry, Tourism and the Yunnan Provincial Government, the concept had been re-labelled “The Five Waterfalls Model.” While the ROS utilizes a lot of western science - and that science was understood by the Chinese audience - it immediately struck a receptive chord among them because they perceived not the conservation ethic as its mainstay but the recreational i.e. anthropocentric objective as its relevance. The correlative thinking approach allows the ROS to be seen not in abstract conservation terms but from the perception of its relational linkage to people, serving human needs in an immediate, direct and concrete way. Out of this understanding has come a specific Chinese way of viewing ‘touristed space’ (Cartier & Lew 2005) which is part of a Chinese tourism gaze, and this I have termed ‘the relational gaze.’ I shall return to this topic in my final chapter. Confucius is considered the ‘father’ of relational thinking in Chinese history and I now consider his contribution to Chinese philosophy and his place in Chinese common knowledge.
Confucius and Confucianism

It is difficult to over-state the influence which this one man, Confucius, has exercised over Chinese philosophy and indeed the structuring of its society and its values. It has been said that “All of Chinese thinking is a series of commentaries on Confucius” (Hall & Ames 1998). Fung Yu-lan (1952), one of the great 20th century authorities on the history of Chinese thought, compares Confucius' influence in Chinese history with that of Socrates in the West. It is a fallacy of some western commentary that Confucius was just a purveyor of trite moral truisms, when the validated historical record amply demonstrates that he was a founder of a social order which has lasted longer than any other in recorded history (Li Zhonghua 1994). His contributions to Chinese common knowledge have been immense. Only the briefest outline of the major themes of his thinking is possible here.

Confucius (551-479B.C.) was a thinker, political figure, educator, and founder of the Ru 儒 School of Chinese thought. He spent his whole life in exploring human issues and practicing ren 仁 (being honest, upright, morally correct). His influence in this is profound. Confucius had the ancient books and records classified, the first five becoming known collectively as Wujing or ‘Five Classics’. More books were added later and according to some sources they finally totaled thirteen (Rennie 2000). The first five were The Book of Songs (shi), The Book of History (shu), The Book of Rites (li), The Book of Changes (yi) and The Spring and Autumn Annals (chunqiu), which he used to teach his own students (according to tradition he had 3000 students, of whom 72 were his favourites). His subsequent books included The Book of Music (yue), and The Book
on Filial Duty (xiaojing) (Rennie 2000). The thinking of Confucius covered a wide ranging area from philosophy to aesthetics to ethics (morals), metaphysics, and imperial politics. Confucius’ own teachings have been preserved in one of the most famous classical texts of all (one that is foundational to Chinese common knowledge) the *Analects* 论语, (or “Sayings”) a collection of his thoughts and sayings compiled by his students and followers. His disciples were also responsible for the three other main Confucian classics which compiled his thoughts: *The Great Learning*, *The Doctrine of the Mean* ("Zhong Yong", the so-called ‘Middle Way’), and *The Mencius* (writings of Mencius). Over the centuries these became mandatory texts for some of the content of the imperial examination system, which ushered in the mandarins as the governing bureaucracy for the emperors. Much of their content remains as part of Chinese common knowledge today. And in developing natural resources for tourism in contemporary China, references from these texts are often made and incorporated into the development, as will be illustrated in subsequent chapters.

The accepted wisdom of Confucius established the tradition of Chinese culture for practically its entire intellectual tradition, from the time of his life during the Spring and Autumn period in the 5th century B.C. to the Republican period in the early twentieth century A.D. (Ebrey 2003). Confucianism was adopted as the state ideology in the second century B.C. and except for a period of Mongolian rule by the Yan Dynasty from 1279 A.D. to 1368 A.D. the Confucian mandarin class dominated Chinese society. But when the Manchurian Qing Dynasty overthrew the Ming Dynasty in 1644, they found it necessary to reach an accommodation with Confucianism to legitimate their rule, and to accept the bureaucracy of the mandarins (Ebrey 2003). Throughout this period the imperial exams were structured around Confucian thought until their
abolition in 1905. In fact elements of Confucian philosophy remain pervasive; they still persist and act as guiding values for the current dynasty that rules China – the Chinese Communist Party.  

Western traditional philosophies emphasize knowledge and this knowledge has it own ‘being’: it exists separately from human behaviour. But Chinese philosophies, especially in Confucian thought, show an inseparable relationship to human behaviour; thus they are practical philosophies. Nature and the aesthetics of nature are related by Confucius to human values, feelings, and behaviour: humans could improve their moral standing by learning from nature, so his concepts of aesthetics also need to be explored as they relate to Chinese perceptions of nature.

For Chinese, the maxim is that aesthetics should be used to cultivate goodness, thus beauty/aesthetics and goodness combine (Li Zhonghua 1994, p.134). For Chinese, aesthetic values are bound up in Confucian functionality or whether something has utility value; no function, no beauty. At this juncture, sociolinguistics again come into the picture. The Chinese character for beauty 美 is composed of two characters; the first is ‘lamb’ 羊, the second is ‘great’ 大, and combined, they mean that “the taste of the lamb is absolutely great” – i.e. beautiful! In the western system of values, a lamb might be considered as beautiful in itself, but for the Chinese the value of a lamb is bound up in its utility as food and its ability to satisfy the sense of taste. It is another example of the Chinese emphasis on correlative thinking. My Australian husband often says as we

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2 To illustrate the pervasiveness of Confucian thought, at the highest level of Government in China today its cadres are exhorted to follow the selfless example set by Confucius himself where the good of society was elevated above the individual. And at a more mundane level, Confucius’ teachings on etiquette and harmonious social interaction were introduced into the curricula of all state primary schools in 1998 in order to counter the perceived self-centeredness of children born under the ‘One child policy’. The goal of overcoming selfishness is fundamental in classical Confucianism.
are driving along “Look! There is a rabbit!” I always respond (in slight irritation): “So what?” But if my husband said: “Look, there is a rabbit which would taste great if stewed!” then I would have no problem with his attempt to interpret the landscape through which we are passing by pointing out an object of interest to the western tourist gaze, because he would have transposed it into the Chinese tourist gaze - specifically into my relational gaze.

Chinese philosophies seldom discuss True or False questions but moral ones: Good and Evil. Perhaps the most important premise of Confucius was that essential human nature was good, and becoming a person of excellence (ren) was a cultural achievement dependent upon practicing li 礼 (Brooks, E. & A. 1998). Li is interpreted as ‘ritual’ or ‘protocol’ and Confucius placed great emphasis on the need to act with due propriety at all times – this included following court ritual, the law, observance of ritual associated with life and death, respect for traditional institutions, for elders and scholars, etiquette - all behaviour in fact encompassing personal, family and social settings. It was essential to act correctly - yi 仪 - in harmony at all times since li underpinned the stability of community and society. Both the universe and the superior person (chun zu) follow the "Mean". Zhong means center, equilibrium, balance; yong means harmony. The compound Zhong-yong means "central harmony," the mean between extremes, middle way, balanced course. Confucian thought extolled ‘the middle way’, avoidance of extremes combined with a blending of both ends (“zhong yong ji dao”).

Confucius viewed heaven as continuous with the world of the secular: the world was one organic whole (Ogden 1992; Ho Ping-ti 1964). It was the moral responsibility of the
emperor as the ‘son of heaven’ to maintain harmony between heaven and earth, the
court and the people, to perform the correct rituals in their seasonal sequence, in order
to guarantee peace and prosperity. When harmony between the heavens and the earth
was achieved then humans and their endeavours prospered. It was the over-arching
responsibility of the emperors to ensure that this situation prevailed.

To achieve *chun zu* (‘the noble man’) one not only had to perform correctly in terms of
harmonious social interaction, one had to reach understanding of a subject through long
and careful study (Hayhoe 1989). For much of the past two millennia, under Confucian
thought, social status in China for those outside the royal lineages was achieved by
receiving an education and then serving in the bureaucracy of the state. It was
considered more worthy to be a scholar than to be wealthy or demonstrate military
brilliance. A significant component of Confucian scholarly and creative endeavour
arising from this value were major contributions to “*shan shui*” (literally, ‘mountain,
river’) literary, calligraphic and artistic heritage because, as noted in Chapter One,
travelling became an accepted component of the life of mandarins and courtiers. Their
travel was often determined by two differing circumstances. When appointed as senior
imperial administrators they toured the region(s) under their jurisdiction in order to
fulfill their responsibilities. Often, however, senior courtiers fell out of favour with the
emperor or higher court officials and were banished. Many took to heart the Confucian
edict "to seek ultimate truth from the landscape" (Ge 1991, quoted in Petersen 1995)
and spent sometimes several years in exile. I will return to look at “*shan shui*” in more
detail in Chapter Four, and now turn to Daoism, which was also a major source of *shan
shui* literature and artwork.
Daoism and Feng Shui

Daoism

Daoism stands alongside Confucianism as one of the two great religious/philosophical systems of China. It is difficult to define Daoism precisely because there are reputedly more than one hundred schools of Daoist thought, and again only a brief outline is possible here. The umbrella term ‘Daoism’ covers a range of doctrines similar to Confucianism, as well as assorted naturalistic or mystical religions. Sometimes the term "Lao-Zhuang Philosophy" is used to distinguish the philosophical from the more religious "Huang-Lao" (Yellow Emperor-Laozi) strain of Daoist thought, after their main advocates (Schwartz 1985).

Tradition has Daoism arising after the death of Confucius, in part in opposition to the strong anthropocentric cast of his philosophy. Ecological in its early form, it insisted that the relational definition of humankind had to extend to the natural world since the social, cultural and natural environments co-existed in continuous mutually shaping ways. Humans had to be “responsive to the cadence and flow of all of nature’s complex orders. [They could not ignore their] responsibility to participate fully in the harmony of non-human surroundings …” (Hall & Ames 1998). Since Daoists believe that all ‘Ten Thousand Things’ have feelings their view of nature is of a holistic tian with ‘man and nature in harmony’. It was still anthropocentric in that they see that all things exist for humans, that is, “tian (heaven) created ‘The Ten Thousand Things’, the earth nurtures them, and humans use them” (Li Zhonghua 1994, p.95). Nature is the foundation upon which humans rely for their living/existence so Chinese are empathetic with it. But
Daoists extended the concept to mutual reciprocity of feelings. No matter whether they are Daoist or Buddhist or, to a lesser extent, Confucist, all see nature as a living organic whole which has the capacity to empathize with human beings. Thus, the poet Xin Quiji (1140-1207 A.D.) wrote this famous *shan shui* stanza: “I see green mountains. How enchanting! I expect the green mountains see me in the same way.” In many ways this poetic stanza is the essence of the Chinese tourist gaze, as is Li Bai’s poem about Mount Jinting where humans and mountain enjoy reciprocal empathy, their feelings permeating each other (see below) - an anthropomorphic mode from which to view the world. In this context it may be said that the ultimate goal of tourism development in China is to induce the traveller to enter into a relationship of mutual feeling with nature, with all of the Ten Thousand Things, because the Chinese believe that all things are capable of feeling. A Chinese tourist gaze thus encompasses anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism.

The holistic and ecological view of Nature was also encapsulated in Daoism’s ‘Ten Good Deeds’. The first exhorted respect for parents; the second, respect for emperor … and so on. The seventh encouraged the rescue of wild animals (turtles and birds most commonly referred to) and their release to freedom in the wild, the planting of fruit trees, and re-afforestation of degraded areas. The eighth urged that the good Daoist should plant trees, dig wells, build rest houses, and construct bridges along roads used by travellers (Li Zhonghua 1994, p.45). Note that on the surface there is good environmental practice in such activities - but actually the focus is on the welfare of the traveller/pilgrim. Anthropocentrism in which conservation is only a by-product is the core, rather than biocentrism.
The complementary force-fields of humankind and nature came together most powerfully in the Daoist concept of “yin-yang”, literally the ‘shady side’ and the ‘sunny side’ of the mountain (Ropp 1992; Spence 1992). This concept is embedded in correlative thinking and is employed to identify alternative patterns of hierarchical relationships. Thus, the Daoist “Old Scholar” Laozi will be seen as intellectually superior to one of his young students and thus ‘overshadows’ him in this respect, so the student is *yin* and the master is *yang*. The student, however, may be physically stronger than his teacher, so in this regard the student is *yang* and Laozi is *yin*. When the various strengths and weaknesses defining a relationship can be balanced to maximum effect, the relationship is most productive and harmonious (Hall & Ames 1998). The Daoist *yin –yang* dialectic is used by Chinese to ‘read’ human/landscape interfaces and this spills over into tourism development of natural heritage inevitably introducing, paradoxically given Daoism’s initial opposition to Confucianism, an anthropocentric element.

Daoism, influenced by the ancient text *"I Ching"* (Book Of Changes), refined Confucian philosophy, (in fact opposed much of it, seeking a more liberal and less rigid application of ritual and greater personal freedoms) and developed into a popular religion. It stressed constant cyclical change and the need for humans to exist in harmony with nature. The essence of life itself, the cosmic force (*tian*) called *ch'i*, was the major determinant in the growth of all things, whether trees and crops would thrive, to what height a mountain reached, how fast a river flowed. Everything was in a constant dynamic state of change, even rocks, although the process of change in this instance was so slow that humans could not observe it. According to Daoism, “*temples and altars crumble, bells and urns rust, deities are forgotten but man survives. Temples, altars, bells and idols are man-made, whereas man and mountain are holy companions shaped*
by the same great cosmic force” (Eberhard & Morrison 1973, p.57). The famous Tang dynasty poet, Li Bai, has captured the Chinese sense of the symbiotic relationship of man-in-nature with his profound poem, “Alone on Mount Jingting”:

Man and mountain silently gaze at each other  
Neither is ever satiated  
Oh! Mount Jingting  

(Own translation).

Daoism perceived opposites flowing towards one another and being mutually dependent rather than being drawn into conflict. Summer flowed into winter and back to summer again; the sun rose, sank and was replaced by the moon which rose and sank and in turn was replaced by the sun; hot could not exist without cold, light without dark, male without female; death could not exist without life. Opposites - the yin and the yang - are the primordial forces which like a magnet's positive and negative poles, unite. Dao united everything, exemplifying the need of humans and nature to bring opposing forces into a fluctuating harmony (Rossbach 1983). When harmony between the heavens and the earth was achieved, when the forces of yin and yang were fully complementary, when ch'i was not disturbed or its force flow impeded, then prosperity ensued (Plate 3.1).

As well as mountains, caves are a particularly important component of Daoist philosophy. Daoism emphasizes living in this world and the belief is that longevity and immortality can be achieved without death as a direct continuation of this life - in contrast to Buddhism and Christianity. In this context, caves are “gateways to Heaven” and in ancient times there were 36 nationally famous sacred Daoist cave sites all over
China, with many hundreds more having a local level of significance. Temples were constructed across the entrances to caves, signifying their gateway role (Plate 3.2).
PLATE 3.1

Daoist philosophy is based on harmony between the forces of yin and yang, and ch’i. (Source: Rossbach 1983, below left; Rossbach 1987, below right)

The famous Daoist mountain, Qiyunshan in Anhui Province, is legendary for its good feng shui because the configuration of the valley and the river below are interpreted as a natural representation of the yin-yang symbol.

Translation of the Chinese from a sign on the crest of Qiyunshan overlooking the valley: “The world’s largest natural yin-yang symbol”
Daoists believe that caves are ‘passages to tian (‘heaven’) and to emphasize the ‘gateway’ role have often constructed their temples across the entrances to caves.
Pilgrimage trails to these caves were established and continue to be used centuries later. Many of these caves retain their original Daoist significance today, embellished by stories that have been incorporated into novels, poems, calligraphy and artwork to form part of Chinese common knowledge. Alchemy – seeking for the elixir of immortality – was another by-product of Daoist belief, and again caves were accorded special status. This will be followed through in more detail in Chapter Six.

In terms of aesthetic values, Daoism has a less functional view than Confucianism of aesthetics in the pre-eminence it gives to human’s relationship with nature. In the Daoist ideal, humans should completely submerge themselves in the landscape, become part of the infinity of the Ten Thousand Things, and not feel small or limited by their human-ness but become part of the Whole, otherwise they cannot appreciate beauty. This appreciation of Nature as Whole is the basis of their concept of aesthetics (Li Zhonghua 1994, p.142). This world view subsequently was captured and reflected in Chinese poetry and prose, the so-called shan shui literature, in shan shui art, painting, and calligraphy; and the archetypical mandarin as a traveller in the landscape (Li Zhonghua 1994, p.143). To be regarded as beautiful or aesthetically pleasing and to possess artistic merit the creativity of the effort needs to express feeling – whether feelings of humans or feelings of any of the Ten Thousand Things that might be depicted. For example, the famous Italian sculpture, David, by Michael Angelo (1475-1564A.D.) is perfectly proportioned, anatomically detailed, scientifically accurate. In contrast, a Chinese sculpture of a smiling old man with a large head and short legs - anatomically distorted and exaggerated - in Chinese eyes would be regarded as a good piece of art work because it captures the ‘feelings’ associated with longevity. Over the centuries this portrayal of longevity has become commonly recognized and
appreciation of its aesthetic qualities has become ingrained in the Chinese perception of
‘good art’. To enhance a tourist site, a statue of longevity or other Immortals may be
erected – out of place in terms of western perceptions as much as a statue of David
would appear incongruous at Uluru; but where in Chinese eyes a landscape evokes a
feeling of timelessness such a statue will be completely appropriate. This is the case of
a longevity statue erected overlooking a deep gorge among the peaks of the Huangshan
mountains, its symbolism capturing the feeling of eternity of the tezhi 特质 (the
‘essence’ of a place. See details in Chapter Five).

Because tian (the cosmos) is “the garden of morality and the kingdom of the arts” the
sage’s mission is to “experience the beauty of heaven and earth to understand the Ten
Thousand Things” (Li Zonghua 1994, p.101). Every phenomenon in the tian includes or
has both moral value and artistic value thus the Chinese value system of nature is also
the value system of morality and arts. Hence the Daoist belief that ‘man and nature’ are
in harmony (and Confucius’s directive that ‘man’ should seek wisdom from and in
nature). Consequently Chinese tourists possessed of Chinese common knowledge are on
a Confucist/Daoist journey, drawing constantly on their Chinese common knowledge to
inform them and help them interpret their experience, seeing both the visible and the
invisible: hence a Chinese-specific tourist gaze. In general with regard to landscapes and
tourism in contemporary China, Daoist beliefs, practices, and famous characters - all
elements which are part of Chinese common knowledge but which will be beyond the
grasp of non-Chinese international visitors - will be alluded to. Thus Daoism makes an
unambiguous contribution to a Chinese tourist gaze because of the way it directs
Chinese perceptions of place.
Feng shui

Weaving its way through the philosophy and religion of Daoism is the concept of feng shui. This guided the human relationship with the environment in a systematic way and impacted on the Chinese landscape at every level. Its origins are attributed to the early ruler, Fu Xi (circa 2800B.C.) who ‘discovered’ art and science and instituted feng shui “to sanctify the lives of his people, attune them to the moods and rhythms of nature and provide them with security and a sense of continuity” (Michell [sic] in Eitel 1984, p.5). Some of the rules for feng shui were recorded in the I Ching (The Book of Changes). Yan (1965 p.24) described feng shui as “a mystical combination of Chinese philosophical, religious, astrological, cosmological, mathematical and geographical concepts.” The term literally means “wind” and “water”. Since the endeavours of humans are subjected to the twin influences of the heaven and earth, feng shui was designed to provide a mechanism by which the yin and the yang of ch'i could identify where the forces of heaven and earth would be in harmony. Humans could then interact with them at prescribed places and times to achieve prosperity. Below ground the forces of ch'i flow through dragon's veins; above, they manifest chiefly as wind (feng) and water (shui). Thus, crucial to feng shui are features in the landscape. For example, mountains - yin, passive, with ascribed characteristics of the dragon, tiger, turtle or phoenix - could be balanced by water - yang, active, able to attract and hold wealth; and their juxtaposition would determine the flow of forces or energy between them and whether a site was to be avoided or developed for a particular purpose (traditionally a town, a shrine, a grave - now extended to include a tourist attraction). This reflects the notion that “human alterations of the landscape do not simply occupy empty space. Rather, sites are viewed as manifesting certain properties which influence, even control, the fortunes of those who intrude upon the site” (Knapp 1986, pp.108-109).
To establish the relationship between the many complex components of a particular landscape and to identify the *xue* 穴 was work for an expert known as a geomancer (Plate 3.3). *Xue* is literally translated as 'lair' (as in dragon's lair), or metaphorically as ‘centre’ or ‘nucleus’ where the *ch'i* collects/focuses and is the best possible site for human ingress into a landscape (Fan Wei 1992). The geomancer utilised a *luopan* wheel, one of the world's first compasses (used for divination however rather than navigation) for his elaborate calculations. This ‘compass’ combined astrological detail with metaphysical measures of the five elemental energy sources (metals, wood, water, fire and earth) and geographical coordinates (Plate 3.4).

Under the patronage of the emperors *feng shui* became an official state science and up to the last Emperor in the early twentieth century, it was directed by the Board of Rites in Beijing. With the cessation of the national guidance of *feng shui* which came with the end of the system of imperial rule, and the accompanying attenuation of religious values and their influence on patterns of behaviour, the application of *feng shui* has turned from the public good to private benefit. Its current use has tended to be restricted to individual communities, villages, houses or businesses rather than geographical areas. While it was officially banned by Mao Zedong as contrary to the scientific atheism of Marxism, it was integral to the Chinese landscape; it simply could not be banished or destroyed, although individual manifestations such as a *feng shui* shrine might be. It was never fully suppressed and continues to flourish today in communities throughout China and among overseas Chinese, whether they are resident in Hong Kong, Singapore or California. Many tourism developments today will be based on *feng shui* analysis of the site which will determine the location of specific buildings and their orientation, placement of
Feng shui assessment of a site was carried out by an expert called a geomancer.

Source: Eitel 1984
The geomancer utilized a form of compass called a *luopan*.

Source: Eitel 1984
embankments or artificial hills, introduction of a body of water, tree-planting and so forth. It moves well beyond the aesthetics which western architects and landscape specialists would apply.

The practices of *feng shui* are also consistent with the principles of conservation and good land management. Williams & Webb (1994), describing the many examples of *feng shui* in rural China, note that ideally, a village or house should be built on a south-facing slope flanked by the arms of encircling hills - the dragon behind, the tiger on the left, the white horse in front (Plate 3.5). Such a location would ensure warming sun, shelter from the cold northerly winds, and protection from floods. A *feng shui* grove of trees should be maintained on the uphill slope behind the village. This will provide further protection from the winds, lessen the risk of land slides, prevent soil erosion and regulate water flows. Building on the edge of a hill or cliff should be avoided lest the dragon be angered, flick its tail and destroy the house. “Given that China is prone to earthquakes this seems wise advice” (Williams & Webb 1994, p.113). There should be a meandering river in front of the village. This will provide a steady water supply and ensure that wealth accumulates - agriculturally likely at least, since it may deposit rich silt along its banks making farming prosperous, in contrast to a swiftly flowing river which will carry wealth away in floods (Plate 3.6).

On flat land, the *feng shui* wood takes the place of the protecting hill to the rear of the village. Since all land can be farmed, this is often no more than a narrow symbolic belt of banyans, camphor trees and bamboo. Other *feng shui* groves away from the village may be retained and/or planted where they act as screens against malevolent spirits (*shaqi*). These are believed to be able to travel horizontally and in straight lines only so
PLATE 3.5
The Daoist Purple Cloud (Zi Xiao) Temple in Wudangshan is considered one of the best feng shui sites of any temple in China. Its construction on this favoured site was ordered by the Song Emperor, built between 1119-1125 A.D., and renovated during the Ming Dynasty in 1412.
Purple Cloud Temple, Wudangshan, is regarded nationally as being located in one of the most harmonious feng shui sites of any temple.

The Purple Cloud Temple demonstrates a classical feng shui arrangement of mountains and water.

- The Temple is located facing south with the Dragon Mountains and the Black Tortoise ridge encircling it and protecting it from the chill north winds.
- A feng shui forest covers the slope of the Black Tortoise ridge.
- The White Tiger Hill on the west blocks the malignant glare of the western sun.
- The Green Dragon Hill on the east guards the site if the White Tiger gets out of hand.
- The Red Phoenix in front (south) is low enough to allow a vista but high enough to protect the site from shaqi influences.
- The temple is located on a slope above the streams, pool and river so it will thrive because its foundations will not be undermined.
- The temple faces the water, is embraced by the streams, and so will enjoy prosperity. (A site in the bend of a body of flowing water will accumulate riches as the river slows down and deposits its wealth, whereas one which is located on the banks of a straight flowing river will have its wealth swept away).

In terms of the Chinese tourist gaze, it is of interest that while the official guide books and pamphlets issued in both Chinese and English mention that Purple Cloud Temple is excellent feng shui, none of them provide any details as per my diagram and explanatory notes above. Through their ‘common knowledge’ Chinese visitors can see and read the site without the need for such interpretation.
can be stopped by such a screen. For the same reason bridges may be constructed with a hump, with steps, or with zig-zags (Plate 3.7). Shaqi may also reside in winds funnelled through gaps in hills, so artificial dirt ridges may be thrown up across the gap, a line of trees planted, or a pagoda constructed in the vee. Dwellings and other buildings will be constructed out of line-of-sight from the path of shaqi. In viewing landscapes, Chinese will be able to ‘read’ the evidence of “feng shui” application in the juxtaposition of hills, rivers and remnant forests, understanding for example that a particular feature that appears natural is actually human-made to harmonize elements or block harmful shaqi influences. Again, the invisible will meld with the visible in a distinctive Chinese tourist gaze.

Most feng shui woods are not simply stands of native trees. Over centuries of care, they have been planted with many additional species held to be invaluable or useful - various kinds of fruit trees, camphor trees, and others with perceived medicinal value since the woods often acted as pharmacopoeia for the community it served. Traditionally feng shui woods were protected by benevolent gods, only specified people (usually the village herbalist) could harvest plants, fruit, seeds, etc and sanctions were imposed against anybody damaging them (Knapp 1986). Where villages have been abandoned, or farming largely ceased as younger generations have transmigrated to cities, the relative neglect of the forests has often resulted in a greater re-vegetation of original species. In a number of the more than 300 feng shui groves remaining in Hong Kong, many rare native trees have survived the almost total clearance of the original forests. Several are dominated by the tall, large-leafed endospernum which only grows in woods more than 150 years old (Williams & Webb 1994). Where many other countries have completely deforested their landscapes, throughout China adherence to feng shui has resulted in the
PLATE 3.7
The 12th century village of Hongcun in Anhui Province is famous for its feng shui with the Ox Intestines Lake in front as it faces south, a feng shui forest behind, and the encircling protective Dragon range to the north. The bridge across the lake is constructed with a half moon archway to prevent shaqi from entering the village.

Villages all over China are sited facing south in front of rivers, with their feng shui forest and protective dragon range behind them to the north.
conservation of at least some of the biological heritage of the past four thousand years. One important preservation aspect has been their role as "accidental arks" (Williams & Webb 1994, p.126), holding species that have retreated from much larger habitats to seek refuge in the remaining forested remnants. These include birds, some mammals, and many smaller animals and insects. The density of village settlement in China has often meant that though individual groves may be small their spatial proximity allows movement between them and thus comparatively significant numbers of species to survive (Williams & Webb 1994).

The ideals of *feng shui* are largely consistent with the contemporary notion of ecologically sustainable development (ESD). Its fundamental tenet is the need for humans to harmonize with, not disrupt or destroy nature, although it also seeks to provide a measure of control by humans over natural forces. Tampering with nature might unleash adverse energies and disrupt equilibrium; and unplanned or indiscriminate modifications of the landscape could lead to unpredictable, perhaps disastrous, results. The goal of *feng shui* is to tap the earth's *ch'i* in ways which will achieve the desired harmony and its consequential sustainable prosperity.

One must be wary of being misled by romanticism about *feng shui* as ESD, however, particularly as the demise of the imperial system and increasing secularism have reduced virtually all advocacy of *feng shui* for public good and replaced it with a narrow focus on individual fortune. It would be naive to expect that the ideals were always rigorously implemented although they have represented ‘best practice’ and as such demonstrated a sensitivity towards sustainable development (Anderson, E. & A. 1973; Fan Wei 1992; Hammond, Adriaanse, Rodenburg, Bryant & Woodward 1995). In terms
of historical ecology, we can perceive that the ancient practice of *feng shui* represents a response to the environment which has resulted in major modification of that environment. Further, it has been a primary determinant in the pattern of human settlement and the distribution of species in China. If we then turn to tourism, we can see that the landscapes of China hold a profound heritage which is largely hidden from non-Chinese eyes and which requires carefully constructed interpretation to be revealed.

*Feng shui* may be making a resurgence in China because during a recent (July 2005) field trip to the far north west Province of Xinjiang to develop an ecotourism plan for a nature reserve, the topic came up on a number of occasions without any prompting. For example, a senior provincial tourism official consistently advised local officials and developers to consider the *feng shui* aspects of a site in making decisions about how best to proceed. In commenting at one point upon why businesses on one side of a street in a rural township were more successful than those on the other side of the street he matter-of-factly noted that the better side was supported by “good *feng shui*” since all the buildings faced south. His listeners all nodded, apparently accepting the accuracy of his observations. At the university of my Chinese colleagues (Zhongshan University, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, visited in July 2005), it was noticeable that many buildings, both old and new, were fronted by *feng shui* lakes and pools, and guarded by statues of *feng shui* lions; and a professor told me that the Geography Department, which should in her view have been pursuing a scientific approach to its work, was advocating the need for its building to have a pair of *feng shui* lions stationed outside the entrance to enhance its prospects of good fortune. While these are only personal observations opportunistically garnered, discussions with Chinese colleagues suggest that they are indicative of a trend which has brought *feng shui* back into open
consideration in some physical and conceptual planning for tourism development. In fact, Nanjing University has started (September 2005) a course in feng shui and physical planners are one of the targeted recruitment areas.

**Buddhism in China**

Buddhism first entered China from India about 2000 years ago where it immediately appealed to many adherents of Daoism. Early texts suggest that it was viewed as almost an extension, and certainly a companion, of the Huang-Lao tradition of Daoist practices attributed to the Yellow Emperor (Huangdi). For several centuries there was active syncretism between the two as “Buddhists and Daoists borrowed ideas, terminology, disciplines, cosmologies, institutional structures, literary genres and esoteric (salvation) models from each other, sometimes so profusely” during the first five centuries that today it is virtually impossible to determine whether specific beliefs or practices originated with the one or the other (Lusthaus 1998). By the fifth century A.D. there were more than 10,000 Buddhist temples around China (Ebrey 2003).

Confucists were less accepting of Buddhism and some initially saw it as a dangerous barbarian import that could undermine Chinese social and ethical mores, even its political stability. Over several centuries vigorous political and polemical attacks on Buddhism forced it to respond with apologia and revision of some of its tenets and practices to make it acceptable, even attractive, to Chinese. By the fifth century A.D, “Buddhism began to extricate itself from its quasi-Daoist pigeonhole by clarifying definitive differences between Buddhist and Daoist thought, shedding Daoist vocabulary and literary styles while developing new distinctively Buddhist terminology and genres” (Lusthaus 1998). This resulted in a new range of different Buddhist
teachings that, while sinified to a certain extent, were frequently out of line with each other. Picking up on the Daoist and Confucian emphases on harmony, a reform movement throughout the sixth century resulted in the emergence of four main Sinitic Buddhist schools all centred on the Mahayana Buddhist sect which had originated in India. These four remain as the focal centres of Buddhism in modern China. Thus it could be said that “Mahayana Buddhism, the most prominent branch of Buddhism in China, played an important role in shaping Chinese civilization; and Chinese civilization exerted a profound impact on the way Buddhism was transformed in China” (Ebrey 2003, website p.1).

Caves, as in Daoism, became one of the most favoured locations for Buddhist temples and several thousand were constructed all over China. In both Buddhist and Daoist theology caves were places of special significance. The three most famous Buddhist cave temple complexes are Dunhuang in Gansu Province (construction began in 366 A.D.), Yungang in Shanxi Province (460 A.D.), and Longmen in Henan Province (early 6th century A.D.) (Plate 3.8). More than 500 rooms were excavated or fashioned out of the soft rock at the Dunhuang cave over a period of more than 500 years of active construction, and decorated with sculptures and frescoes in styles that have changed over the centuries. 50,000 statues dating back to the 5th century A.D. survive in the huge Yungang cave. More than 100,000 images can be found in the 1,300 caves of Longmen ranging in size from just a few centimetres to more than 17m (56 feet). Many stories about these places, the magical events reputed to have occurred there, and the monks and scholars who resided in them, have become part of Chinese common knowledge. As new natural caves have been opened for tourism in modern China the Chinese have thus seen no incongruity in decorating them with statues, paintings and other esoteric
artwork. The subject of caves as part of China’s tourism development of natural resources will be pursued in detail in Chapter Six.

PLATE 3.8

Caves were favoured sites for Buddhist temples.

Longmen Grotto Buddhist temple complex, Henan Province, with carved Buddha statues
(Source: Tovey, nd)
One of China’s most famous classics arises from the introduction of Buddhism into China. It is "Journey to the West", written by the Ming Dynasty novelist Wu Chengen (1500-1582 A.D.), based on many of the traditional folk stories which had been circulating since at least the Tang Dynasty. In 100 chapters, each one a complete adventure in itself, Wu relates the mythical story of a young Tang Dynasty Buddhist monk, Sanzang, who together with his three disciples, Monkey, Pig and Friar Sand, travelled in search of the Buddhist Sutras (scriptures). The novel commences with the birth of the Monkey King and his rebellion against Heaven (first seven chapters). It then recounts the birth of Sanzang, why he began his search for the Sutras, and his preparations for the arduous journey westwards to India mounted on a white horse (chapters 8-12). The remaining 88 chapters describe the trials and tribulations of the party as they fight and overpower demons, ghosts and monsters, trek over the Foyen Shan (Flaming Mountain), traverse the Yinhe (Milky Way), and after 17 years finally arrive triumphant at their destination, the Leiyin Si (Thunder Monastery). There-in they find the holy scriptures for which they have searched so long. The chapters reverberate with as much Daoist magic as Buddhist morality. It has been reprinted innumerable times, and is available in modern China in book form, comic form, children’s illustrated story books, and as a popular television series, “The Monkey King”. Thus “Journey to the West” and is integral to Chinese common knowledge and in this case the electronic media may be seen as a contemporary means of transmitting Chinese common knowledge. All over China, especially in the context of cave tourism, references to characters and events from the book will be employed in a ludic manner to capture features of the landscape for tourists, a form of interpretation that is incomprehensible to any non-Chinese visitor who is ignorant of the classic. Another famous classic, 'The Investiture of the Gods’ (16th century) which combines both Daoist and Buddhist
elements, is also integral to Chinese common knowledge, is similarly the subject of a popular television series, and is equally used in the playful presentation of caves for tourism in China.

**Anthropocentrism and Anthropomorphism**

In reviewing these various components of Chinese philosophy and religion which have shaped its culture and civilization over centuries, and found their way into common knowledge, the contrast between the biocentric (or eco-centric) versus the anthropocentric approach, which necessarily encompasses anthropomorphic tendencies, to nature is apparent. As noted in the introductory chapter, I wish to focus on Chinese anthropocentrism in terms of its own characteristics, although it is inevitable at times that a contrast may be drawn with a perceived western emphasis on biocentrism that is quite different. One may suggest that the latter is a dominant western paradigm in the context of ecologically sustainable development, the ideals of ecotourism, and in contemporary management of many national parks and reserves in countries such as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, while the former has been the consistent approach adopted by China for several thousand years. These differences are then reflected in contrasting forms of tourism. Because virtually all nature-based tourism in China is mass tourism, and because the Chinese concept of wilderness is at variance with the western definition, there is little tourism development in China that could be labeled as western-style ideal type ecotourism. As I probe these issues, some of the material which follows is taken from a jointly authored paper: Sofield, T. and Li, F.M.S. (2003) “Processes in Formulating an Ecotourism Policy for Nature Reserves in Yunnan Province, China”.

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The Chinese word for ‘nature’ 自然 - ziran - may be translated literally as “everything coming into being” and expresses the totality of mountains, rivers, plants, animals, humans, all bound up in their five elements – metal, wood, water, fire and earth (Tellenbach & Kimura 1989). “Man is based on earth, earth is based on heaven, heaven is based on the Way (Dao) and the Way is based on ziran (nature): all modalities of being are organically connected” (Tu Wei-ming 1989, p.67). In ancient China there was the archetypical ideal of Confucian thought, “a sentiment of consanguinity between persons and nature … an awareness of active participation [by humans in] the well-balanced and harmonious processes that are the cosmos itself” (Shaner 1989, p.164). It is an anthropocentric perspective with a sociological definition in which humans live and work in harmony with nature, where, because nature is imperfect, humans have a responsibility to improve on nature (Chan 1969; Elvin 1973). Intervention is thus not simply accepted but often deemed necessary and tourism development utilizing natural resources will thus be ‘improved’ with the addition of a wide range of human-made constructions. The Chinese approach is thus distinct from a perspective that separates nature and civilization (humans), which views nature ideally as free from artificiality and human intervention, an approach espoused by many people and environmental organizations such as World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and World Conservation Society (WCS) in western countries.

This attitude encompassing humans and nature as indivisible continues in modern China. In effect, any venture which is set in the Chinese countryside and utilises natural resources and attractions tends to be classified as ‘ecotourism’ when a western definition would define it as nature-based tourism or simply a tourism facility located outside the urban area (Sofield & Li 1997). For example, the ‘Ecotourism Plan’ for the
rural surrounds of East Lake five kilometres from Huangzhou township in Hubei consists of five ‘development zones’ – a conference centre, a hotels and resorts area, fishponds (aquaculture for both commerce and recreation), water sports (including water skiing), and a visitor reception area with amusement park (Huanggang County Government 2001). Their setting – in the countryside – is sufficient in the Chinese lexicon to earn them the title of ‘Ecotourism’.

The biocentric orientation of western ecotourism in its ideal conceptualization encompasses five generally accepted components which distinguish it from nature-based tourism:

i. conservation of nature is its fundamental criterion;

ii. education about biodiversity, habitats, and the need for conservation is an integral component for both host communities and tourists;

iii. any income generated from ecotourism has a significant proportion ploughed back into maintaining the quality of the resource and its conservation;

iv. local communities when they are associated with a development must be able to share equitably in the benefits of ecotourism; and

v. ecotourism ventures or activities must be designed to be sustainable ecologically, economically and socio-culturally (e.g. Allcock, Jones, Lane & Grant 1994; Eagles 1997; Fennell & Dowling 2003; Valentine 1992; Weiler 1992).

Ecotourism thus defined is a holistic system of management of a natural resource for sustainable tourism, with the principle of conservation taking primacy over economic profit making and human comfort (anthropocentrism). In China nature-based tourism
ventures are generally characterized by an almost total absence of any conservation message for both visitors and hosts. Because of population pressures invariably the outcome is mass tourism, again in contrast to ideal type ecotourism which tends to be developed around relatively small visitation levels (Han 2000). In this context it is of interest that Chinese legislation for the establishment of nature reserves (Regulations of the Peoples Republic of China on Nature Reserves 1994) follows mainstream western thought and incorporates reserves with core areas based on biological values from which public entry is prohibited and all economic activity is to be excluded. Article 26 states: “It is prohibited to carry out such activities as cutting, grazing, hunting, fishing, gathering medicinal herbs, reclaiming, burning, mining, stone quarrying and sand dredging, etc.” And Article 28 prohibits “tourism, production and trading activities” from the core areas (PRC 1994). However there is a substantial ‘implementation gap’ (Dunsire 1978) in applying the intent expressed in that legislation.

A small group of Chinese environmentalists, notably those associated with China’s Man and Biosphere (MAB) Program, with the Bureau of Natural and Ecological Protection in the State Environment Protection Administration, and some academics understand and promote the biocentric approach. But management regimes in all cases aside from a few fall far short of the legislative rhetoric. In this context Xue Dayuan (2000, p.61) noted that: “Though resource development activities in nature reserves are not allowed … in fact almost every reserve now practices some form of such activities within their prohibited zones.” Li Wenjun (2000, p.70) noted that while “the ideology of strict protection” for nature reserves was incorporated in the 1994 legislation, there existed no national policy on ecotourism for reserves and “tourism in nature reserves is largely uncontrolled”. A study of 83 reserves (54 of them Level A national nature
reserves) in 1998 by Zhuge Ren (2000), revealed that 68 (82%) had at least one of the
prohibited activities occurring inside their boundaries, 54 of them had 3 or 4 activities,
and 14 of them had 5 to 8 activities. 40% of all reserves he surveyed had forms of
tourism activity within their boundaries, including within their core areas. In the five
years since Zhuge’s survey, tourism development has been vigorously promoted by the
State authorities and anecdotal evidence by Sofield and Li (field notes: 2001, 2002,
2004, 2005) suggests that the incidence of tourism activity in many different forms is
occurring unchecked at a significantly higher level than Zhuge’s 40%. On the other
hand there is also some evidence that western planning concepts are slowly gaining
more acceptance (Elery Hamilton-Smith, personal communication, May 2005), and
institutions such as Zhongshan University’s Center (sic) for Tourism Planning and
Research are energetic in applying these concepts in both teaching and consultancies.
However my personal experience suggests that the incidence of translating such
planning into practice remains generally limited.

In addition to differences over what constitutes nature-based tourism and ecotourism,
‘ecotourism’ development in China does not incorporate values of ‘wilderness’ inherent
in western constructs of what authors such as Weaver (2005) have described as
‘comprehensive ecotourism’. Perceptions of wilderness vary greatly and across cultures.
What may be wilderness to one observer (e.g. the Australian Outback to a Caucasian
Australian) will be another person’s home (e.g. the Australian Aborigine who is familiar
with every topographical detail and its biota, and for whom it will be the ‘Inback’).

Hendee, Stankey and Lucas (1990 p.27) note that etymologically the English language
word ‘wilderness’ “is derived from the Old English ‘wild-deor-ness’, the “place of
untamed beasts” and that civilization by contrast is “an environment under human
control.” In their view, “the only wilderness true to the etymological roots of the word is that which humans do not influence in any way whatsoever” (Hendee et al. 1990, p.27).

There is no similar Chinese word for wilderness however, the closest probably being “huangye” meaning ‘uninhabited countryside’ which does not carry the same connotations of pristine, unsullied isolation. Rather its connotations are negative, in the sense that the land is ‘bad’, or ‘poor’ or ‘not fertile’ (‘bad-lands’). Since humans are always a part of nature in the Chinese perception there is an absence of the paradox described by Nash (1982) which exists in the western concept of management of wilderness, that is, if wilderness is an area not under the influence of human agency its management in fact requires human control of nature. Hendee et al (1990, p. 28) refer to this as “the intellectual dilemma” posed by the concept of ‘managed wilderness’: for some “just the knowledge that they visit an area by the grace of, and under conditions established by, civilization is devastating to a wilderness experience.”

In examining how Chinese values about landscape and wilderness are translated into tourism attractions, the anthropocentric position accepts (indeed encourages and facilitates) programs to alter the physical and biological environment in order to produce desired ‘improvements’ (Sofield & Li 1998). These invariably include landscaped parks, facilities for recreation and tourism, roads for ease of access, observation towers, and so on. While western practices in many parks followed a similar pattern in the past, and may still occur, current environmental consciousness will often restrict the size, shape and form of such intervention today and in countries like Australia, Canada and New Zealand, they can only be introduced following a compulsory environmental impact assessment. Usually strong attempts will be made to conserve, preserve and protect areas of ‘wilderness’ and maintenance of biodiversity.
will underlie the philosophy of management. In China, management practices of natural areas in general do not depend upon an understanding of biological and environmental processes and resources. Instead the primary objective of management will be to focus on ways to increase direct human use, and the character of the wilderness will be changed to reflect the desires of humans and contemporary standards of ‘comfort in nature’. Styles of recreation and tourism will be tuned to the convenience of humans, so trails will be concreted, resorts with karaoke facilities will be permitted inside reserves, cable cars approved, pavilions erected, and so forth.

“Pavilion” is itself another interesting example of correlative thinking bound up in sociolinguistics. The character for pavilion 亭 when used as a noun means “a resting place”. Used as a verb it means “stop”. When combined in the form of a building erected alongside a trail in natural surroundings both meanings immediately validate its harmonious presence in a setting that to westerners might be seen as human intrusiveness and domination over nature (Plate 3.9). Cable cars, common in many of China’s national parks, have not been seen as environmentally damaging or visually discordant; the service they provide is justification for their construction and ‘western’ type concerns about potential damage to the environment are non-existent. Even the very centre of the ideal of the Daoist reverence for nature, Mount Wudang, is now adorned with a cable car that takes 3000 tourists a day to a restaurant on the highest peak next to the famed Golden Hall Temple (Plate 3.9). This saves the tourist a ten hour climb, is consistent with ensuring that development is based on the comfort factor, and consideration of any environmental concerns is absent. In this case it can be argued that for Daoist Chinese the integrity of the pilgrimage experience manifested in the tough climb to the Temple along the ancient sacred way through three 1000-year-old
Pavilions in wilderness areas may seem incongruous and intrusive to western eyes but to Chinese they are evidence of ‘man in harmony with Nature’.
‘gateways to Heaven’, and the traditional ascending order of purification that one attained by passing through each of the three gateways, has been compromised. Some Daoist pilgrims will thus ‘experience’ Mount Wudang by shunning the cable car and making the arduous climb; and palanquin carriers still do a thriving business taking the infirm up to Golden Hall Temple on the summit.

The anthropocentric approach, taken to its extreme, means the loss - in western eyes - of an essential wilderness quality: naturalness (Hendee et al. 1990, p.19). But for the Chinese, humans are integral to naturalness! The Chinese thought process does not allow nature to be separated out as a distinct category that has an absence of human presence in some way, shape or form. The societal context of Chinese values was most succinctly expressed by a senior parks administrator from Jiuzhaigou Biosphere Reserve in response to my explanation to him of the western concept of ‘wilderness’: “But without man there is no wilderness only nothingness because wilderness needs man to appreciate it” (Zhang, personal correspondence correspondence, October 2000). This response emphasized the empathetic relationship between humans and nature as first expounded several thousand years ago by Confucius and reinforced by Daoism. In itself it is also another manifestation of Chinese common knowledge and thus a further indicator of a Chinese tourist gaze.

The biocentric approach emphasizes the maintenance or enhancement of natural systems, if necessary at the expense of recreational and other human uses (Hendee and Stankey 1973, cited in Hendee et al. 1990). “The goal of the biocentric philosophy is to permit natural ecological processes to operate as freely as possible, because [in the western system of values] wilderness for society ultimately depends on the retention of
naturalness” (Hendee et al. 1990, p.18). It requires controlling the flow of external, especially human-made, pressures on ecosystems by restricting excessive recreational or touristic use of the bio-geophysical resources. The recreational use of wilderness is tolerated only to the degree that it does not change the energy balance inordinately. Thus western style ideal-type ecotourism is in general an acceptable part of a biocentric approach to nature reserve management. A biocentric philosophy requires recreational users to take wilderness on its own terms rather than manipulate it to serve human needs. Like the anthropocentric approach the biocentric approach also focuses on human benefits, but the important distinction between them is that biocentrically the benefits are viewed as of benefit to all humans whether visitors or not, may take years to achieve, and will be dependent upon retaining the naturalness of the wilderness ecosystems (Hendee et al. 1990, p.19).

Chinese anthropocentric and anthropomorphic values attributed to ‘wilderness’/ziran find very different expression in use, management and acceptable behaviour in such environments (see Chapter Five, case five, on Huangshan, for just one detailed example of how these values are incorporated into management of a landscape). If we take the three main values of wilderness identified by Hendee et al. (1990) – experiential, scientific, symbolic/spiritual - a cursory examination is enough to highlight the differences between the Chinese perspective and western conceptualizations:

i) Experiential: - the experience of feeling close to nature, of experiencing the mystical forces which shape the universe. The wilderness experience is seen as valuable in its own right. For many westerners this may be translated into a form of ecotourism which allows them to experience the solitude and freedom of nature with no sight or sound of
humans anywhere, camping out under the stars, or undertaking a six-day trek through
the wilderness of uninhabited forest such as those of Tasmania carrying all necessities
(food, sleeping bag, tent, etc) in a back-pack. The very name of Tasmania’s World
Heritage Listed rainforests provides positive connotations for western nature lovers –
the ‘South West Wilderness’. But such a title in China would provide every reason to
shun the forests because directly translated the title would mean ‘South West Badlands’.
For Chinese, it may be sufficient simply to visit a forest resort, and surrounded by the
forests, enjoy playing cards, mahjong or karaoke in the airconditioned comfort of built
facilities. Three resorts located deep inside the boundaries of Caiyanghe Nature Reserve
in Yunnan, for example, exhibit this form of tourism. They are representative of many
similar facilities throughout most of China’s nature reserves including those with World
Heritage Site status such as Yellow Mountain (Huangshan) in Anhui Province,
Jiuzhaigou in Sichuan Province, and Shennongjia in Hubei Province which is inscribed
in the UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MAB) program. The western approach will apply
a stringent conservation management regime. Chinese will place the comfort of visitors
first: it could at a stretch be termed nature-based tourism but not ecotourism in the
western definition (Plate 10).

ii) Scientific: – wilderness areas are seen “as valuable assets; as natural baselines that
reveal the extent of impacts elsewhere; as sites where scientists can study natural
processes; as gene pools maintaining the diversity of nature and providing a gene
reservoir we are only now learning how to use; and as sanctuaries for [rare or
endangered] flora and fauna” (Hendee et al. 1990, p.9). Chinese accept and support this
concept in principle through the creation of biosphere reserves under UNESCO’s ‘Man
and Biosphere’ program, which designate restricted core areas reserved for scientific
PLATE  3.10

It is not uncommon to find large accommodation and restaurant complexes inside national parks.  This is the ‘North Sea of Clouds’ area inside Huangshan.

Hotels (7000 beds) and restaurants, top right hand corner

Shennongjia Nature Reserve has a captive golden monkey research program as part of the attraction.  A number of nature reserves (national parks) in China have similar facilities.
investigation and conservation in their national parks. However, purpose built facilities are tolerated (e.g. forest research centres in Gaoligongshan Nature Reserve, Yunnan; the Wolong captive panda breeding program in Sichuan Province) and these have the dual function of also being a tourist attraction in their own right (Plate 10).

iii) Symbolic/Spiritual: – communing with nature symbolizes both simplicity and stability in a fast-changing world where individuals have little or no capacity to exercise control over the pace and stress of modern life. The western world appears to have ‘re-discovered’ this as a virtue of ‘wilderness’ only in the twentieth century. For Chinese communing with nature (not wilderness in the western sense) has been philosophically a guiding tenet of our society for several thousand years, as noted in the brief outline above of Daoist and Confucian values.

For the majority of Chinese the Daoist/Confucian heritage invests nature with a very strong spirituality and symbolism abounds in Chinese metaphors and similes drawn from nature. All cases presented in the succeeding chapters will provide many examples of this. But in all instances, the symbolism is set in the context of correlative thinking and the relational aspects of nature to humans. Nature is utilitarian, there to serve the interests and needs of humans rather than possessing intrinsic value divorced from human agency. Whether anthropocentrism is or is not a strong feature of western societies is a question I leave for others. My contention is more straightforward: anthropocentrism must be seen as a major element of a Chinese world view which frames an approach to nature-based tourism that is embedded in Chineseness and Chinese common knowledge, the *ars contextualis* of Hall & Ames (1998).
To advance my thesis from these first three chapters I employ lines from the poem, “Touring Shanxi Village”, penned by China’s most prolific poet, Lu You 陆游 (1125-1210A.D.). These lines have entered Chinese common knowledge:

山重水复疑无路，
柳暗花明又一村。

_The overlapping layers of mountains pierced by meandering rivers seem like a trackless wilderness_

_But lo! Rounding a hill - a white washed village of colourful flowers set against dark green willows, all bathed in bright sunshine!_

Chapters One to Three plotted a course through the multi-conceptual ranges and forests of Chineseness: but my next four chapters expose the theoretical and the conceptual to the sunshine of more open space and explore specific settings and situations, so that like Lu You’s _shan shui_ poem and drawing upon the richness of the forested mountains the way ahead is clarified. Chapter Four examines the place of mountains in China’s tourism development; Chapter Five analyses the planning tools that have been applied for tourism development in natural sites in China; Chapter Six navigates the development and presentation of caves for tourism in China; and Chapter Seven probes the touristic characteristics of a natural phenomenon, the tidal bore of Qiantang River.
CHAPTER FOUR

MOUNTAINS - DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE AGES

Inscription on the Wall of West Grove Temple in Lu Mountains
By Su Shi (Su Dongpo), circa 1090 A.D.

Viewed from side-on the mountain is horizontal, a continuous flowing range composed of many peaks
Viewed from the front it is vertical, a single high peak.
Whether viewed from a distance or close-up
From high or from low
The view of the mountain is never the same.
Travellers cannot know the real face of Lu Shan
When they stand inside (the foothills of) the mountain.

(Own translation from Fan Yunkuan 1996)
In this chapter, I explore the particular place of mountains and landscapes in China’s ‘long march’ from ancient travel to modern tourism. Four stages may be identified in this epic: mountains as objects of Nature worship; the development of famous mountains; the decline of famous mountains; and the renaissance of famous mountains. A wide range of examples are presented to illustrate various issues arising from the historical stages of the place of mountains in China’s society, culture and development which also exemplify aspects of the previous chapters, particularly the importance and place of calligraphy in adorning and enhancing natural sites, and the wealth of Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist heritage, imperial history and folklore that invest natural sites with profound cultural significance for Chinese visitors.

China is a vast country with great variety in geology, geomorphology and landforms. Within its 960,000 square kilometres, mountains and undulating hills constitute more than two thirds of the land mass. There are well-developed karst landforms such as the Shilin Stone Forest (limestone pinnacles) in Yunnan Province, the sharp peaks of Guilin’s karst countryside, hundreds of karst caves, and the calcareous lakes of Jiuzhaigou in Sichuan Province (Plate 4.1). Tengchong County in Yunnan Province has more than 90 volcanoes and numerous thermal springs in a scenic area of less than 100 square kilometers (Tengchong County 1998). The Autonomous Province of Tibet has the highest mountains in the world. Plains and grasslands occupy about 10% only. China’s 18000 kilometre-long coastline is dotted with numerous islands and islets. There are hundreds of rivers and lakes, including four of Asia’s mightiest rivers, the Yangtze, the Mekong, the Salween and the Yellow River. Climatic zones range from the high alpine frozen wastes of Tibet in the north-west to the subtropical rainforests of the
PLATE 4.1

China’s natural scenic resources are vast

Guilin & Lijiang River karst scenery

Calcareous lakes of WHSL Jiuzhaigou

Grasslands of Tibetan Plateau

Island off the coast of Dalian, north China

Silong Glacier, Yunnan Province
south where the temperature difference between the two is more than 40 degrees Celsius. While alpine forests in the north Qingan Ranges are still covered in snow, the coconut trees in Hainan Island in the south sprout new green shoots. China is ranked fourth in the world in terms of biodiversity. 3,099 vertebrates have been recorded in China. Some 200 of these have been classified as endangered and/or rare and include the giant panda, the small red panda, the Asian tiger, the Asian elephant, the Asian rhinoceros, the Asian leopard, the snow leopard, the golden monkey, gibbons, wild ox (takin), hornbills and other birds. More than 130,000 insect species inhabit China; and a total of more than 30,000 plant species have been recorded (Zhang Baosan 1998).

China thus offers a vast array of natural resources for tourism, none more so than its mountains which have been made famous over the centuries, influenced and modified by history and culture so that all over China “they are accompanied by numerous relics, antiquity, poems and prose, legends and myths. Chinese scholars consider that historical and cultural resources have become an inseparable part of the scenic areas” which are “an integrated regional/spatial site based on the aesthetic beauty of natural landscapes permeated/embodied with rich historical and cultural human landscapes” (Gan 1988, p.1, translated from the Chinese). To modern Chinese tourism planners the cultural takes precedence over the natural, for example Wang Bingluo (1988, p.63, translated from the Chinese) stated: “In relative terms, the scope of the value of natural resources is not as broad as the cultural ones, and this affects the synthesized value and ranking of the scenic areas to a great extent”. This is why many Chinese natural scenery sites are regarded as ‘historical records’ and there is a popular saying: “You shan ru du shi” — “Touring in the mountains/natural landscapes is as if studying history”.

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In the Chinese language, the vocabulary related to mountains including both single and compound words as well as their detailed divisions runs to more than 1000 characters and is probably greater than any language system in the world (Zhou Weiquan 1988, p.47). From this one tiny facet of sociolinguistics we can see the close relationship between Chinese understanding of mountains in terms of their physical properties and their cultural assets. To understand the place and role of mountains and natural landscape in contemporary tourism in China it is therefore necessary to delve back into five millennia of history. There are four identifiable stages in this chronicle: Stage 1 – mountains as objects of nature worship; Stage 2 – the development of famous mountains; Stage 3 – the decline of famous mountains; and Stage 4 – the renaissance of famous mountains (Xie Ninggao 1988).

**Stage One: Mountains as Objects of Nature Worship**

If the legend of ‘Yu feng jiu shan’ (in which the mythical emperor Yu was said to pay homage to Heaven in nine different mountains) is taken as the starting point, the development of sacred mountains in China has a history of almost five thousand years (Xie Ninggao 1988). In ancient times, the view of mountains and nature was ambivalent. On the one hand, they provided necessities of life such as fruit and edible plants; on the other hand, they constituted mystical places full of high peaks and deep valleys with dangerous wild animals roaming around, and generated destructive storms where natural powers resided. *The Book of Rites*, one of the Five Classics, stated that: “High mountains and deep gorges create clouds, give birth to rain and wind, and succour wild animals. They are deities.” Inaccessible high peaks were regarded as the abode of immortals and locations from which entry to heaven could be attained. One of the ancient texts *Shanhaijing, the Book of Mountains and Seas* (circa 2500B.C.) recorded
that: “The peak of *Kunlun Shan*¹ is the earthly abode of the heavenly gods. In order to ensure a good climate for agriculture and other primary activities, and also wishing to avoid natural disasters, ancient people started offering sacrifice to the ‘God of Mountains’ for its blessings” (Zhang & Qin 1997).

In the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States period (770-221B.C.), the practice of paying homage to the ‘God of the Mountain’ (a different God for each sacred mountain) spread to virtually all kingdom states, and formed a set of rites. As described in *Shanhaijing, the Book of Mountains and Seas*, there were various forms of sacrificial practice in the designated 451 mountains within 26 mountain regions. This sacrificial practice to the Gods of the Mountains was not only conducted among the general public but within the imperial court with a more elaborate series of rites and was called ‘*fengchan*’ (*feng* - pay homage to Heaven, *chan* - pay homage to Earth). The official record of ‘*fengchan*’ started with the First Emperor Qin in 219 B.C. He instructed his Prime Minister, Li Xi, to make engraved stone records describing his journeys to pay homage to Heaven at Tai Shan (the eastern sacred mountain) and other mountains as well. This may be considered the prelude to the development of the activity of rock cliff inscription in famous mountains. Five famous mountains representing the four cardinal points and the centre of the Earth were designated as the ‘five sacred mountains’² to which homage was paid by the royal court, and sacrificial rites were conducted by lesser royal members to lesser mountains.

¹ In between North Tibet Plateau and Xinjiang Desert, thought in ancient times to be the highest mountain.
² The five sacred mountains, each of them among China’s most visited tourist/pilgrimage sites today, are: Tai Shan 泰山 (Peace Mountain, in the east), Hua Shan 华山 (Magnificent Mountain, in the west), Heng Shan 衡山 (Balance Mountain, in the south), Heng Shan 恒山 (Ever-Lasting Mountain, in the north) and Song Shan 嵩山 (Lofty Mountain, in the centre).
In the Han dynasty, to showcase his sovereignty and demonstrate his respect for Heaven and care of his subjects, Emperor Wu Di (140-87 B.C.), frequently toured his kingdom and paid homage to ‘Heaven’ (tian) on mountains (Plate 4.2). Sacred paths (tian-ti - ‘stairways to Heaven’) were constructed to the summits and were restricted for the use of the emperor and members of the royal court ascending the mountains. The grand scale and frequency of Wu Di’s ‘fengchan’ were unmatched by his imperial ancestors and deeply influenced the following emperors. Gradually ‘fengchan’ became a hallmark grand ceremony. The five mountains as the symbols of Heaven enjoyed a supreme status above other famous mountains. In time, the five sacred mountains were joined by Buddhism’s ‘four major mountains’ and ‘eight lesser mountains’, and Daoism’s ‘thirty-six mountain cave heavens’ and ‘seventy-two happy/blessed lands’ (Xie Ninggao 1988). During the Han dynasty, ‘four sacred rivers’ were also formally designated and their respective rituals were set. There were differences in the rituals between mountains and rivers and these demonstrated that the status of the ‘five sacred mountains’ was superior to that of the ‘four sacred rivers’.

The sacralization of mountains resulted in a significant number of myths concerning mountains as the abode of immortals. The most popular myths relate to the fabled imaginary Immortal Isles of Penglai, Yinzhou and Fangzhàng in the eastern sea, and the Kunlun Shan (a real mountain range with very rugged terrain, more than 2500 km long and several peaks over 7000 metres) in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region in the west of China.

1 The four sacred rivers are the Yangtze, the Yellow, the Huai and the Ji Rivers.
PLATE 4.2

Emperor Wu Di frequently paid homage to the ancestors and gods of the mountains. Here he is depicted approaching the summit of Wudangshan
(Source: Eitel 1984, utilizing etchings by Thomas Allom from *China Illustrated*, 1843)

‘Stairways to Heaven’ were cut into the rock for emperors to ascend: Lotus Peak, Huangshan
The Immortal Isles were believed to be located along the seaboard of Penglai county in Shandong Province. It is a matter of documented historical record that Emperor Qin several times sent alchemists sailing for the elusive Immortal Isles to search for the elixir of life. When Daoism was established during the era of the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 A.D.), the belief in Immortals and alchemy was further reinforced. The number of the elusive Immortal Isles was increased first from three to five and subsequently another ten new imaginary immortal islands were added into the Daoist scriptures. The naming of ‘decorations’ (the technical term for formations in karst caves) as ‘the Three Isles of Penglai’ is very common in karst caves all over China and guides embellish the visual with reference to many of the myths associated with the search for the elusive elixir of immortality.

Regarding Kunlun Shan, according to the description in an ancient Daoist book, “Huainan Zi” (circa 139 B.C.), there were three tiers or levels at Kunlun Shan that Daoists needed to surmount. All three levels were located high in the mountains and could only be reached by a long and tortuous route. One would become immortal after climbing up to the first level. One would acquire magical power after advancing to the second level. If one was able to ascend to the third level where the heavenly Gods abide, one would become a God. This upwards/uplifting journey symbolized the belief in Daoism of the complete journey to heaven as pilgrims empowered with magical ability transcended from mortal to immortal. Daoist mountains all over China (for example, Wudang Shan, Qiyun Shan) adopted the same triadic framework, demarcating the three tiers with ‘Gateways to Heaven’ through which one passed in ascending order on the route to the summit (Plate 4.3). One of the most famous myths of Kunlun, now firmly

4 “Huainan Zi” means “The Book of the Vassal King of Huainan”. It was written by the vassal king Liu An who governed the Huainian Region which is located in nowadays Anhui Province, and a group of the King’s house guests (Lau & Ames 1998).
Heavenly Gateways are essential features of sacred ways and will be strategically sited to demarcate both physical and spiritual boundaries. The sites of the three Heavenly Gateways to the summit of the Daoist sacred mountain, Qiyushan, have been carefully selected to allow the physical to reinforce the spiritual: passing through the gateways symbolizes entry into the world of Immortals.

First Gateway to Heaven, Qiyunshan

The Second Gateway to Heaven demarcates a ridge along the Sacred Way

The first Gateway is a natural tunnel on the brow of a cliff. It is lined with calligraphy up to 1000 years old.

The third Gateway to Heaven leads onto the summit where the main temple is located.

Temple of Heaven, Qiyunshan
ensconced in Chinese common knowledge, is recorded in the “Biography of Emperor Mu” of the Zhou Dynasty (1001-946 B.C.). Emperor Mu ascended the summit of Kunlun Shan in the 17th year of his reign to visit the Celestial Ruler’s palace on earth. There was a tarn at the top of the mountain called ‘Yaochi’- ‘beautiful pond’, that was the abode of Xi Wangwu, the Queen Mother of the West. Emperor Mu hosted a banquet there for the Queen Mother. Today, as with the Three Isles of Penglai, many myths related to the heavenly banquet at Yaochi can be heard in cave interpretation as guides invest decorations and cave pools with assumed likenesses of Yaochi.

The collection of stories about the Immortal Isles and Daoist mountain triadic tiers are reputed to be two of the most ancient myth systems in China (Zhou Weiquan 1988).

Apart from deistic worship of mountains, academe actively developed during the Spring and Autumn Period. Among various philosophies, ‘learning from nature’ emerged as a major theme. According to Confucius: “the benevolent adore mountains, while the wise admire waters” (The Analects of Confucius).

Why do the benevolent adore mountains? Because mountains are what everything depends on: vegetation, plants and crops, birds and animals - are all nurtured from the mountains. Mountains selflessly nourish all living creatures and also create clouds and regulate winds. Mountains support (are pillars of) heaven and earth. Thus according to Confucius mountains provide peace for what a country needs, “like a gentleman doing good deeds” (The Analects of Confucius).
Why do the wise admire water? Because water flows along its course wisely without missing any small crack, gully or tributary. Water converges at the confluence in a way ‘full of courtesy’; plunges deep down without hesitation ‘full of courage’; when slowing down, does not mix with still muddy water, as if it understands the decree of Heaven; water rolls on incessantly as if ‘full of virtue’. The heaven and earth, the living creatures, the peace of the country are all dependent on the waters/rivers. What the waters have demonstrated - wisdom, courtesy, courage, understanding the decree of heaven, and virtue - are the characteristics of a wise man (The Analects of Confucius).

By incorporating values that imbue nature/natural scenery with a range of human social and cultural values, such as likening mountains to benevolence and waters to wisdom, shan shui (mountain and water landscape) philosophy was to have a profound influence on the aesthetic value in natural landscapes subsequently. For example, when observing the confluence of two rivers, one a roaring cataract, western minds might conjure up images of power, majesty even, and feel in awe of the raw power of nature. But to accord to the scene the concept of gentlemanly courtesy, where the lesser stream demonstrates its respect for its more powerful brother by graciously giving way – an anthropomorphic interpretation recognizable to many Chinese, which itself is seen in the whole context of a universal Chinese understanding of wisdom – demonstrates the dominance of culture over nature. All river/water/lakes scenery in China will have these cultural values deeply embedded in them. To the Chinese onlooker, nature is cultural and the distinctions/divisions that westerners draw between humans and nature/wilderness are absent. This is a distinct feature of what I term the Chinese tourist gaze, a gaze more deeply and broadly imbued in a more generalised way through the Chinese ‘common knowledge’ base than Urry’s Eurocentric western tourist gaze, which lacks
the more institutionalized foundations of ‘Chineseness’. These values extend the Chinese gaze into both the relational gaze and the harmony gaze, which are discussed further in my final chapter.

After the Han Dynasty replaced the Qin Dynasty, the Chinese kingdom enjoyed a long period of relatively stable peace and prosperity that sanctioned travel. For example Zhang Qian travelled westward through central Asia to Europe between 138 and 113 B.C. and made records of the geography of the places he visited. The route he took was followed by many later travellers and became the famous ‘Silk Road’. To research the book, ‘Records of a Historian’, Sima Qian, a historian in Han imperial court, widely travelled within the kingdom between 125 and 110 B.C. to collect his data. Sima Qian’s touring and field studies not only confirmed the status and functions of famous mountains but gave them a new content/substance and historical value – rather than paying homage to Heaven and/or the God(s) of that mountain his purpose was researching/visiting historical heritage sites. This profoundly affected the form and purpose for visiting famous mountains by subsequent generations, and finds a ready echo in contemporary visitation by millions of Chinese each year to such places.

**Stage Two: The Development of Famous Mountains**

From the end of the Han Dynasty to the Opium War in the Qing Dynasty (220-1840 A.D.), a duration of some 1,700 years, imperial China experienced numerous circumstances from growth to prosperity to decline. Its economic, cultural and scientific development reached an apex in Asian history. Against such a background, the number of famous mountains greatly increased. The meaning of famous mountains also altered from the original, deistic worship to recreational purposes. There are two sub-stages:
1. **Transitional Period**

This period saw a transition from deistic worship of mountains to aesthetic recreational visitation, although mountains still continued to be worshipped. During the period of Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties (from 220 to 581 A.D.), the political elite and literati enjoyed social privileges which extended to seeking leisure in *shan shui*. Some scholars or frustrated mandarins also either devoted all their time in pleasure travel, for example, Xie Ling Yun (385—433 A.D.), or sought a haven or life as a recluse in the countryside and gave expression to their feelings in poetry and prose, for example, Tao Yuan Ming (T’ao Ch’ien 365-427 A.D.). One of the consequences of such pleasure travel and reclusive life styles was the creation of an abundance of *shan shui* literature. Xie Ling Yun is regarded as the pioneer of *shan shui* poems and from him this distinct style of poetry was established. Tao Yuan Ming is regarded as “the archetype of the man of noble mind who abandons high office for a life of self-sufficiency and reclusion” (Clunas 1996, p.53). Tao’s most famous poem, “*Picking Chrysanthemums by the East Fence*” and his short story, “*The Land of Peach Blossoms*” both surpassed Xie’s literary efforts. Tao’s poem, still taught in Chinese schools around the world, depicted the chrysanthemum as a moral symbol of pure and lofty behaviour and thought. It conjures up an image of Tao with his back turned on government office, his face directed to his rows of chrysanthemums by the East Gate of his garden and his eyes gazing towards the distant Southern Mountain. His short story describes a journey to a fictitious land of peace, away from the turmoil of the world. The *shan shui* literature deeply influenced the aesthetic image of *shan shui* landscape for subsequent generations, as articles and poems in this genre and the format of writing them was passed down through the education system.
Su Shi’s poem which opened this chapter is one of the most famous of all *shan shui* examples. It not only describes the imposing landscape of Lu Shan\(^5\) and its enchanting scenery but also explains the different views from different vantage points, whether high or low, sideways or front-on. It links the feelings of a traveller visiting Lu Shan with the philosophical concept that understanding or knowing is relative. Your station in life, high or low, will also affect your perception of reality. Only when you can move outside yourself emotionally or physically isolate yourself, unbounded by the relativities of time and distance, space and place, can you discern the real nature of things, from the particular to the whole. This poem thus has very high artistic value for Chinese because it uses imagery to reveal the philosophical; all things are relative and you cannot see but only sense the whole. This underscores the Chinese view of the inadequacy of language referred to in Chapter Two and Chapter Three. But this poem is not purely abstract and irrelevant to the human condition: its subtlety is designed to leave the reader with a lasting after-taste, a lot to think about. Its capture of essential Chinese values - of correlative thinking, relational positioning of humans and nature, the anthropocentric approach, and endorsement of Confucian and Daoist principles about the role of nature in assisting humans to grow in wisdom - has facilitated its entry into Chinese common knowledge. Every body can recite at least the last two sentences:

> “You cannot know the real face of Lu Shan
> Because you are there (bound up inside).”

This phrase is applied to all sorts of every-day situations in contemporary China and among Chinese wherever they may be physically located in the global diaspora. It is

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\(^5\) *Lu* = thatched cottage. Legend has it that in the time of the Zhou Dynasty there were seven brothers who all had magical powers. They built a thatched cottage in the mountains and retreated there as recluses. Emperor Wu (1134-1115 B.C.) sent an envoy to request them to serve in the royal court, but when he arrived there was no one there. The seven brothers, through meditation and exercise of magical powers had all become Immortals and flown up into the sky, leaving only their thatched cottage behind. This is how the mountain got its name.
used to refer to the truth about a person or matter; metaphorically, one’s true character as the real face of Lu Shan.

Parallel with the birth of *shan shui* literature was the emergence of the school of *shan shui* painting. During this period, the first cohort of *shan shui* painters rose in the history of Chinese art. Famous mountains and great rivers became the subjects of the painters’ artistic expressions of their feelings.

The emergence of *shan shui* literature and *shan shui* paintings demonstrated that in the literati class, mountains were no longer the objects of deistic worship but sites to tour, objects for contemplation, reflection and reproduction in written and artistic forms, an environment in which to refine one’s temperament. Mountains might still be mystical, awesome; but they were as well touristic sites or places for living while seeking harmony and wisdom from nature.

During the evolution of mountains from sacred place to lived place, especially mountains that were developed as a dwelling place, Buddhism and Daoism played an important role, combining both the deistic and the human residential functions and giving rise to the common saying: “Famous mountains are mostly occupied by monks” (the authorship of which is buried in antiquity) (Plate 4.4). While this saying could be interpreted as male-gendered thinking - because in fact schools of nuns with mountain retreats also evolved – it should be placed in the context of society at the time where there were many more monks than nuns. In addition, the sound of the word “monk” provides a tonal balance for the characteristic succinctness of *wenyen* which the word “nun” cannot. Buddhism was introduced to China in the Eastern Han Dynasty (circa 25-
The saying: “Famous mountains are mostly occupied by monks”, is as true today as it was 2000 years ago.
220 A.D.) as noted in Chapter Three. Numerous temples were built to accommodate the monks and nuns. In only a century-long reign of the Western Jin dynasty (317-420 A.D.), more than 1700 temples were built (Xie Ninggao, 1988). In the succeeding Northern and Southern Dynasties (420-581 A.D.), most emperors and nobles embraced this religion thus hundreds and hundreds more temples were established. The sites chosen for temples were invariably in scenic mountains because the tranquility value ascribed to them would benefit the monks and nuns to transcend worldly concerns as they strived to reach Nirvana. This was especially so for the *Chan* (Zen) sect; its temples were usually located in well-forested mountains such as Daufeng Shan (Plate 4.5). It could be concluded that Buddhism laid the foundations and infrastructure for pleasure travel in China when they developed mountains for temples since these buildings provided hospitality (lodgings and food) for all who arrived at their gates. Thus temple buildings formed a vital part of mountain development, helping to shape both tourist trade and travel patterns.

The Daoist religion originated from ancient witchcraft. Daoism’s central tenet as noted in Chapter Three is harmony and the adoration of nature, purity and simplicity and Daoist priests believe that high mountains are where the Immortals abide. Alchemy (collecting medical herbs) to make elixir (the magic potion that will lead to immortality) and meditating in deep mountains is the way to attain the form of a celestial being. One ancient writing elaborates on the meaning of immortal: “Immortal (*xian*) means move (*qian*), or more fully “move into mountains.” *Qian* rhymes with *xian* which rhymes with *tian* (heaven), a common phenomenon in the formal Chinese *wenyan* writing style. Such rhyming words will often be used to provide the contextual meaning of a word, so for example ‘*dong*’ (cave) means ‘passage to’ [heaven] ‘*tong*’. This
PLATE 4.5

Buddhist Temples were most often located in forested mountains and the food and lodgings they provided for pilgrims were an early forerunner of the hospitality industry.

Wa-La Monastery, outside Dege, Sichuan Mountains.

Songgu Buddhist Temple on Jiuhuashan, one of the four most famous Buddhist mountains.

Buddhist shrine, alpine grove, Daufeng Shan
demonstrates the succinctness and terseness of *wenyan*. In fact the Chinese character of *xian* 仙 consists of two pictorial morphemes: man 亻 and mountain 山; it belongs to the category of associative compounds, one of the six categories of Chinese characters. The character thus depicts its meaning. Hence to Chinese the ideal environment for meditating to transcend to ‘*xian*’ would be mountains standing up steep and high, their peaks hidden in mist all year round, tranquil, serene, away from worldly concerns. After the Eastern Han dynasty most of the famous mountains such as the five sacred mountains, plus Wudang Shan, Qiyun Shan and Qingcheng Shan were all occupied by Daoist temples and their cohorts of priests (Plate 4.6). Whether Buddhist or Daoist, the reasons for occupying famous mountains were: first, the need to follow the doctrine of the religion (i.e. away from worldly desires); second, to seek utopia by immersing themselves in scenic mountainous natural settings (immortal landscapes), fulfilling aesthetic and emotional needs since mountains symbolically represent a ‘paradise’ on earth; and thirdly, to utilize the bounty (fresh air, pure water, herbs, healthy food, etc) which this ‘immortal’ environment provides.

The establishment of religious temples provided the accommodation infrastructure for literati, celebrities and artists to tour mountains. Although monks and nuns, priests, literati and artists were pursuing different things in the mountains, they shared common philosophical views and aesthetic values in natural landscapes. Among them, there were numerous monks and priests who were highly talented literati or painters; some literati or artists also had profound understanding of Buddhism and Daoism doctrines and enjoyed making friends with monks. They were all keen on facilitating the development of temples. The literati were involved in the development and construction of famous mountains from the very beginning. Gifted craftsmen were involved in the development
The Sacred Way of Wudangshan takes the traveller sequentially past the Daoist temples of the range, ascending through the three Heavenly Gates to the Golden Horn Temple on the summit.

1. Purple Cloud Temple on the lower southern slope of Wudangshan

2. Red Dragon Temple, halfway to the summit of Wudangshan

3. Leaping Tiger Temple, Wudangshan

4. Second Heavenly Gate, Wudangshan

5. Stairway to the summit

6. Golden Horn Temple, summit of Wudangshan
directly by creating buildings with high architectural merit, cliff engravings, calligraphy carved into the living rock, statues in caves and grottoes, rock paintings etc. The evidence of religious and literati activity over centuries has produced literally thousands of artifacts, including multi-storey temples and pagodas, transforming whole mountain ranges and caves into cultural rather than natural sites (Gan, 1988) (Plate 4.7).

PLATE 4.7

Shibaozhi Buddhist Temple,
Wanxian County, Sichuan Province

(Source: Tovey, n.d.)
2. Heyday

In 581 A.D. the short-lived Sui Dynasty reunited the previously divided Chinese Kingdoms of the Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties (from 220 to 581 A.D.) and developed numerous political and economic initiatives. The subsequent Tang Dynasty improved and further expanded Sui’s reform agenda. During the early 8th century, when Emperor Xuanzong was on the throne, the Tang Dynasty’s prosperity reached a zenith that was unmatched by any other dynasty. Not only were its science, literature/culture, arts and religions flourishing, so did the scale of development in famous mountains.

Thriving religions and mountain development went hand-in-hand. Xie Ninggao (1988) suggests that religions were most prosperous in the Tang Dynasty because:

(i) the imperial court supported and sponsored them;
(ii) the general public widely adopted them, especially Buddhism;
(iii) scholars and mandarins who were frustrated by the social and political situations sought comfort in shan shui. Mountain temples became their ‘home’; and
(iv) the prosperity during the Tang Dynasty facilitated travel. Scholars, the rich and merchants all enjoyed shan shui.

According to historical records, in 1291 A.D. there were 24,318 temples and the population of monks and nuns amounted to 213,148; in 1667 A.D. temples totalled 79,622 and the population of monks and nuns were reduced by 100,000 to 118,907. But at the end of Qing Dynasty (circa late 19th century) their population increased to eight hundred thousand (Xie 1988). From the time of the Tang Dynasty, some temples held temple fairs and show-cased their penjing (potted landscape) collections in festivals. (The miniature penjing landscapes themselves were part of shan shui culture (Plate 4.8),
PLATE 4.8

A display of penjing miniature landscapes. These are in Bao Garden, Anhui Province. The inscription on the wall behind the display is a line by Mao (in his calligraphy)
“Rivers and Mountains! Oh! How beautiful is the Motherland!”
later exported to Japan where the art is known as bonsai). This was the beginning of (relatively) large scale pilgrimage travel. Pilgrimage travel enhanced appreciation of natural landscape and contributed in no small way to the conservation of natural and cultural landscapes for religious purposes. It thus played an important role in mountain development by creating a human presence (temples and communities) regarded as in harmony with the natural landscapes.

Apart from temple buildings, additionally cottages, teaching colleges, and retirement homes of the literati formed part of the human landscape in mountains, e.g. Bai Juyi’s White Thatched Cottage in Lu Shan, and Li Bai’s academy in the foothills of Huangshan. The famous ‘four academies of classical learning’ in the Song Dynasty were all located in mountains. Chinese natural sites as human landscapes find fitting expression in a poem by Tang Dynasty poet, Liu Yu Xi (772-842A.D.):

“A Mountain doesn’t need to be high,
It will be famous as long as immortals abide there;
Water doesn’t need to be deep,
It will be full of spiritual power as long as the dragon resides there.”

The flourishing age of the Tang Dynasty further reinforced the culture of the literati’s shan shui travel and also pilgrimage travel and thus gave an impetus to mountain development. Chùjǐng-shēngqíng 触景生情 (the scenery evokes a special feeling) and jiètí-fāhuī 借题发挥 (borrow the theme [of the scenery] to express your feelings) were a common practice among the literati. A direct translation is awkward but when combined the phrases carry the meaning of having human emotions and sentiments elicited from natural phenomena, resulting in the inspiration to write a poem in the romantic tradition
e.g. a late Autumn forest may evoke feelings of an old person’s life fading away, or two trees side by side may engender a poem about two lovers. Thus in contemporary tourism Chinese visitors to national parks will ‘see’ anthropomorphic characteristics in the landscape before they will ever see the botanical or ecological elements of the two trees. Huangshan (Yellow Mountain) provides an excellent example of this aspect of the Chinese tourist gaze. A number of its pine trees have become famous and have been bestowed with anthropomorphic titles such as ‘Two Lovers Entwined’ (see Case Five, Chapter Five). Chinese common knowledge with its emphasis on literary heritage before the sciences enjoins Chinese tourists to interpret their national park experience through the culture of *shan shui*, thus contributing to a Chinese tourist gaze.

Li Bai, perhaps the most prominent of all Chinese poets in history, “spent (his) whole life wandering around mountains … hundreds of poems flowing from his unrestrained, exuberant spirits inspired by ten litres of wine, every mountain and river his former abode”. According to Xie Ninggao (1988, p. 31) Li’s poems display “a grand and magnificent style manifesting the towering and imposing sight of *shan shui*. Li Bai’s gifted sense of perceiving and interpreting nature’s beauty, his rich imagination and romanticism, reached an apex in the aesthetics of mountains that no forerunners had visited.” Mountains all over China bear witness to his poetic fame with stanzas inscribed in cliffs, on rock faces and boulders, the lines immediately recognizable to Chinese observers.

While Li Bai’s poems about natural and cultural landscapes project an image of imposing beauty, Liu Zongyuán’s poems excel at capturing the serenity of pristine nature which in turn could improve the character and temperament of the individual (the
Confucian affirmation of humans learning from nature). Liu’s *shan shui* theory is that *shan shui* not only has visual and aural impact but spiritual and psychological/emotional effects. Liu’s *shan shui* prose like Li Bai’s poems had a significant effect on later generations as the education system transferred his works down through the ages.

Su Shi had his unique way to describe waters. In his poem *Reflections on Red Cliff* (referred to in Chapter Two) he wrote:

“The great river (Yangtze) flows endlessly eastward.
Through the ages its waves have swept away
All trace of thousands of heroic men.
West of the ancient fortress rears Red Cliff
Where General Zhou Yu won his early fame.
At its base jagged rocks stab into the air,
Shock waves beat the shore, churning up mounds of snow-like foam.
Rivers and mountains, our Motherland so fair,
Have nurtured how many heroes those ages now hide?

(Own translation)

Su Shi succinctly described the vast and mighty nature of the Yangtze and drew the association of physical landscape with history, expressing his paradoxical feelings of both intimacy and grandeur towards the river’s landscape. His poem meets the criteria (mentioned in Chapter Three) of a great poem in Chinese terms because of the way in which scenery and human feeling are intertwined [Chùjǐng-shēngqíng 触景生情 and jiètí-fāhuī 借题发挥]. Su Shi’s contemplative poems surpassed most of the poems of the same genre and set an example for Chinese style nature-based travel i.e. it is always enriched by culture, or as Ying Yang Petersen (1995) put it: Chinese not only see the river, but the history and heritage of a nation.
Apart from landscape literature, landscape painting was also highly developed during the Sui Dynasty; it flourished in the Tang Dynasty and reached an apex in the Song Dynasty. Landscaped gardens were also developed as an important component of shan shui culture and an entire centuries-old tradition grew from this movement which is still extant all over China and often finds an outlet in landscaped courtyards of mountain temples. The “Book of Gardens” written at the end of Ming Dynasty (circa 1600 A.D.) describes the major form of landscaped gardens, ‘shīqīng-huàyì’ 诗情画意 – an idyllic picturesque environment with poetic atmosphere often dominated by a miniature mountain complemented by a lake with one or more pavilions strategically located within the setting. These design features are attributed to shan shui poets and painters, and it is easy to understand how naturally ‘shīqīng-huàyì’ emerged as the guiding principle of garden development (Zhang Yuhe 1988). The famous Song Dynasty painter Guo Xi (1010-1090 A.D.) said in his “Theory of Painting” that: “A mountain gains liveliness from water, is endowed with splendour from flowers and trees, is elegantly veiled with cloud and mist… and is luminous with pavilions as bright eyes ...”.

‘Shīqīng-huàyì’ thus encapsulates many of the key aesthetic values of Chinese thinking about humans and nature, and highlights the cultural influences at work on China’s landscapes. ‘Shīqīng-huàyì’ is also an integral part of the Chinese tourist gaze.

The contemporary western paradigm of much natural landscape development for tourism emphasizes minimal or no construction, as outlined in the previous chapter’s discussion on anthropocentrism. In western planners’ eyes many Chinese natural sites may seem to have been inappropriately developed with little regard for conservation and biodiversity (e.g. Wen & Tisdell 2001). However, historical records reveal a sound
understanding of the basic principles of natural landscape conservation. For example, in 
1412 A.D. Ming Emperor Chengzu 明成祖 commanded his engineering department to
build the large scale Daoist temple complex in Wudang Shan (now a World Heritage 
Listed Site) (see Plate 4.6) according to three imperial decrees:

i) The position and the scale of construction should be in proportion to the 
mountains;

ii) Buildings should follow the contours of the natural landforms without 
changing the natural landscape; and

iii) Regular maintenance should be conducted to conserve the complex so that 
the previous construction effort would not be wasted.

The emperor’s aim was to ensure that human development in natural landscape was to 
enrich not degrade the environment, and three hundred thousand workers and craftsmen 
spent the next eleven years following the Emperor’s edict.

The result of hundreds of years of such activity is that in addition to the physical 
evidence of human endeavour, natural sites in China are always associated with folklore, 
myths, ancient celebrities and also as a storeroom or museum of literature and art pieces. 
The natural scenery-cum-heritage sites can be called the “treasure box of literature and 
art as well as the classroom of them” (Zhu 1988, p.11). When a place is invested with 
political authority, spiritual and religious authority, literary and artistic authority, and 
clan ancestral authority (for example, through visitation by celebrities from various eras 
and all walks of life), then its status as a site of importance is validated and assured. 
Their names, reputation and stories about them inhabit the scene, thus such sites are
precious human landscapes even if much of the physical evidence of historical/cultural presence has been obliterated by time. This accounts for a saying:

“The picturesque scenery of the Motherland also requires great people to praise it:
The causeway in West Lake still bears the name of its commissioner, Su Shi.”

Most Chinese tourism planners such as Qi Kang and Lai Jukui (1988), Bao Jigang (personal communications, 2004) and Xu, Honggang (personal communications, 2004, 2005) agree that special historic and human features are the important factor and condition for scenic site development. Wudangshan World Heritage Listed site is a case in point where the major attraction is not the mountain range but a complex of Daoist temples and altars stretching 70 kms through the mountains. Likewise, Huangshan, also a World Heritage Listed site, is renowned for its natural scenery but it achieves a richness that is virtually all based on its time honoured cultural heritage. The end result is that in developing natural sites for tourism in China in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, cultural endowment is regarded as essential. Natural scenic qualities are generally regarded as insufficient in themselves to warrant investing in such development, and the three cases (in Chapter Five) of Huangdi’s Valley in Huangshan, Longjin Valley in the Yangtze River’s Three Gorges region, and Big Hollow Mountain in the Tenchong volcanic region of Yunnan Province exemplify different aspects of this Chinese-ness. All three developments are in stark contrast to the more usual western

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6 Su Shi, the famous poet referred to previously, was for a time Governor of Hangzhou and he ordered the construction of what has become the most famous causeway across the most famous lake in China.
approach to tourism development which lets a natural site’s scenic and biodiversity characteristics speak for themselves.

**Stage Three: the Decline of Famous Mountains**

From the late Ming to Qing Dynasties, especially at the end of the Qing, feudal ruling power was in decline. Following the Opium War of 1840-42 A.D. the Emperor was forced to concede foreign occupation in various enclaves (known as ‘concessions’). Foreign powers on the one hand stole ancient artefacts from scenic areas, and on the other hand they built villas and resorts for leisure and recreation, especially in Lu Shan. Chinese warlords followed suit. Traditional public scenic areas became private property. Until the dawn of the twentieth century a unifying theme throughout China's long history of travel was the place of culture in the traditions of heritage travel and pilgrimage. However where this theme was central during the four millennia covering the reigns of the dynastic emperors from 2000 B.C. to 1900 A.D., it virtually disappeared during the twentieth century as a series of upheavals wracked the country. The “Boxer Rebellion” waged throughout most of 1900 as an anti-foreigner drive by a group called the Society of the Righteous Fists brought widespread civil unrest and ended most recreational and pilgrimage travel until it was suppressed by an American/European expeditionary force. The long fight to overthrow the imperial system which had begun at the turn of the century finally succeeded in 1911 and the declaration of a Republic in 1912 broke the linkage with annual imperial pilgrimages to the sacred mountains. Warlordism then became rampant throughout China as different fiefdoms strived for greater power and territory under a weak Republican Government. The formation of the Chinese Communist Party in the early 1920s added another contender to the assorted warring parties. Subsequent internal unrest from the 1920s to the time of
the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1937 rendered much of China unsafe for travel. The Sino-Japanese War (1937-1944) saw the destruction of many mountain temples and cultural landscapes. With the defeat of Japan and the end of the Second World War, China was thrown into civil war as the forces of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) led by Mao Zedong and the Kuomintang Nationalist regime of Chiang Kai Shek struggled for power. In 1949 the Communist Party prevailed and brought peace to China. Throughout these five decades of civil unrest travel around much of China was greatly restricted and very dangerous.

However, the peace of 1949 did not usher in a new era for travel around China. The opposite was the case. For the two and a half decades of Mao Zedong's regime until his death in 1976, both traditional culture and freedom to travel were suppressed, often ruthlessly, as Mao pursued his vision of “totalistic iconoclasm” (Lin 1979, p.1). Permits were required for residents to leave their village or town. International travel as such was not permitted as the Bamboo Curtain closed China to the outside world. Tourism was not accepted as an appropriate form of economic activity and both domestic and international tourism were almost non-existent (Chow 1988, Hudman & Hawkins 1989). From 1954 to 1978 only “friends of China”, carefully screened by China’s diplomatic posts, were granted visas and China played host to only 125,000 visitors (Richter 1989). This restricted foreign visitation was sanctioned on the grounds that the successes of communism could be paraded before a selected international audience. Tours focused on the material achievements of communism such as factories, communes and revolutionary peasant and worker communities. Heritage was not promoted. Contact between tourists and locals was strictly regulated. Foreign visitors were accompanied by guides at all times and were rigidly segregated with special hotels and shopping centres
provided exclusively for them (Chow 1988). Many of these visitors were members of the so-called "international brethren of socialists" whom Hollander (1981) described as "political pilgrims". Socialist ideology prevented the emergence of tourism in any real sense for some 30 years after Mao's assumption of power in 1949. ‘Tourism’ was a propaganda tool (Qiao 1995) rather than a ‘proper’ form of development.

The ten-year long Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) wreaked great havoc on China’s heritage. Few cultural relics escaped the destructive attention of the zealous Red Guards. Statues, stone tablets, ancient architecture, and antiquities of all kinds were either completely destroyed or seriously damaged. Heavy deforestation also brought degradation of natural landscape. Mountain sites and natural landscape sites, many of which had been famous as places for visitation for centuries, deteriorated greatly.

Only with the advent of Deng Xiaoping's 'Open Door' policies of 1978 were these trends reversed. Tourism then became acceptable because of its capacity to make a contribution to modernization.

**Stage Four: the Renaissance of Famous Mountains**

The death of Mao and the arrest of the ‘Gang of Four’ in 1976 brought an end to the Cultural Revolution. Recognizing the need to modernize using all resources available Deng introduced his 'Open Door' policies in 1978 and China took a 'great leap back' from totalistic iconoclasm. Given the explicit ideological basis of the political system, all economic and other reforms required substantial modifications of the ideological framework (Mackerras, Taneja and Young 1994). Deng had to redefine politics in China and while this change of direction undercut some of the Maoist principles it was
nevertheless essential to reaffirm the primacy of socialism to justify the legitimacy and right of the CCP to govern. Thus changes had to be rationalized in the context of their capacity to serve socialism. In this way, Deng was able to rehabilitate China's heritage as a valuable resource which was needed to assist in the tasks of:

i) restoring national unity after the dissension and trauma of the Cultural Revolution, and

ii) revitalising the economy, in this case by making tourism an acceptable form of development (Sofield & Li 1998).

The Heritage Conservation Act 1982 embodied these objectives. Its preambular paragraph states that the Act is designed "to strengthen the conservation of China's heritage" and "to carry out nationalism, to promote revolutionary traditions, and to build up socialism and modernization." The Act moved squarely into areas rejected by Mao's totalistic iconoclasm, including within its purview "those ancient cultural sites, ancient tombs, ancient buildings and architecture, cavern temples and rock engravings, ... those valuable artworks and handicrafts representative of different eras in Chinese history, ... manuscripts and ancient texts with historical, scientific and artistic value; and those representative objects which reflect the different eras and different ethnic social systems" (Heritage Conservation Act 1982, Article 2 (i)-(v)). The Act is comprehensive and accompanying regulations cover the classification of all heritage objects into different categories of national, regional and local importance. This Act provided the foundation for tourism to embrace heritage in its development, as tourism planners in many regions and districts used the different categories of importance to develop their natural and cultural heritage resources (Sofield & Li 1998).

Deng Xiao Ping’s introduction of ‘capitalism with a socialist face’ stimulated new economic development and invigorated leisure travel. The traditional mountain scenic
areas became prominent attractions as contemporary Chinese followed in the steps of their forefathers. By 2003, domestic travel in China had reached the staggering scale of an estimated 780 million journeys, and international travel reached 33 million visitors in that year (China National Tourism Administration, Annual Report, 2003). China’s various mountain sites were being visited by between three to five million Chinese each year (Plate 4.9). This may be seen as their pilgrimage to connect with the places of their Chinese-ness, but I would argue that it cannot be directly compared to the nostalgia for a bucolic, uncomplicated past credited as the motivation for much western travel as post-modern, urbanized masses surge out of their cities. It is therefore another distinguishing factor between Urry’s western tourist gaze and a Chinese tourist gaze. I will return to this theme in my final chapter.
PLATE 4.9

Congestion is becoming a problem in some sites.

Huangshan holiday weekend, April 2004: Two flows moving in opposite directions jammed in gridlock
CHAPTER FIVE
CONTEMPORARY TOURISM PLANNING FOR
NATURAL AREAS

The preceding four chapters have provided some details of the fundamentals of Chinese common knowledge related to natural landscapes and its enduring social and cultural heritage. This chapter explores how the various values and manifestations of Chinese-ness find expression in contemporary planning for development of tourism in mountainous areas. It incorporates results from my exposure to and involvement in tourism planning in more than ten tourism projects in China during the past decade (1994-2004). It therefore draws upon personal experience and the experience of professional colleagues, as well as the literature related to this topic.

Planning Principles
The first principle to note is that for a mountain in China to be regarded as beautiful it needs to be ‘gazed at’ holistically, that is the physical landscape must be permeated with human cultural and historic heritage. Without this the essence of harmony is absent (Xie 1988, p.40). Since harmony is reliant on ‘man improving on nature’ it is ‘natural’, indeed essential, for all types of human endeavour, from pavilions and temples, trails and stairways, rock cliff engravings and calligraphy, paintings and stone tablets, ponds and lakes and gardens, carvings and other arts and craftwork, to be located in natural landscapes, modifying the scenery. Evidence of such human endeavour is the “key aesthetic” in landscapes (Xie 1988, p.41) and the application of the principles of feng shui ensures the achievement of harmony with the correct placement and orientation of human constructions in natural settings, as outlined in Chapter Three.
Translated into contemporary tourism development in China, it results in always modifying natural environments with human-made construction of one form or another.

The second principle, therefore, is that tourism development in landscapes in China is synonymous with building something or modifying the landscape through human intervention. Nature is imperfect, to leave it untouched is to abrogate one’s responsibility, and the very word used to describe ‘wilderness’, huangye, as ‘bad-lands’ and its state as yuanshi, ‘primitive’, are expressive of fundamentals of the Chinese tourist gaze. This approach forms the foundation of an anthropocentric approach to the development of natural landscapes for tourism, and it is combined with elements of the landscape (rocks, trees, and so on) being anthropomorphized, that is, imbued with human characteristics.

The third principle is that when developing tourism for China’s natural areas its planners will attempt to define the tezhi (‘essence’) of the landscape and then design accordingly. Tezhi connotes the intrinsic or indispensable properties that serve to characterize or identify the landscape (Xie 1988, p.37). But they are not properties of biodiversity or of geomorphology. They are properties embedded in human feelings, correlative and relational. Thus a landscape will be identified as imposing 雄, or mysterious 奧, or elegant 秀 or dangerous 險, always in relation to the perspective of the emotions of the human onlooker (anthropomorphism). Imperatives of design for human construction will then flow from that given identity to match the design of nature which, being imperfect, requires the addition of human-made elements for the benefit of humans (anthropocentrism).
Application of Tezhi

Thus in scenic areas famous for their ‘imposing’ image, buildings would normally be placed on ridges, peaks or cleared slopes and in Chinese eyes their highly visible presence will harmonize with and enhance the tezhi, the essence, of the landscape. The Yellow Crane Pagoda, for example, has occupied a strategic site above the Yangtze River in the ancient city of Wuhan for more than 2000 years (now in its sixth reconstruction), dominating the surrounding landscape (Plate 5.1). Its imposing presence has been the subject of poems and prose for centuries (as referenced in Chapter Two). The towering Tai Shan was worshipped by emperors from generation to generation, with the layout of its many temples and other architecture reflecting its orderly and splendid nature (Xie 1988). The Dai Temple is located at the south piedmont looking back at Tai Shan peak, facing the flat plain with its central axis lined up with the peak, its feng shui achieving harmonious balance with its setting. The three Heavenly Gates were built at strategic points along the mountain trail up to the Bixia (Rosy Cloud) Temple constructed on the highest peak. The path is wide, especially the section of stairs leading to the last Heavenly Gate, and for our Chinese eyes it is like a ladder stretching up to the heaven and a passage to the land of the Immortals (Plate 5.1). Westerners by contrast may find it intrusive, unsympathetic and out of place. Ancient pines, cypresses and peony trees over one thousand years old are dotted around the complex, the imposing Tai Shan receiving added grandeur from the vegetation.

In scenic areas famous for their ‘dangerous and precipitous’ image, buildings normally will be placed near cliffs or along steep slopes or situated at strategically located places
of difficult access. For example the Hanging Temple complex at Heng Shan, the northern sacred mountain, has its more than forty buildings and their connected
PLATE 5.1

Examples of ‘Imposing’ *tezhi*

The Yellow Crane Pagoda in Wuhan has dominated the Yangtze River for more than 2000 years. The painting below is reproduced from historical records and depicts the pagoda as a wooden building, circa 100B.C. It hangs in the current Yellow Crane Pagoda (right).

The ‘Stairway to Heaven’ leading up to the third heavenly gate on Taishan also captures the ‘imposing’ *tezhi* of the site.

(Source: Tovey n.d.)
passageways built into shallow depressions along the cliffs. Nan Tan Temple on Wudangshan is similarly located in a cliff along a depression leading to a shallow cave, with a sheer drop of 300 metres to the valley floor below. A special prayer point, a stone dragon, juts out from the temple over the abyss, a design feature that perfectly captures the *tezhi* of this place (Plate 5.2).

In scenic areas famous for their ‘elegant’ image, planners will strive to design buildings that are light, simple but elegant and are in proportion to the surrounding landscape. The purpose is to lead visitors to calmly appreciate the view and add a delicate interest and charm to the scenery. In low undulating areas dominated by lakes, an elegant tower (pagoda) would be placed at the ridgeline of a small hill to break the smooth gentle outline of the view. The new pagoda on a low hill above West Lake, Hangzhou, is one example (Plate 5.3). Guilin and Taihu provide others. This is an application of the principle related to the need to improve on the imperfections of nature. A flat area needs a vantage point, and a round hill is not the ideal shape, which is that of a spire. By constructing a pagoda on the summit of a gently curving hill man is not dominating nature but is in harmony with nature through improving on it.

In scenic areas famous for their ‘profound mysterious’ image, buildings are often integrated with a cave or cave system. For example, in Yândàng Shan (Wild Goose Mountain) the Goddess of Mercy Cave, a nine-level temple complex was built following the cave’s terrain. From a distant, it is a natural cave; at a closer look it faintly reveals some buildings; inside it displays a nine-level temple complex which can accommodate several thousand people.
The Daoist Nan Tan Temple is built into a cliff face in Wudangshan. Its *tezhi* is characterized as “dangerous and precipitous”.

A special prayer point has been constructed so that pilgrims to Nan Tan can experience the *tezhi* of this site, suspended in air 300 metres above the ground below.
The ideal shape is a spire and so human intervention improves on the imperfection of Nature by constructing a pagoda on a rounded hill, thus attaining harmony.
Xie (1988, p.43) concludes that the aesthetic treatment of construction in natural landscapes exhibits rich ethnic and cultural characteristic. Where *tezhi* is ‘imposing’, ‘precipitous’ or ‘vast’, constructions are mostly ‘revealed’. Where the essence is ‘elegant’, ‘mysterious’ or ‘delicate’, buildings would often be ‘concealed’. Xie’s approach reflects the views of the Tang mandarin scholar, Liu Zongyuan (773—819), who wrote some 1300 year ago that the attractiveness of natural scenery came from the combination of its ‘openness’ and ‘depth’ on the one hand or ‘seclusion’ on the other, and the way that these characteristics were captured by architectural placement and design (Zhou Weiquan 1988). For open landscapes, buildings would be exposed to add a focal point and detail to the natural scenery. Some temples, even though in secluded settings, were deliberately constructed in a way that would expose at least part of their construction to view, rather than tucking them away, in order to add to the Chinese sense of what was required to make a harmonious landscape. Purple Cloud Temple in Wudangshan illustrates this approach: secluded but not completely hidden.

While in the western world seclusion is a norm of much architectural design principles in wilderness with buildings not dominating the landscape, Chinese planners choose to expose the building to add detail to the natural scenery. Thus in China it is not uncommon to see temples, pagodas and the like constructed on precipitous sites such as high, perilous peaks or at the edge of steep cliffs. Culturally, buildings being visible from below are considered to enrich the landscape and enhance the viewers’ appreciation of the scenery (see for example, Shibaozhi Buddhist Temple, Wanxian County, Sichuan Province, Plate 4.7). From above, from the building itself, the dominating exposed architecture would open up vast unfolding scenery stretching below. This perspective is designed to create a sense of rising above the world, transcending
the worldly with connotations of being in heaven, of being detached and aloof from the affairs of man. In other words, the importance of temples in scenic areas lies not only in their religious function and their hospitality (accommodation and sustenance) for travellers but in their function of landscape enrichment (Xie 1988). Temple complexes meticulously located according to the principles of feng shui and thus considered to be in particular harmony with the natural environment, are used to make a further statement at the level of micro land forms in order to create an artistic atmosphere/image (as with the Purple Cloud Temple in Wudangshan, see Plate 3.5). The architecture becomes the focal point of an enriched scenery, the construction itself ‘scenic architecture’ transforming the natural into the cultural. In the western paradigm of nature/wilderness tourism planners will be at pains to maintain that sense of wilderness by hiding or removing evidence of a built environment and other evidence of the presence of humans. Chinese values will often take on the opposite, with highly visible design and the location of the building making the landscape whole, intrinsic to the scene.

This treatment is surely very Chinese for in the western world where empathetic design often determines the approach to the construction of facilities in landscape areas such as national parks, man-made features are often ‘concealed’. The end result in China is to provide an experience which allows Chinese visitors through their common knowledge to relate in a multiplicity of ways to the landscape, and such design factors constructed around tezhi are integral to the Chinese tourist gaze.


**Application of Jingjie**

Kong Xiaokai (1988, p.471) extends this anthropomorphic approach. He states that:

“The major principle in Chinese natural landscape design is to provide a cultural experience by connecting the scenic tour with its specific cultural domain. Ambience and poetic atmosphere are not only the domain of traditional Chinese aesthetics but the essence of all forms of artistic creation such as prose, poems, paintings, calligraphy, seal carvings, music, dances, operas, landscape gardens and scenic attractions” (my translation from the original Chinese).

Kong argues that *jingjie*, ‘scenic ambience’, does not exist naturally in the landscape but is created through the development stage based on the cultural information with which the landscape is endowed (1988, p.473). If that information is not presented clearly then the planner has the responsibility to provide it. This is a distinction from the western perspective which endows nature with its own intrinsic qualities and often decrives any cultural (i.e. human) presence, so ‘pristine’ ‘untrammelled’ and ‘pure’ are adjectives used to extol the wonders of ‘unspoilt Nature’. In China, the thinking is reversed: human presence is not ‘spoiling’ the environment/scenery/attraction but rather is necessary to enhance it.

As far as the cultural information is concerned, it could be a poem, a painting, anecdotes of celebrities, myths and legends, local custom or other material. To highlight a poetic atmosphere couplets in the form of cliff inscriptions and stone tablet engravings could be introduced to the site. A famous verse highlighting the theme of the scenery and linking the visitor to a thousand years of literary heritage will enhance the *jingjie* and thus the visitor’s experience. For example, in the Tang Dynasty a scholar, Song Zhiwen
(656-712A.D.), wrote a pair of couplets for Taoguang Temple near the Qiantang River in Hangzhou (See Chapter Seven):

“Within the temple one can gaze at the sun rising from the blue sea,
Without leaving the doorway one can watch the Qiantang tidal bore”.

(Own translation)

Subsequently when the Ming Dynasty scholar, Yuan Hongdao (1565-1610A.D.), visited the same temple nine hundred years later he wrote:

“From inside the temple I could see Qiantang River and count the waves.
Not until then did I understand that Song’s couplets depicted the river and the tide as vividly as a painting.”


Both poets’ works have entered Chinese common knowledge and illustrate how a visitor may experience the scenic ambience by connecting the landscape with thematic verse.

One of the best known examples of the connection of landscape to poetic atmosphere comes from the White Deer Cave Academy of Classical Learning at Lu Mountain (Lu Shan Bailu Tong Shuyuan). There, the Ming Dynasty scholar, Zhu Xi, inscribed on a river boulder his writing of “Zhen liu”枕流 to highlight “the delight of resting (literally ‘pillow your head’) on the gentle slope to appreciate the babbling sound of slowly flowing water” from the stream outside the Academy. The Long Jun Xi gorge case presented below has a similar inscription on a rock in the middle of the stream: “Study the water” (“Du shui”讀水)1. This is a very modern tourism development in the 21st century (2001), borrowing from ancient culture to enhance the experience for the visitor. Another example in which history, culture, art and nature are fused in mountain

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1 Both inscriptions, zhen liu and du shui, are excellent examples of the conciseness and terseness of the wenyan form of literary writings.
landscapes is The Immortals Cave in Lu Shan. There, a four-character phrase ‘Indulge in the flying clouds’ is inscribed on a huge hanging boulder in front of the cave. When clouds flow in filling the valley and forming an undulating sea of clouds, the only object floating above the sea is the boulder, and then the atmospheric meaning of ‘Indulge in the flying clouds’ can be fully appreciated. At Tai Shan there are more than one thousand rock cliff inscriptions, with many styles of calligraphy dating back from the time when the Qin prime minister, Li Si, first inscribed Emperor Qin’s pilgrimage, to the record of the last dynasty of China, the Qing emperor, paying homage to Heaven. From that first instance a tradition was born and a culture developed. Spanning more than 2000 years the inscriptions are known to Chinese as the Tai Shan ‘museum of calligraphy’ and most natural sites in China are similarly invested with calligraphy (Plate 5.4).

It is important to note that the use of the beauty of literature and art to praise the beauty of nature is not interpretation as defined in the western sense, although to the Chinese tourist gaze the presence of such material does allow greater appreciation of the historical and cultural heritage with which a site is endowed. Interpretation for western visitors of the use of such material could take a lengthy explanation, perhaps requiring a short course in Chinese sociolinguistics and culture. And their ‘gaze’ would still not encompass the comprehensiveness of the Chinese tourist gaze because of their lack of Chinese common knowledge. Thus calligraphy inscribed on a cliff face in the middle of nowhere is not graffiti, it is Kong’s (1988) jingjie. And by virtue of the calligraphy nowhere becomes somewhere.
Sites all over China are, in Chinese eyes, enhanced by the addition of calligraphy. Rather than taking a photo of ‘just the scenery’, Chinese will invariably focus on the calligraphy.

Liu’s famous 8th century poem about mountains and water (Ch 4), Jade River valley, Huangshan.

Where a site lacks calligraphy historically, as in the development of a walking trail along White Horse River, Hubei Province, it will be inscribed (above).

Pilgrim trails are adorned with calligraphy everywhere: this records the rock from where the Goddess of Mercy preached on Putuo Shan.

30m high inscription on the karst columns at Shilin Stone Forest, Yunnan: “Beyond the clouds is there something better than this reality?”

“Heavenly created pleasant landscape” Qiyunshan
Function of Mountain Paths

In addition to temples, pavilions, monuments, statues, stone tablets and other constructions, mountain paths and trails are significant elements of human intervention that occupy the attention of tourism planners in China. Mountain paths were not built once and for all. They were (are) constantly being repaired, changed, added to, widened, with pavilions to rest at, and steps constructed up steep inclines, etc. They have been perfected by more than one thousand years of repeated usage, amendment and arrangement. Pious Buddhists could gain merit for the next reincarnation by constructing new steps along a sacred way and this is a tradition which has continued unbroken for more than 1500 years in many mountain sites. Improvements to mountain paths all over China continue to be made to this day, with ancient steps and paving stones being replaced, repaired, re-positioned, or discarded in favour of new materials (Plate 5.5).

This dynamic development instead of static existence brings out the debate of authenticity. At which point in time should paths be ‘frozen’ as authentic historical fabric, and re-development castigated as ‘inauthentic’? Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that in China authenticity often resides in the process rather than the built fabric: the repair and remaking of paths, with new materials according to the latest technology (e.g. reinforced concrete instead of uncut slabs or hewn stone pavers) is a tradition that goes back in time for several thousand years. Just because something is ‘old’ (other than people) bestows it with no particular value, unless that ‘oldness’ is in some way also special. Why save a cottage just because it is a thousand years old when there are a million other cottages equally old? Why keep the surface of a path made of rough-hewn stone 1000 years ago when there are millions of similar slabs in other paths and when
Paths and trails in China undergo a continuing process of renewal.

Along one section of the sacred way to the summit of Qiyunshan the hand-cut 1000-year old paving stones (left) have been cast aside for a new section of reinforced concrete (above). The ancient battlement along the side of the path remains.

Trail widening with reinforced concrete replacing ancient paving stones, Huangshan

Chang Jian (circa 730 A.D.)

In the pure morning, near the old temple,
Where early sunlight points the tree-tops,
My path has wound, through a sheltered hollow
Of boughs and flowers, to a Buddhist retreat.
Here birds are alive with mountain-light,
And the mind of man touches peace in a pool,
And a thousand sounds are quieted
By the breathing of a temple-bell.

Part of the ancient trail in Huangshan was ‘modernised’ for the installation of a temple bell to mark the new millennium, December 2000. In Chinese eyes a bell in this location is regarded as entirely appropriate and in harmony with Nature.
concrete will make for a smoother walk or ride? In other words the definition of authenticity, like many other concepts in China, will be related to the human comfort factor – a relational concept rather than one in which things are seen as inherently valuable in themselves without reference necessarily to human agency.

Mountain paths have three functions that are considered in planning for tourism in mountainous areas: pilgrimage, transport of supplies for daily life, and organizing the scenery. First, as the ‘sacred paths’ for pilgrims, trails link up all focal points in that mountain and in particular perform the network function of ‘a sequential link’ to major temples, for example, in Tai Shan and Wudang Shan (see Plate 4.6). Some mountainous scenic areas make use of special landforms along the major route of this transport network to create a special religious atmosphere. For example in Tai Shan, Qiyun Shan and Wudangshan the three Heavenly Gates through which pilgrims must pass to reach the summit have been positioned at physically commanding sites, emphasizing the demarcations between the three sections which symbolize the belief in Daoism of the complete journey to heaven (see Plate 4.3). This mirrors the myth mentioned in Chapter Four of mortals transcending to immortality by climbing the three different levels at Kunlan Shan. Buddhist mountains also bestow special significance on their mountain trails. In the past, at the major sections of the paths in Putuo Shan, one of the most venerated Buddhist sites where the annual “Kuan-yin” (Goddess of Mercy) pilgrimage takes place (Swain 1992), highly artistic lotus flowers were engraved on every stone step (several thousand of them) which symbolized that the pilgrims were “walking in Buddha’s world” (lotus flowers are believed to grow everywhere in Nirvana). Most of the engraved steps were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, but recent restoration work has replaced many of the original hand-carved steps with concrete moulds of lotus flowers. Where mountain paths are ‘sacred ways’ then the planning and design of such
routes for tourism will focus on this function and appropriate religious features will be incorporated (Plate 5.6).

With reference to the second function, as transport routes, the design of paths would link villages, inns and other accommodation places, including temples en route in a way that matches the walking pace of travellers. The exhaustion of mountain climbing is also an important factor to consider, so pavilions should be built to provide resting places at appropriate distances apart. Micro-climate would also be examined for the choice of a potential path. Routes with good cross-breezes, tree shades and slowly flowing brooks would be ideal. The principles of environmental conservation in which the minimization of impacts guides much contemporary western track design, if present at all, is subordinated in China to design factors that will provide comfort for human first – anthropocentric rather than biocentric values predominating. According to Ding Wenkui (1988, p.299) for example: “In any tourism plan it should be proposed that every three li (1.5 kms) there is a kiosk, every 5 li (2.5kms) there is a pavilion and every 10 li (5 kms) a restaurant and guest house” (Plate 5.7). The concept of ‘wilderness trekking’ is alien to most Chinese touristic users of their landscapes, although this could change in future if western concepts such as ‘bushwalking’, for example, take hold.

Third, paths should be designed in order to organize the scenery for travellers (again, relational to *humans* as the central point of a landscape). The route should lay stress on the dynamic effects of continuously unfolding scenery in order to link up as many attractions as possible for the benefit of the traveller. To achieve the best scenic outcome for travellers planners must find “the delicate balance in the relationship of distance, time and atmosphere of the attractions” (Zhou 1988, p.55).
Pilgrim trails are appropriately designed with shrines and other religious features.

Bas relief carving of a famous general along the sacred way to the summit of Qiyunshan.

Daoist incense shrine along the Wudangshan trail to Prince Ridge Temple.

Pavilion on Putuo, columns appropriately inscribed, overlooking the sea cave of the Goddess of Mercy.

Turtle Rock along the trail in Long-Zhong. The inscription records that one of the Daoist Immortals revealed himself here.

In a small grotto on the Qiyunshan trail the word ‘Longevity’ has been inscribed, the colour yellow combining ‘Prosperity’ with longevity. The vendor has incense sticks for sale.
Kiosks, pavilions and accommodation units are standard constructions along trails.

Kiosk, halfway up the sacred way, Wudangshan

Restaurant adjacent to the Golden Horn Temple, summit of Wudangshan

Refreshment stalls, Jade Dragon Mountain alpine boardwalk, 1.5 kms from the head of the cable car (Yunnan).

Kiosk, Huangshan

Refreshment kiosks, small eating places and souvenir shops along the ancient way, Wudangshan.
In this context, rather than an environmental impact assessment dictating the route of a trail, the need to time one’s arrival at midday, for example, to be able to observe sunlight playing on a river far below at the bottom of a deep perpendicular-sided gorge to avoid dark shadows obscuring the view, or at sunset to enjoy the evening light on distant peaks, will determine how and where the path should go (Plate 5.8). The need to see these sights at certain times will mostly be ‘pre-determined’ by a *shan shui* poem or prose from the brushes of a famous poet or scribe (thus a specific Chinese tourist gaze). It is not really a matter even of culture taking precedence over the natural; rather it is simply that the reason the trail is there is cultural and so little conscious thought (if any) goes into considerations of impacts on the environment. If for example it would take too long on a particular section of a track to follow the contours of the mountain, then very long flights of stairs going straight up or straight down will be built, or a bridge might be constructed to reduce the distance and meet the exigencies of distance, time and atmosphere (Plate 5.9). Westerners are often taken aback at the elaborate construction of paths in China’s natural areas, since in China few scenic trails designed for tourism will be embedded organically in the landscape, unsealed or unadorned. Rather the paths will often be a dominant visual element (Plate 5.9). And since the purpose of that construction will facilitate the access of people to a particular site, they will be regarded as fitting harmoniously into the landscape. The Chinese gaze will pick up on the functional and relational elements and approve of them. They will not ‘see’ the ‘visual pollution’ with which western observers sometimes greet the kilometers of concreted steps and paths geometrically dissecting the landscape of Chinese mountains.
Trails designed for tourist scenic spots must find “the delicate balance in the relationship of distance, time and atmosphere of the attractions.”

This trail in Huangshan is designed for a 30 minute walk from the hotel area with times displayed for visitors to reach the vantage point to watch the sun set.
A new trail in UNESCO’s Man and Biosphere World Network listed Shennongjia Nature Reserve in Hubei Province, the “Swallow Trail”, epitomizes this approach (Plate 5.9). The trail has bridges and stairs built in places where a western park management regime would probably hesitate to go, both in terms of biodiversity conservation and in terms of danger. But the tezhi of the steep rugged peaks of the Swallow Trail encompasses ‘dangerous’ and ‘precipitous’ so cliff-hugging paths and vertical stairways are built and suspension bridges span chasms, where-as a western approach might stop the trail at the edge of a precipice and leave some of the pinnacles only for the most adventurous of visitors to tackle without the benefit of a made trail. The design approach adopted for the Swallow Trail also emphasizes another aspect of difference: we may say that virtually all trails in China are constructed for mass tourism, whereas in the west much ecotourism is designed for small numbers; and even in parks where visitation is heavy many trails will be deliberately left in a un-constructed state and signposted as ‘difficult’ as a management tool to restrict visitation and therefore lessen adverse impacts on the environment.

One attraction can form different scenes from various angles by the clever routing of paths. Sometimes the paths lead visitors into the scene and sometimes out of it. The new trail constructed into West Gorge, Huangshan, is designed along the principle of leading the traveller from one spectacular viewpoint to another (Plate 5.9). For Chinese tourism planners the layout of the paths should also adopt the principles of Liu Zongyuan (mentioned above) by alternating the sense of “openness” and “seclusion”, employing the tools of “suspense” and “building-up to a climax”, and highlighting the contrast of “precipitous” and “smooth” (Zhou 1988, p55), e.g. the Swallow Trail. All of these
A suspension bridge is slung across a ravine to reach a scenic lookout, saving a tortuous climb up and down. Westerners may accept such a bridge because they can ‘see’ that in China it fits culturally and it is not unaesthetic to their eyes, but a western park management might not.


The new “Swallow Trail” in Shenongjia features both bridges and steps that dissect the steep mountain slope.
efforts are designed to ensure that mountain paths provide an interesting experience – and are of course imparting human values onto the natural landscape.

Pavilions have an important function to play in providing a quality experience on trails and paths. They will be strategically located as per above, perceived as more or less essential additions to the landscape, necessary not just for their function of providing a resting place but for enhancing (harmonizing with) the natural scenery. They will usually be adorned with calligraphy, assisting trail users to ‘stop and smell the roses’ (Plate 5.10)

PLATE 5.10

Pavilion on a distant hill drawing the visitor into the landscape
Pavilions are regarded as essential elements in the design of paths and trails. They may function as a rest stop, as a viewing point, as a focal point in the landscape, and as a repository for calligraphy to link the site to heritage. They introduce a human-made element into the natural environment to improve on nature that is vital for harmony.

Pavilions may be un-obtrusive and semi-concealed when the tezhi is ‘mysterious’ (left: pavilion on the Jade River trail, Huangshan).

Or they may make a statement and draw travellers to a scenic vantage point when the tezhi is ‘open’ and ‘imposing’ (below: pavilion at Yellow Oxen Bluff overlooking the Yangtze River Three Gorges Dam).
This brief outline of some of the planning principles that are utilized for contemporary
tourism development in China demonstrates the manner in which such planning draws
upon all of the aspects of Chinese culture explored in the preceding chapters. To
provide concrete illustrations of the way in which these principles have been applied in
recent mountainous tourism developments I now offer five different cases: Shishi Shan
and Star Lake, Guangdong Province; Long Jun Xi Valley, Hubei Province; Huangdi
Yuan Valley, Huangshan; Big Hollow Mountain and Moli Scenic Reserve in Yunnan
Province; and Huangshan World Heritage Listed Scenic and Historic Reserve.

The inscription on the reclining slab on the trail
along the knife-edge of Baodaofeng reads:
“Even the emperor must bow to pass by me.”
Case 1  Shishi Shan

*An example of myths, local folklore and customs providing added significance to the original natural landscape*

Areas which are endowed with natural geographic characteristics often have those forms accorded magical powers and are associated with myths and legends. For example, myths of the Dragon King are normally related to hydrological landforms such as karst caves, waterfalls and pools. Boulders resulting from a fracture along joints frequently connect with folklore about ‘Testing-the-Sword Rock’ (i.e. the split or cleft in the rock is said to have been formed by an Immortal testing the sharpness of his or her sword by slicing into it with a single blow). Any landform resembling a person or animal would be named after an immortal or a god.

As Xie (1988) points out, even when scenic sites are completely separate in different provinces hundreds of kilometres apart if they include similar types of landforms then the myths associated with those landforms will be much the same. This similarity can be interpreted as one manifestation of common knowledge drawing upon familiarity with Chinese ethnic folklore and culture.

Sometimes myths and folklore also reflect the characters of history and human geography. For example, Tai Shan always relates to emperors worshipping the Heaven there (‘fengshan’). Lónghu Shan (in Jiangxi) has a series of stories about the founder of Daoism. Such myths, legends, histories and stories form a chain linking natural landscapes and human landscapes integrally, which increases the interest and attraction of such sites for Chinese tourists.
As stand-alone entities, poems and calligraphy of natural landscape have their own artistic and historical value. At Shishi Shan (Stone House Crag) above Star Lake near Zhaoqing City in Guangdong Province, the Shishi Cave (Stone House Cave) is famous for “some 270 rock-face inscriptions which date back to the Tang (618-907 A.D.) and Song (960-1279 A.D.) Dynasties. Of these the better-known ones are the poems of Bao Zhen, the upright official of the Song; of Yu Dayou of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644); and of the poet Qu Dajun and the painter Li Jian both of the Qing dynasty” (Zhu Yifei & Wang Hangchang 1996, p.396). This section of the cave, with a large number of rock inscriptions varied in calligraphic style and featuring a wide range of content, is thus called Qiannianshilang, the 1,000-Year-Old Poetry Corridor (Tang Tao 2001) (Plate 5.11).

The seven peaks of Star Lake at Zhaoqing are linked to the Jade Emperor, the supreme deity of Daoism. According to legend a long, long time ago there was the lake but not the seven peaks. However there were seven bright stars which shed their light on the earth. They all fell in love with the lake and decided to come to earth to enjoy her company. Thus they turned themselves into the seven picturesque peaks that now encircle three sides of the lake and from whence the lake takes its name (Plate 5.12). On clear moonlit nights, the story goes, one can hear the melodious music of fairies wafting down from the summit of Stone House Crag and this is believed to be the music being played while the Jade Emperor was giving a banquet for all the gods and goddesses. This accounts for the presence of the following six characters inscribed on the Crag during the time of the Ming dynasty: “Di’Shang Bai’Shen Zhi’Suo” or the ‘Site Where the Jade Emperor Toasts the Gods and Goddesses’. Another legend tells the story of Tian-ma, the winged horse god, flying past the peaks and being so
enchanted by the scenery that he descended and alighted on the shores of the lake.
Without being aware of it he landed on and dented a stone tablet on which is inscribed
the text of an essay by the famous Tang dynasty calligrapher, Li Yong, which bears the
title; “The Stone House Crag of Duanzhou”. As the hoof-shaped dent is clearly visible
today, the tablet has been known for centuries as the “Horse Hoof Tablet” and is one of
the most precious of the calligraphy inscriptions at Seven Star Crags. (Zhu Yifei &

The rich infusion of cultural heritage – stories, folklore, religious beliefs, calligraphy,
and so forth – is known often in great detail by Chinese visitors to Shi’Shi Shan and
Star Lake and the physical attractions of the landscape are thus immeasurably enhanced.
The Moon-in-the-Water Temple at the base of ShiShi Shan adds a Daoist religious
element to the experience for Chinese (Plate 5.13). Western visitors (unless they are
sinologists) are unable to penetrate the depth of Chinese understanding with which the
latter view this scenery, and the tourist development of Shi’Shi Shan and Star Lake
provides one more example of the intricacies of a Chinese tourist gaze.

PLATE 5.11

ShiShi Cave – the 1,000-Year-Old Poetry Corridor
(Source: www.zqtourism.com)

ShiShi Cave (Stone House Crag Cave)
The seven stars fell to earth and became the Seven Heavenly Fairies peaks which encircle Star Lake.
Plate 5.13

Entrance to ShiShi Shan Cave

Star Lake

Moon-in-the-Water Palace Temple, ShiShi Shan
Case 2  Long Jun Xi Valley

Building Culture into Nature

For the majority of Chinese their Daoist/Buddhist heritage invests nature with a very strong spirituality; and symbolism abounds in metaphors and similes drawn from nature. In the Long Jun Xi valley entering Xilin, the lowest of the Yangtze River’s Three Gorges in Hubei Province, for example, two waterfalls are rich in symbolism. The waterfalls and their names are derived from the animal kingdom, human characteristics are attributed to them, and the whole is a manifestation of the Daoist forces of yin and yang and the Chinese tenet of ‘man in harmony with nature’. One, the Dragon-Leaping-Into-Stream Waterfall, has five outflows roaring forth from a cave in the cliff face. It is described by the guides as tumultuous, expanding, powerful, ambitious, virile, masculine. On the opposite side of the valley is the Phoenix Piano Waterfall which has a fine lace-like flow that tinkles gently down the cliff-face. It is described as delicate, beautiful, demure, coquettish, feminine. The dragon symbolizes the emperor, and male power yang; the phoenix symbolizes the empress, and female power yin. Both are required to produce harmony. The peaks above the waterfalls are yang, male; the valley gorge with its steep walls is yin, female (Plate 5.14).

In 2001 the two-kilometre trek along the uninhabited valley floor to the waterfalls was for westerners as close to a wilderness experience as is possible in China. There was an ancient covered bridge across the entrance to the stream where it joined the Yangtze River; and two examples of calligraphy were etched in mid-stream rocks (“Listen to the murmuring brook.” “Study the [everchanging flowing] water.”). Old growth forest crowded in on the unmade track that led to the waterfall below the perpendicular walls of the gorge festooned with creepers and flowers. The waterfalls, so different from each
PLATE 5.14

Phoenix Piano Waterfall

Dragon-Leaping-into-Stream Waterfall
other, were beautiful in anybody’s terms and more than sufficient justification for westerners for the investment in time and effort to see them (Plate 5.14).

For Chinese, the symbolism inherent in the *yin* and *yang* of the waterfalls, the peaks and valley, and the elegant calligraphy, combined to make the walk a cultural one even if in their eyes it was undeveloped, and the valley was ‘primitive’ (Plate 5.15).

By October 2004, the valley had been ‘properly’ developed for tourism and the experience was centrally and solidly a Chinese cultural one, although the guides and the brochures described it as ‘ecotourism’. A landing for cruise ships and ferries had been constructed on the bank of the Yangtze about 100 metres from the entrance to Long Jun Xi Stream, and as each boatload of tourists arrived they were greeted with a cultural performance of ethnic songs and dances by costumed locals. Three restaurants had been built behind the landing up against the cliffs of the Yangtze, able to seat 500 guests. The path from the landing to the stream was a concrete boulevard landscaped with trees and flowers, and three ‘traditional’ sampans were moored in the river below the path for photo opportunities. An entrance booth with souvenir shop and toilets had been constructed and where the stream entered the Yangtze it had been dammed to form a lake (Plate 5.16).

After paying the entrance fee, the walk commenced by crossing the new dam wall and proceeding to the ancient bridge which had been renovated and much of its traditional materials replaced (e.g. concrete balustrades and tile roof replacing carved timber rails and shingle tiles). The path leading to the waterfalls was concreted with steps and rails in steep places (Plate 5.16), and as tourists walked to the waterfalls they could see a
PLATE  5.15
Long Jun Xi River Valley prior to ‘proper-development’ for tourism

Trail to the waterfalls – just one small pavilion

Ancient covered bridge near the confluence with the Yangtze

Pristine forests in the gorge

The calligraphy enjoins travellers to: “Study the Water”
fishing boat on the artificial lake behind the dam wall, with a couple engaged in raising and lowering a traditional fishing net. Another sampan propelled by a single stern oar and with a traditionally dressed woman standing in the prow was also rowed up and down the small lake (Plate 5.16).

Two small pavilions had been erected along the pathway to provide resting places. Halfway to the waterfalls, a traditional Yangtze River fishing village had been constructed deep within the valley, a stone path led down to the river’s edge, and two traditionally clad girls could be photographed washing clothes by hand in the traditional manner. At the waterfalls, a large pavilion, (complete with toilets) had been built for shelter. The return walk took tourists down the opposite side of the valley into the artificial village, where more traditional dances and a traditional wedding, complete with village drums, traditional string instruments, flutes and horns, were performed for the benefit of tourists (with one hapless - or lucky! - male tourist being ‘chosen’ as the groom for the wedding). From a quiet, contemplative walk in pristine nature the experience is now a participatory immersion in Chinese culture (Plate 5.17).

The second trip to Long Jun Xi Valley was made with a combined tour group of about 100 Chinese and twenty-five Westerners (English, Italian, German, Australian, New Zealand, American, Canadian). While no formal survey was carried out, each of the twenty-five Westerners was questioned about their response to the walk. Every one of them expressed complete satisfaction with the excursion; “culturally fascinating and scenically stunning” were typical of their comments. Unaware that the ‘traditional’ village had not been there two years previously, there was no question in their minds of inauthenticity.
PLATE 5.16
Long Jun Xi River Valley after ‘proper’ development for tourism

A line of restaurants have been along the Yangtze River at the entrance to Ling Jun Xi. A landing for cruise ships and ferryboats has been constructed and visitors are greeted with a cultural performance. The entrance to the Long Jun Xi Stream has been dammed (extreme left) to create a lake, traditional Yangtze river craft have been moored for a ‘photo opportunity’, and an entrance kiosk constructed (top right background) which sells the entry tickets for the walk to the waterfalls.

Three traditional Yangtze River fishing boats float on the artificial lake, each one ‘crewed’ by traditionally dressed river folk, including one couple (above) who raise and lower a traditional boom fish net. View of the artificial lake, showing the newly renovated bridge and fishing craft. (The Yangtze River gorge is beyond the dam wall, visible under the bridge).

The old trail has been concreted and widened for mass tourism.
PLATE 5.17

Long Jun Xi River Valley after ‘proper’ development for tourism

A traditional village suddenly appeared in the valley at the halfway point of the walk to the waterfalls.

Two traditionally-dressed girls hand-wash clothes in the stream below the village, for another photo opportunity. Interestingly, Chinese know that this is staged. But westerners may not realize the theatrical nature of what is in fact a cultural performance, because to all intents the village appears ‘normal’ not artificial, and they have no way of knowing that it is purpose built for tourism and less than one year old.

A traditional wedding is performed in the village for tour groups as they return along the trail. All visitors know that this is staged.

For Chinese and westerners alike it is a highlight of the walk, the cultural gap wider for westerners than for Chinese and therefore exotic. But it is still of great interest to the Chinese audience who join in the fun with gusto.
For the Chinese, there was general agreement that the trip was worth the fee (50 yuan – about US$6). But when questioned about whether they would have taken the excursion if the human-made elements had not been there, they invariably commented that ‘there would be nothing to see’. On further questioning, some accepted that the waterfalls were beautiful but they would be reluctant to pay the same entrance fee “if that was all there was to see.”

The tourism development of the Long Jun Xi Valley waterfalls exemplifies the anthropocentric approach that is integral to Chinese management of natural resources for tourism. This is evident in the construction of the cruise boat landing, restaurants, entrance booth and souvenir shop, pavilions, ‘traditional’ village, and concrete paths and steps – all for the comfort and convenience of visitors. Since nature is meaningless without people, the sentiments expressed in the two examples of calligraphy provide that essential input. Cultural performances (including not only the wedding ceremony but traditional fishing and hand washing of clothes) add ethnic colour ‘to bring nature alive’. Anthropocentrism is also evident in the perception that nature is imperfect and needs to be improved hence the landscaping, the construction of the lake, and the placement of traditional sampans to ‘improve’ the waterscapes. No environmental impact assessment was carried out before the stream was dammed. Comfort of visitors was paramount over conservation of nature and maintenance of biodiversity. Interestingly the Chinese tourist gaze perceives this experience as a walk in nature albeit with the many complex cultural under and over-tones that are inherent on their gaze on all natural sites. To the westerners interviewed on the day, the walk was ‘a Chinese (cultural) experience absolutely.’
Case 3 Huangdi Yuan Valley

Validation Through Authority Figures

One of the most recent (2004) tourism developments in Huangshan, Anhui Province, is “Huangdi Yuan”, or “Emperor Huang’s Recreation Site” which consists of a valley on the eastern side of the range. The Emperor is regarded as the legendary father of the yellow race. He is believed to have reigned about 5000 years ago, before recorded history, in the vicinity of the mountain range now known as Huangshan (Yellow Mountains). The scenic area includes a peak named after the emperor (Xuanyuan Feng) and covers the valley floor between this peak and Bright Summit, one of the most famous peaks of Huangshan.

The Huangdi Yuan Scenic Valley brochure (undated, circa 2004) describes the newly opened scenic area thus:

“This place celebrates the playground [literally: ‘leisure/recreation place’] of the father of the Chinese race, Emperor Huang. It is the source of Huangshan culture. Here, surrounded by green peaks, mysterious valleys, special pools and caves, and ancient scenic spots, you may discover the legend of Emperor Huang which was recorded in ancient texts. This is the superior natural teaching material for patriotic education to experience and promote understanding of Chinese culture. Here you can find temples, ancient bridges, horse trails, and the site of the college where the famous Tang dynasty poet, Li Bai, taught. You can also discover the footprints of famous literati and ancient celebrities. It is a feng shui treasure place which combines holy royal authority and Nature’s wonders. It is also the rediscovery of a hidden valley after one thousand years of lack of knowledge.

Huangdi Yuan which has mystic valleys, colourful pools, special caves, ancient relics - the “New Four” special features of Huangshan - is the

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2 Patriotic education refers to the inclusion in school curricula of field trips to famous sites and this development attempts to capture the student market.

3 The ‘New Four’ are additions to the ‘Old Four’ for which Huangshan has been famous for centuries—the sea of clouds, the pines trees, the rock formations, and the mineral springs.
The billboard erected at the roadside entrance to the valley declares in Chinese: “To view the real face of Huangshan we have to advise you to explore Huangdi Yuan.” A larger-than-life statue of the Emperor has been erected in a five-acre landscaped entrance to the valley, and a new hotel constructed at the site (Plate 5.18). The path behind the statue is highlighted with replicas of the ancestral gates honouring famous clan leaders of nearby World Heritage Site listed villages of Hongcun and Xi-di, and the village of Shexian.

At present within this area the following scenic sections have been defined and developed:

- The Heavenly Platform (a raised flat area on Dragon Peak) and the Incense Stand Lake (incense stands are metal and are located outside temples for the burning of incense candles)
- The Heavenly Purple Fungus Gorge;
- A group of karst caves; and
- An ancient cultural relics group.

According to the brochure there are about 30-40 major attractions within these four sections. Among them are:

- the ancient temple site of Heavenly Platform (there is a famous spring there and it is also the site of the discovery of the first reclining statue of Emperor Huang);
- the Incense Stand Lake (legend has it that the Emperor made his incense stand here melting and shaping the metal in a furnace);
- a rock formation which is labeled ‘the Emperor flying to the sky on a dragon after completing his meditation’;
- the cave where the emperor rested and slept;
the mysterious Heavenly Purple Fungus Gorge (according to the brochure the gorge “closely matches” the details of legends recording where the emperor collected heavenly purple fungus, made his incense stand, practiced alchemy and produced an elixir for longevity, which he swallowed, then rested before being taken up into heaven by the dragon at the site of the Heavenly Platform);

the site of a temple called the Yellow Valley Temple where there is headstone of the tomb of Li Zicheng;4

Huangdi Yuan karst caves group which is located in the east slope of Xuanyuan Feng Peak. Initial exploration has revealed more than ten ‘weird’ caves and there are still many more “mystic underground palaces” not yet developed;

millennial cypress, about 1,500 years old, which legend decrees is the site of the ancient Xuanyuan temple (Xuan Yuan is the family name of the Emperor);

the Green Willow stone arch bridge dating from the time of the Tang dynasty (in good repair);

the purported residence of Li Bai when he lived in the Huangshan area (where he wrote his famous poem “A Request to a Friend for a Pair of White Pheasants”); and

an ancient horse trail that leads to Li Zicheng’s tomb.

A detailed inspection of the Huangdi Yuan development by two Chinese academic colleagues (one an Associate Professor of Tourism) in May 2004 produced the conclusion that the scenic qualities of the valley were “nothing out of the ordinary” and similar to many other such rural sites (Xu Honggang, personal communication, May 2004. See Plate 5.18). The difference was the attempt by the developers to make the valley significant in (Chinese) touristic terms by a comprehensive linkage into culture heroes from China’s past.

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4 Li Zicheng was a peasant leader who successfully overthrew the Ming Dynasty. However his reign was short-lived – just one month - and legend has it that he retreated to this isolated area and maintained a low profile for the rest of his life to avoid capture and beheading. The headstone may or may not be genuine.
A larger-than-life statue of Emperor Huangdi has been erected at the entrance to the valley, with a line of ancestral gates arching over the trail into the valley beyond. They are replicas of similar ancient gates honouring ancestors in nearby villages such as Shexian (below left) and world heritage listed Xi-di (below right).

A new hotel has been constructed overlooking the entrance statue of Emperor Huangdi.

Jade Pool is typical of the valley’s scenic quality.
Huangdi Yuan thus provides a potent example of the way in which contemporary Chinese tourism development draws upon its cultural heritage to validate and legitimize a specific place for contemporary tourism. Emperor Huang is a recognised authority figure, famous as the father of the yellow race, and as such an extremely powerful symbol. The development of Huangdi Yuan has the investors (the local provincial government authority and a Shanghainese businessman) creating the entire attraction from famous legends that are well known to most Chinese, regardless of the paucity of archaeological evidence to sustain this presentation.

The authority of the Yellow Emperor is embellished with the famous figure of Li Bai, and the peasant leader Li Zicheng who possibly ‘retired’ to this valley. Li Bai’s poem is reproduced in full in the brochure so attesting to its importance in Chinese eyes. Li Zicheng is regarded by the current CP regime in China as ‘a Hero of the nation’, a contemporary elevation to a higher status than history had previously accorded him. As a recognized authority figure he thus reinforces the validation of the valley as authentic (Plate 5.19).

The full force of cultural heritage is evident in determining the form of this contemporary Chinese tourism development. The language of the brochure and the roadside billboard take for granted widespread knowledge of the background to the legendary/historic figures the developers have utilized. That ‘widespread knowledge’ is of course restricted to Chinese people in general or to international scholars of Chinese culture: thus localization (as distinct from globalization) is reinforced. The billboard also incorporates a nice reliance on the assumption of Chinese common knowledge with its reference to “the real face of Huangdi Yuan”, a reference to Su Dongpo’s poem.
about Lu Shan (referred to in Chapter Four) and the popular idiom which has entered the Chinese lexicon as a result. The erection of ancestral archways along the entrance trail also draws on a cultural facet immediately recognizable to Chinese to add more grandeur to the imperial *tezhi* of the valley.

Localization is further buttressed by utilization of a contemporary Chinese authority figure, recently retired President Jiang Jemin, to add his seal of approval to the project. This takes the form of a quote, reproduced in Jiang’s own calligraphy, on the cover of the brochure (Plate 5.19) which acknowledges the profound feelings of all Chinese towards the legendary role of Huang as father of the yellow race (and which incidentally also reinforces the link into ‘patriotic education’).

The semiotics of this phenomenon need to be explored. Jiang’s quote could be interpreted as ‘just a testimonial’ from a popular figure. But there is far more to it than this. First, as noted in Chapter Two, the characters of Chinese writing are a gift from the gods, so the calligraphy has a symbolism which is far deeper than simply the words the characters define, and thus very different from the reproduction of the letters of the roman alphabet. When calligraphy is located away from the site it still has its own validity. By contrast, MacCannell’s application of semiotics to tourism has the sign dependent upon the site, even when it is an ‘off-site marker’. But Li Bai’s poem about Huangshan’s white pheasants or Jiang’s comment about the feelings of Chinese towards Huang have the same validity if reproduced in Hubei instead of Huangshan and are NOT dependent upon the valley now designated as Emperor Huang’s playground.
The Huangdi Yuan Valley brochure features the calligraphy of ex-President Jiang on the cover.

The brochure also features the alleged tombstone of the peasant leader Li Zicheng; the Green Willow Tang dynasty stone bridge; the millennium cypress, purported site of the ancient Xuanyuan temple; and an ancient pavilion.

A plaque on a wall records the apparent site of the cottage where the Tang Dynasty poet, Li Bai lived, adjacent to his college of learning.

A poem by Li Bai (top right); the legend about the Emperor’s elixir made from the Heavenly Purple fungus; and the Immortal’s cave where the Emperor rested.
Second, calligraphy as previously stated is a form of ‘high culture’, a sophisticated art form that draws admiration when skillfully shaped. It is embedded in Chinese culture, with different art forms of calligraphy attributed to a series of famous historical figures. Sometimes it is the fame of the person who bestows significance on the calligraphy; sometimes it is the artistry with which the characters have been drawn that imparts fame to the composer. In this case both aspects are fused in the reproduction of the President’s calligraphy on the face of the brochure.

Third, ex-President Jiang is not extolling the virtues of this particular attraction but referring to general Chinese cultural heritage. His quote is therefore not a sign of the site, and it thus becomes a sight in its own right. It is a contemporary expression of utilization of Chinese culture using a contemporary authoritative figure equivalent to the ancient figures of authority from China’s past to authenticate a contemporary tourism development. The ‘Nature’ of the site and the visual attractiveness of the scenery is completely subordinated to cultural heritage; and the development of the site can only be understood by Chinese in a cultural context. Without that cultural validation in all probability it would not, in the eyes of most Chinese, merit visitation. Indeed, without that cultural input in all probability the valley would not have been ‘developed’ for tourism at all.

In effect we have a **tripartite partnership** between the tourism investor/developer, guide and visitor regarding interpretation. The **developer** relies upon Chinese common knowledge which ensures that the cultural significance of his chosen site – or the cultural significance with which he imbues the site when archaeological authentification is lacking – will be of sufficient consequence to attract visitation. The **guide** also relies
upon the same knowledge to interact with his/her tour group without having to spend any time at all on explanation. And the (Chinese) visitor will recognize in the developer’s promotion of the site famous historical, mythical, religious, literary and/or folkloric characters as a key motivating factor in a decision to consider visiting the site. While this might seem a little like a theme park in western eyes, a Chinese gaze views it all as ‘natural and Nature’: the cultural elements are embedded in nature, the site is isolated in uninhabited mountains and so to a Chinese gaze it is undeniably an ecotourism experience.

The valley is attractive in western ecotourism terms. It is well-forested; the stream is clear and clean with many beautiful jade-coloured pools. The surrounding mountains are impressive with spectacular rock formations. But the physical geography of a site, no matter how attractive, will in most instances, prove insufficient to attract substantial numbers of Chinese visitors. A survey of several prominent tourism academics in China suggests that only Jiuzhaigou Nature Reserve, famous for its calcareous lakes, has the ability to attract visitors purely on the basis of the quality of its scenery. In all other cases natural resources must be supported by cultural resources, and in most cases it would appear that the cultural aspect is the major attractant. The tezhi of this site is based on imperial and historical grandeur and the various developments reflect this aura. In other words, the development of the site is constructed on an understanding of the specifics of a Chinese tourist gaze which is itself constructed on Chinese common knowledge. The invisibilities (to western eyes) are highly visible to our Chinese eyes. To capture this necessity for attracting Chinese visitors to the site the investor has followed the planning principle asserted by Kong (1988), above, that the cultural significance of a natural site must be incorporated into its development.
Case 4  Tengchong Volcano Reserve and Moli Scenic Reserve

‘Anthropocentric Eco-Tourism’ Development in Yunnan Province

Tengchong Volcano Reserve

The development of Big Hollow Mountain in Tenchong Volcano Reserve for tourism illustrates the cultural differences between the Chinese approach to utilization of natural resources for tourism and the western notion of ecotourism. My field trip in 1999 as part of a team to develop ecotourism plan for nature reserves in Yunnan Province, provided a picture of development that epitomized Chinese aesthetic and cultural values about ‘man in harmony with nature’ which is the antithesis of western ideals of empathy with nature, that is, the concepts of wilderness unspoiled by human intervention, and conservation. The Tengchong Volcano Nature Reserve covers an area of about 130 square kilometers and contains more than 90 extinct volcanoes together with about twenty caldera lakes (Tengchong County 1998). Most of the cones are quite small – many of them less than 150 metres high – set in rugged lava flows that have resisted cultivation, so that some areas of the reserve are relatively pristine although all parts have been logged in the past.

Big Hollow Mountain is one of the larger volcanic cones, perhaps 300 metres high, and its perfectly symmetrical cone and crater has made it an object of veneration for centuries. From a concrete expanse of five acres built as a car park for tour buses, the way to the mountain is entered via a replica of the Imperial Gate that stands in front of the Forbidden Palace in Beijing. A concrete boulevard, 50 metres wide and one

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5 Details of the two examples used in this Case 4, Tenchong Volcano Reserve and Moli Scenic Reserve, are to some extent drawn from a previously published paper on nature reserves in Yunnan Province: see Sofield & Li, 2003.
kilometre long, has been constructed from the gate to the foot of the mountain. The undulations of the lava flows have been levelled, all natural vegetation removed and replaced with flower-beds along both side of the straight boulevard. Hundreds of plastic flags are strung across the boulevard, which ends in a 2 metre-high raised oval platform about 100m in diameter at the foot of the volcano. Set in the centre of this concrete platform is a shiny ceramic black-and-white tiled mosaic of the *yin-yang* symbol that is ten metres in diameter. On either side of the platform two broad sets of concrete steps with steel handrails ascend in straight lines up the slope of the volcano, to converge at the summit. Two huge concrete platforms jut out from the steps as observation points on the ascent. A concrete path with rails has been constructed around the rim of the crater. The overall impression is of grand, linear, concrete forms visible from miles away which dominate the landscape and subjugate the volcano to human construction. The sense of wilderness and naturalness that many westerners look for is absent (Plate 5.20).

In Chinese eyes, however, this development enhances rather than detracts from our appreciation of the site. Big Hollow Mountain accurately captures all of the key points of Daoism – the regal entrance gate, the imperial way, the staircase to heaven, the *yin-yang* forces of man and nature. The plastic flags may look to western eyes like decorations for a used car sales lot, but they are in fact Buddhist prayer flags and walking beneath them to the mountain one is blessed ten thousand times as they ripple in the breeze and the prayers are wafted into the air to fall on passers-by. In effect Chinese visitors can ‘be’ the emperor as they climb the concrete steps to the summit since all the different developments combine to provide a highly visible and experiential link to invisibilities through which they can symbolically span several millennia of
PLATE 5.20
Big Hollow Mountain, Tenchong Volcano Reserve, Yunnan Province

A wide boulevard draped in flags welcomes visitors to the Mountain.

Big Hollow Mountain from a distance. The boulevard and the stairs going straight up the mountain are discernible.

From the viewing platform halfway up the mountain there is a perfect view of the yin-yang symbol at the foot of the volcano, and the landscaped boulevard to the distant car park and souvenir shops.
Chinese heritage. For Chinese, the site is rich in their culture and an illustration of ‘man in harmony with nature’. It provides an excellent example of a Chinese tourist gaze.

Tourism plans for the volcanic nature reserve announced for the five year period 2005-2009 (Meng Yongning 2005) emphasize the way in which ‘development’ is synonymous with ‘building something’ in the China of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and reinforce the differences between western and Chinese notions of ecotourism. ‘Development’ has the theme: “An outdoors sports mecca in the Nature Reserve”, and includes a racetrack (horse-racing), a golf course, hot-air ballooning, hiking (a made trail), and “new tourism products” such as a museum of vulcanology and an Omnimax theatre (Meng Yongning 2005, p.46). Our recommendations for this area (Sofield, Li & Kang 1999) included only ‘adventure trekking’ with un-made trails to take advantage of the relatively pristine wilderness area around the numerous volcanic peaks.

**Moli Scenic Reserve**

A second site provides another graphic example of the difference in approach which highlights the cultural differences between Chinese and western concepts of nature and ecotourism. This is the development of Moli Forest Scenic Reserve, famous for 2000 years in Chinese history for two interlinked features: a waterfall deep in a sub-tropical rainforest where the oxygen levels are reputed to be so high that to walk to the waterfall is believed to re-invigorate the body and turn old age back into youth; and a hot spring pool in a valley at the foot of the waterfall where an imperial princess went daily to bathe and where a Buddhist temple 1400 years old venerates the spot. For many years a
track from the Ruili River led up to the temple and hot spring pool and thence for two kilometres through the old-growth forest to the waterfall.

In May 1998 a ferry trip down the Ruili River was introduced. It includes a two-hour stop at Moli for passengers to walk to the waterfall. Some 12,000 visitors had undertaken the walk in the first 12 months, free of charge. Shortly thereafter a Taiwanese investor was granted approval to develop the site. The track from the river bank to the temple was widened and concreted for tour buses, with a huge traditional Chinese Imperial gate erected at the entrance. Two hotel complexes were constructed beside the hot spring pool and temple, both rectangular concrete blocks of no particular architectural distinction, owing nothing to their surroundings in either shape, form or colour, clad in white ceramic tiles and roofed in orange-red tiles. The stream leading to the pool was bricked and the pool itself tiled in the manner of a western, suburban, backyard swimming pool. A large restaurant-cum-karaoke hall was built opposite the temple. Five acres of forest at the entrance to the waterfall valley walk were cleared and landscaped with formal gardens, lawns, two huge aviaries and a lily pond complete with the mandatory carp and a bronzed (‘traditional’ wooden) waterwheel fountain. The aviaries were built, so the Taiwanese developer informed us, to display the birds and animals of the forest. The 2-kilometre walk to the waterfall was to be developed with concrete paths and bridges. In its post-development state, Moli Scenic Reserve is expected to attract upwards of 50,000 visitors per year, with a 20 yuan (USD$2.50) entrance fee (Plate 5.21).

When set against the western concept of ideal ecotourism, the Moli Forest development is seen as incongruous, as destructive of nature, as contradictory to wilderness
PLATE 5.21

Moli Scenic Reserve and Waterfall

Beautified entrance to the Reserve

Hotel development inside the Reserve

Moli Waterfall

Ancient Buddhist temple inside the entrance to Moli Scenic Reserve
management principles, the idea of catching forest birds and animals for the aviaries as inimical to sound conservation, the architecture of the hotels lacking empathy with their environment. However to the Chinese, the development is an excellent example of ‘man working in harmony with nature’, of ‘man improving on nature’. After all, the forests are so thick one cannot see the birds and animals and the aviaries are considered perfect for displaying them. The water of the thermal pool would often become cloudy, its bottom slimy with composting leaves and mud, and now it is filtered and clean and able to be used every day of the year. The landscaped gardens are much nicer than untidy forest growth, and the hotels and karaoke hall provide facilities previously lacking. For most Chinese the experience of a walk to the waterfall has been significantly enhanced (Sofield & Li 2003).

There are hundreds of such developments as Big Hollow Mountain and Moli Forest Scenic Reserve throughout China. Both of these are relatively small, involving capital expenditure of perhaps US$2 million. There are many much larger developments (e.g. Wudang Mountain) involving many millions of dollars.

The development of these two reserves (Tenchong and Moli) may at a philosophical level be interpreted as an engagement between Said’s Orientalism and its counterpart Westernism (Said 1978). This issue arises because of the ‘western/modern’ authority accompanying the ownership of the term ‘ecotourism’. If a development does not meet the five criteria generally accepted by western authorities as comprising ecotourism, then in their eyes it is not ecotourism. Tension between the two sets of values emerges at the significatory boundaries of culturally derived different paradigms. Cultural diversity, as revealed on the one hand in the Chinese anthropocentric approach to nature
and on the other hand in the western paradigm of ecologically sustainable development and conservation, is “an epistemological object – culture as an object of empirical knowledge - whereas cultural difference is the process of enunciation of culture as knowledgeable, authoritative ... If cultural diversity is a category of ethnology, cultural difference is a process of signification through which statements of culture or on culture differentiate, discriminate and authorize the production of fields of force, reference, applicability and capacity” (Bhabha 1994, p.34). Where cultural diversity turns into cultural difference there is a loss of meaning, and culture can emerge as problematic.

At another level, the form of development of natural resources for tourism in China introduces elements of localization versus globalization. While these two developments, Tengchong and Moli, may be seen as vehicles for modernization and thereby contributing to globalization, the specific features of the developments are distinctly Chinese, distinctly anthropocentric, and based firmly on Chinese values about nature. Tourism development inevitably means in Chinese terms the construction of something for economic gain: and the tenet of minimising human intervention/presence that underlies the western concept of ideal ecotourism, is lacking. Instead, the Chinese concept of ‘man improving on nature’ is evident in many of the activities undertaken inside the boundaries of nature reserves; and the tension between western and oriental values about ecotourism is not confined to Tenchong Big Hollow Mountain and Moli Scenic Reserve in Yunnan Province but present throughout reserves in all Provinces.

At yet another level it may be argued that the western approach to parks and nature reserves is also anthropocentric since parks and reserves are themselves cultural constructs. As Hendee et al (1990, p.28) acknowledged, “in the final analysis,
wilderness is a state of mind … defined by human perception.” However the major
differences in management and practice, where western biocentric concerns tend to
over-ride human comfort, argue the validity of drawing such a distinction between the
western and Chinese paradigms and the very different meanings attributed to the term
‘wilderness’. This is not pedantic because implementation of management policies will
in practice result in the conservation of biodiversity at the expense of human comfort in
western parks, whereas in China biodiversity and the conservation ethic is usually
subordinated to human comfort.
Case 5  Huangshan World Heritage Scenic Beauty and Historic Nature Reserve

Anthropocentric and Anthropomorphic Characteristics: Invisibilities of a Chinese Tourist Gaze

There is no mountain as beautiful as Mt. Huangshan,
No other mountain under heaven do I want to see after visiting Mt. Huangshan
(Xiu Xiake, Ming dynasty geographer, 1586-1641A.D.)

Throughout China, natural sites are richly endowed with cultural characteristics and these may be anthropocentric (catering to human interests) and/or anthropomorphic (imbuing nature with human characteristics). Both of these features (anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism) are deeply embedded in Chinese values and when a tourism site is developed, Chinese common knowledge will reveal a host of aspects that are invisible to a non-Chinese gaze.

The 72 peaks that form the world heritage listed reserve of Huangshan (Yellow Mountain) in Anhui Province provide an extraordinarily complex tapestry of anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism, and only a few of its many such attributes will be outlined here. It was first inscribed for its biodiversity and subsequently for its cultural heritage. For Chinese, whether they reside in China itself or are part of the Chinese global Diaspora, Huangshan’s fame is perhaps greater than that of any other range. More than 20,000 poems and 200 essays have been written about Huangshan over the centuries, many of them incorporated into Chinese ‘common knowledge’ and known to Chinese all over the world (e.g. Xu Xiake’s lines above). By the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368A.D.) 64 temples and many pavilions had been constructed around the peaks of this 154 square kilometre area. More were subsequently built, e.g. Fahai
Meditation Temple and Wenshu Temple in the 17th century, connected by steps cut into the mountain (PRC 1989). Although only 20 temples now survive they form a focal point for many Chinese visitors to Huangshan. Ancient - and new - calligraphy adorns many rocks and cliff faces. Hundreds of paintings of Huangshan have also been created, and they capture for Chinese the quintessential mountain landscape - sharp peaks, deep gorges, swiftly flowing streams and waterfalls and contorted pines clinging to precipitous cliffs, with a pagoda or temple sited in the landscape according to feng shui principles.

To see the sites of Huangshan, three cable cars have been constructed to take visitors to the peaks, one of them at 7 kilometres the longest in China. Many kilometres of stairs and paths have been constructed all over the mountains, with about 30 pavilions and kiosks located at frequent intervals. Restaurants and hotels (more than 3000 beds) have been built deep inside the peaks in high alpine valleys. Two alpine streams have been dammed to provide water for these facilities. They are all functional elements that enhance the experience of a visit to Huangshan for Chinese travellers. The landscape is thus heavily anthropocentric (Plate 5.22).

In terms of anthropomorphism, the trees and boulders of Huangshan provide many examples. Huangshan’s pine trees are one of its most famous signifiers. More than 100 specimens of Pinus huangshanensis are legendary and “celebrated on account of their age, grotesque shape, or precipitously perched position and bear special names” (PRC 1989). These include “Two Lovers Embracing” (two pines with intertwined trunks) and “Welcoming Guests Pine” (so named because its branches open out like the arms of a host gesturing to visitors to enter his/her house). Such anthropomorphizing is regarded
PLATE 5.22  Anthropocentrism before Conservation: Tourist Facilities at Huangshan

An ‘urban street’ of restaurants and shops in a high alpine valley deep inside the Huangshan Reserve

Souvenir kiosk (above). Stairway (below).

Cable car, Huangshan

Hotels have been built inside the high alpine valley known as the West Sea of Clouds
as inappropriate in western scientific texts and would probably not form part of a submission to the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) seeking world heritage site listing for biodiversity, but it is entirely acceptable in a Chinese context. The ‘Welcoming Guests’ pine tree is used as the symbol for the Anhui Province Tourism Bureau, and a painting of the tree hangs in the Great Hall of the People in Tiananmen Square, Beijing. When Richard Nixon was received as the first US President to visit Communist China in 1972 he was symbolically received by Zhou En Lai in front of this painting. The anthropomorphism of this pine tree is entrenched through its role as a signifier of Chinese hospitality for welcoming guests from all over the world (Plate 5.23).

While the Huangshan pine is of intrinsic botanical interest to western science because of its endemism, its significance for Chinese visitors to Huangshan lies in cultural attributes and many of the trees are so well known from literary references that they form ‘must-see’ sights. The pine survives on precipitous cliff faces at high altitudes, its roots often twice the length of its trunk, buffeted by strong winds and heavy mantles of snow and ice in winter. It has been immortalized as ‘tenacious’, ‘strong’, ‘steadfast’, ‘resolute’, ‘brave’, ‘confronting and overcoming adversity’ – human sentiments all, with the pines thus anthropomorphized in an anthropocentric landscape (Plate 5.23).

Boulders and other geological phenomena have been similarly anthropomorphized. In outlining the geology of Huangshan and noting the presence of numerous ‘erratics’ (a technical term for boulders which have weathered differentially and perch atop mother lodes), the Chinese submission to UNESCO stated that: “Many of these grotesquely-shaped rocks are individually named, such as "Pig-headed monk eating a water melon", 


such names having ancient literary, historical or mythical significance” (PRC 1989). Another erratic is called “Immortal pointing the way ahead”. An isolated porphyry column with a pine tree emerging from its tip – one of the famous geological features of Huangshan – is named “A-Flower-Growing-from-the-Tip-of-a-Calligraphy-Brush-as-Seen-in-a-Dream Peak 梦笔生花”. For Chinese visitors it is a compulsory sight, a pilgrimage to a site associated with one of China’s most famous poets, Li Bai (701-762 A.D.), whose personal calligraphy also adorns other sites around Huangshan. (After approximately 13 centuries, this tree died some time in the 1990’s and has been replaced with an artificial plastic tree while the Reserve management attempts to transplant a replacement – Plate 5.23.)

In examining (and photographing) the calligraphy of Huangshan, Chinese visitors are able to ‘see’ that some of the calligraphy adorning the cliffs of Huangshan is inscribed in the ‘strong, steadfast’ Ouyang Xun style. As noted in Chapter Two, this Tang dynasty calligrapher’s writings and his character are both infused with sentiments such as ‘strong’, ‘tightly structured’, and ‘as steadfast as the lone pine tree clinging to a high mountain cliff buffeted by winds and storms’ (Fan Yunkuan 1996). Chinese visitors to Huangshan will appreciate the appropriateness of Ouyang Xun style engravings in such a setting, making the association between the calligrapher and the pine tree in a fusion of history, psychology, botany and literary art. They ‘see’ a profound cultural element of Huangshan in a botanical species that is invisible to non-Chinese and that this is appropriate because the attributes of the calligrapher who inspired this style are themselves reflections of the characteristics ascribed to the Huangshan pines. There is no interpretation of this phenomenon provided for visitors to Huangshan because the
Ouyang Xun style is one of the three main Tang dynasty styles on which the art of
Chinese couples purchase two locks, entwine them, hang them on chains, and hurl the keys into the abyss as a sign of their everlasting love.

Huangshan’s pines are ‘steadfast’, ‘brave’, ‘resolute’ and ‘tenacious’.
Chinese calligraphy is based, and in learning how to write the characters of the Chinese language all literate Chinese are familiar with it, so it is part of Chinese ‘common knowledge’. Yet for many western visitors to Huangshan such detail, full of meaning in a cultural context, would prove of real interest.

The invisibilities to an educated Chinese will be much deeper even than this since Huanghsan’s sites/sights also evoke familiarities of poems and poets, of warriors and emperors, of fung shui, of Daoism and Buddhism and Confucian ideals, all inextricably linked through the sociolinguistics of Chinese and correlative and relational thinking processes. And this gaze is in contrast to the gaze of western tourists visiting the scenically spectacular mountains. To illustrate the different expectations engendered by culturally determined values, we need look no further than the IUCN which determined China’s application of Huangshan for World Heritage Site listing. Its approval was based on the biodiversity of the mountain range – 1450 native plant species, 28 significant endemic plants, and 300 vertebrates (PRC 1989). Until recently there was little signage around the mountain other than directional signs devoid of interpretation. But in response to urgings from the Bureau of the World Heritage Commission that the significance of Huangshan’s natural heritage be communicated to visitors (1998 report from the Kyoto meeting of the Bureau) there are now about 40 metal plaques located at key points around the reserve. Interestingly, much of this signage amalgamates both western scientific technicalities (the prevailing culture of the IUCN) and Chinese cultural values. As just one example, the interpretation plaque at Xihaimen (West Sea Gate) lookout has its first two sentences utilising technical terms to describe the geological formations and processes, with the remainder of the information referencing
a range of Chinese-specific myths, legends and classical tales. The Chinese characters are followed by this English language translation:

Xihaimen is the most profound and beautiful part of the Huangshan Scenic Spot [Reserve]. A blaze of multifarious colours of medium-to-fine-grained porphyritic granite bodies, and densely distributed vertical and horizontal joints add much to the high and steep granite peaks as well as interesting and odd stones, from which countless fairy stories and sayings are handed down. The NW-SE-trending fault zone cuts into granite bodies, thus forming a quiet, deep and precipitous dreamland in the Xihai (West Sea) Canyon. Stones scenes gather together before Paiyunting (Clouds Overwhelming Temple), such as An Immortal Airing His Boots, Wu Song’s Fighting Tiger, Memorial Archway Stone in the near [foreground], Immortals Walking on Stilts [a line of ascending pinnacles], Female Immortals Embroidering, Heaven Dog’s Watching Moon [Rock], King Wen Pulling a Wagon, etc. in the far [distance]. (Plate 5.24)

As with most other signage in Huangshan, the information relies upon Chinese common knowledge to deliver understanding and recognition of the significance and symbolism that is captured in the scenery before them. But this information requires lengthy interpretation if it is to be comprehensible to non-Chinese visitors. For example, the very name of the lookout is puzzling: what is this West Sea several hundreds of kilometres inland, high up in a mountain range with no lake in sight? The answer lies in classical literature when an early visitor to Huangshan climbed to its highest peaks and looked down on alpine valleys filled with surging clouds. This scene has been immortalized in numerous poems about Huangshan’s West (and North) Sea of Clouds.

Other references similarly rely upon Chinese common knowledge to make sense. ‘Immortals’ in Chinese culture are integral to Daoist belief. As outlined in Chapter Three and Chapter Six they dwell in mountains, and caves (the Daoist ‘passage-way to Heaven’) are often their abode. Evidence of the presence of immortals in mountains thus abounds and Huangshan is no exception as this example demonstrates. The reference to Emperor Wen also links Immortals to Confucian philosophy. In the famous
“Analects” Confucius discussed the meaning of an ancient story in which Wen pulled the cart of an Immortal for 800 steps before stopping, exhausted. As a result the Immortal blessed his descendents with 800 years of unbroken rule. The reference to Wu Song fighting a tiger is taken from two of China’s most famous classics, “Outlaws of the Marsh” (Shi Nai’an & Luo Guanzhong, circa 1350 A.D.) and “The Plum in the Golden Vase” (anonymous, circa 1618 A.D.). Every educated ten-year old Chinese knows that the character Wu Song personifies manly strength because he killed an attacking tiger with his bare hands.

During a field trip to Huangshan in 2004 to prepare a new tourism master plan for the region it was noticeable that perhaps less than 5% of the Chinese visitors to the mountains actually stopped to read the newly installed plaques. Questioning revealed that on the one hand they were on a pilgrimage to validate their knowledge of ancient cultural heritage (Petersen 1995) and were not interested in the scientific information (consistent with the view that such interpretation is akin to ‘going back to school’ rather than being recreational); and on the other hand the references to Chinese culture were superfluous. These observations reinforce the conclusion that for Chinese visitors Huangshan is a cultural landscape before it is a natural landscape even if WHS listing favours the biological over the cultural. They are there to view the beauty of the physical features and forests but they ‘gaze’ at them through the cultural lens of shan shui, denying the validity of the IUCN’s attempt at a scientific imprimatur. The new signs may be appropriate for the few western tourists to Huangshan, for whose gaze they may provide a richer understanding of the place; but it is shallow compared to the invisibles that crowd one upon the other in their hundreds for Chinese viewers.
Signage around Huangshan

Plaque at Xihaimen (West Sea Gate).

Wonderful Ridges and Peaks

Xihaimen (West Sea Gate) is the most profound and beautiful part of the Huangshan Scenic Spot. A blaze of multicolor colors of medium–fine–grained porphyry granite bodies vertically distributed vertically and horizontal joints add much to the high and steep granite peaks, with an interesting and odd stones from which countless fairy stories and sayings are handed down. The NE-SW trending fault zone cuts into granite bodies, thus forming a quiet, deep and precipitous dreamland in the Xihai West Sea Tunnel. Nine peaks scoot together before Polyeasting Immortal Humming Wind Temple, such as Immortal’s Airing His Shoes, Immortal’s Airing His Shoes, Immortal’s Airing His Shoes, Immortal’s Airing His Shoes, Immortal’s Airing His Shoes, immortality’s capriciousness at the near-immortal’s walking on stilts, female immortal’s embroidery: Heaven Dog’s watching moon, king west’s pulling a wagon, etc. in the area.
CHAPTER SIX
THE WORLD OF CHINA’S CAVES

“Here is the monkey king fighting the dragon king of the East Sea! And look! Over there! See the three Immortals waging bets on who will win the battle!”
Guide, Changsheng Cave, Hubei (7 April 2001)

Introduction

In China, wherever there are mountains, there are almost always caves. Like mountains, caves are one of the most popular tourist attractions in China today. The surface area of limestone and dolomite outcrops in mountainous China totals 1.3 million square kilometres, one seventh of the total area. Sufficient rainfall and warm humid climate provide the right condition for karst landscape development. The processes of water corrosion and precipitation have formed numerous karst caves with all shapes of stalagmites, stalactites and pillars. Thus China is called the “kingdom of karst caves” with several hundred thousand caves scattered around the country (Yu Jinbiao 1994).

Historical records and ancient literature show that karst caves have long been used for all sorts of purposes, including leisure. Following the Open Door policy on tourism, more than 200 karst caves have been developed for modern tourism (Yu Jinbiao 1994).

Visitation to caves has a history dating back at least 4000 years but the current patterns of visitation involving mass tourism are less than 25 years old. Originally caves functioned mainly as sites of Daoist or Buddhist temples, or the abode of monks and sages, attributed with being special mystical places that attracted the attention of philosophers, poets, mandarins, authors and others for centuries. As noted in Chapter Four, in Daoist canons ‘dong’ (cave) means ‘tong’ (passage [to heaven]) and there were ‘thirty-six cave heavens’ (dong tian) located around the country (Xie 1988). By cave-
dwelling and practising Daoism it was believed that one could attain immortality. Cave visitation in the form of worship and pilgrimage, or spiritual places of refuge, or because of their mystical beauty combined with supernatural occurrences, are recurring themes in China’s literary and cultural heritage. The classic novel, ‘Journey to the West’, has much of its action centred on or around caves. Even those caves that were not transformed into temples were invested with religious and mythical qualities and characteristics – they were ‘bie you dong tian’ 別有洞天, ‘an altogether different world’, ‘Heaven’, ‘Hell’, ‘the celestial world of the Immortals’, and so forth – and so attracted people to visit and view their distinctiveness. However, from 1949 when Mao Zedong gained control of China until his death in 1976 religions in China were suppressed, pilgrimage travel virtually ceased, and tourism was not an approved form of national economic development for the central command economy. During the Cultural Revolution enormous damage was inflicted on most cultural heritage sites, including Daoist and Buddhist caves.

After the death of Mao in 1976 the Government introduced its ‘freedom of religion’ legislation and some minor pilgrimage travel re-commenced. Deng Xiaoping then introduced his ‘Open Door’ policies in 1978 which included among other things embracing both domestic and international tourism and shortly thereafter tourism as a tool for modernization and economic growth. For the first time caves, particularly karst (limestone) cave systems, were perceived as a resource for touristic development and they thus assumed a new function, that of an attraction for tourism. With huge areas of karst country where caves were numerous, many opportunities were available and from 1982 hundreds of millions of yuan were expended in opening them up for recreational visitation (Yu Jinbiao 1994). In the first decade after Mao’s death when relatively few
karst caves were accessible to tourists such cave sites hosted more than one million visitors each year. For example, one of the first to be developed, Yaolin cave in Zhejiang Province, hosted 5.6 million visitors in its first five years of operation (1983-1987), peaking at 1,266,419 in 1984. Its numbers decreased in the late 1990s to about 450,000 p.a. currently as it faces competition from more than 170 karst cave sites around China (Yaolin Wonderland Management Director, Mr. Wang Laihong, personal communications, September 1998). In 1993 Ling Xiao and Jade River caves in western Guangdong Province hosted more than 1.2 million visitors (Li & Sofield 1994). Famous Buddhist and Daoist cave temples may also receive more than one million visitors per year, much of it from revitalized pilgrimage travel e.g. the Daoist cave temples of Wudangshan; the Buddhist Mogao grottoes at Dahuang; Putuo Island Goddess of Mercy temple complex, the site of the Guanyin annual pilgrimage; and Qiyunshan Daoist temples, Anhui Province. Perhaps more so than any other form of contemporary tourism development in China, caves encapsulate the differences between Chinese anthropocentric values and western concerns with biocentrism in the management practices of caves for visitation. Those differences are stark.

**Western Biocentric Cave Development**

In the west, a biocentric approach as outlined in Chapter Three is the dominant paradigm: most caves are managed from a biocentric perspective and the conservation of their fragile habitats and the needs of the modified life forms that inhabit them, such as glow worms, bats, blind albino insects, transparent fish, fungi and mosses, will determine the parameters of what is and is not acceptable for human visitation. A number of countries have developed comprehensive guidelines for biocentrically oriented management of caves. For example, the US Forest Service regulations for
implementation of the Federal Cave Resource Protection Act (1994) determine management practices for caves in the United States (Stitt 1994). In 2003 New Zealand produced a comprehensive handbook on the sustainable management of natural assets used for tourism, which incorporated a detailed section on management guidelines, indicators and monitoring of tourism visitation for caves (Hughey & Ward 2003), and the Waitomo Caves complex operates under a Scientific Advisory Group to ensure that environmental best practice standards are maintained for its glow worm populations. The general principle is that recreational use of caves will be guided to the degree that visitation does not impact adversely upon the environment, both living and geological (Gillieson 1996).

Lighting in caves that are managed under a biocentric philosophy will be designed to be as natural as possible (no brightly coloured lights) to minimise disturbance to the specialised life forms that have adapted to the low light of caves. Flash photography may also be banned, especially if there is wildlife sensitive to light. Similarly noise levels may be monitored in some caves. Visitation will be restricted, perhaps even banned, during periods of sensitivity (e.g. breeding seasons). It is standard practice in many cave complexes to keep some caverns completely closed from visitation so that they remain in their pristine state. Other management regimes may restrict some caverns for scientific investigation only. Examples of such conservation and protection management regimes include the Undara lava tubes in outback Queensland and the Waitomo Caves in New Zealand as mentioned above. At Undara, the lava tubes are closed for 10 weeks each year during the bat breeding season (field visits 1995) (Plate 6.1). With reference to Waitomo, visitors to the glow-worm caverns are very strictly monitored and controlled to mitigate impacts. No flash photography is allowed and
noise must be minimized. Humidity and temperature are constantly monitored and if
there is any deviation from scientifically determined levels then visitation will be halted
until conditions are stabilized (Doorne 2000; Pavlovich & Kearins 2004). In the early
1990s the caves were in fact closed for some time to allow the glow-worm population to
recover from a tourism-induced population crash while new scientific investigation was
undertaken to determine the optimum conditions for the glow worms and consequential
acceptable limits of visitation (Plate 6.1).

Under a biocentric management regime, a ‘no touch’ policy is usually implemented in
order to protect and conserve delicate decorations. Any disturbance of the natural
environment will be kept to an absolute minimum so that the installation of paths, stairs
and lighting systems will be designed to avoid destruction of any kind. If it is not
possible to construct a path which would take visitors close to particular formations or
provide the best possible vantage for viewing parts of a cave without some intrusive
intervention or destruction then the interests of the visitor will be subordinated to
maintaining the ecological integrity of the cave and no path will be constructed. For
example, helictites (sideways ‘growing’ stalactites) are very delicate and in Buchan
Caves, South Australia, tourists are kept well away (field visit, January 2001) (Plate 6.1).

Interpretation will tend to be scientific, based on explaining the geology of the caves
and the chemical processes leading to different formations, and the ecology of the
highly specialised habitats and lifecycles of the various organisms that live in the
particular habitats of an underground environment (Gillieson 1996, Ham 1992). This
approach is based on principles for interpretation of natural heritage first set by Freeman
Tilden in 1957 (p.2) as: “An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and
PLATE 6.1

Undara Lava Tubes, north Queensland. Because of the sensitivity of breeding bats to human intrusion the caves complex is closed to all visitation for ten weeks each year.

The Waitomo caves, North Island, New Zealand, were closed for some time to allow the glow worm population to recover from a tourism-induced population crash (Doorne 2000; Pavlovich & Kearins 2004).

Helectites in the Buchan Caves, South Australia, are fragile and the boardwalk is sited so that they are well out of the reach of any inquisitive visitor.
relationships” where themes and ideas are supported by facts and figures to illustrate or clarify points. Education is the principle objective. Making a presentation interesting is obviously necessary to achieve the best educational outcome but *entertainment* is not the primary objective *per se*. Westerners in general terms will visit caves for their intrinsic natural properties and they expect to see (beautiful, spectacular) natural decorations as the central attraction.

**Chinese Cave Tourism Development - ‘An Altogether Different World’**

In China, caves are cultural not natural sites. In opening them for tourism, the long heritage of caves as cultural sites is the foundation upon which their development is based. And since humans and nature are indivisible, human intervention is normal – indeed expected, because Nature is imperfect and in order to view caves they must be improved. Interpretation in the western sense is not generally present, at least for Chinese visitors: caves are sites for amusement and entertainment, for fun and games not education. (Daoism advocates enjoyment in living, and the seeking of eternal happiness in one’s existence on earth). At one Australian cave site, Margaret River, a group of Chinese visitors I was observing left after only five minutes, disgruntled by the interpretation and exclaiming loudly (in Chinese) that they were on holiday and expected to be entertained not to have to go back to school!

I wish to explore the phenomenon of the development of caves for tourism in China and present the difference to western readers by describing in nine vignettes some of the experiences that confront visitors. These vignettes are extracts from my field notes of visits made to more than 20 caves in different parts of China (Appendix One provides a
Even caves which are geographically widely separated or developed in different eras reflect the same fundamental approach to their development, utilising Chinese common knowledge as the major mechanism for their presentation. The first vignette is lengthy because it captures many aspects that are common to caves all over China. Subsequent vignettes are much shorter. Each vignette has been selected to illustrate a different aspect of Chinese common knowledge and together they will provide the basis for an analysis of the various forces which shape the tourism development of caves in China. I have used a writing script to demarcate the journal extracts from the general text of this thesis.

**Vignette One**

*Yaolin Cave*

Zhejiang Province

Sunday 6 September 1998

**Extract**

Off we went, about 60 of us, walking through a tunnel passage lit up by white, purple, green ... neon light! The passage was originally a natural cleft, part of the limestone cave, however most of the Karst decorations had been removed (we could see where they had been broken off), the sides walled up, and its floor was reinforced concrete (Plate 6.2).

**PLATE 6.2**

Entrance tunnel to Yaolin Wonderland (Source: Dong 2004)
After walking about 30 metres, we entered the first cavern. The guide used an amplifier because there were so many people in the group and quietness was no part of the tour. It was physically similar to Karst caverns I had visited before (in China and Australia). It was about 25m in height full of karst decorations - stalactites, stalagmites and pillars etc. However, it was different from the Australian caves in that the formations really were 'decorated' - lit up by neon lights with various colours. The guide controlled banks of coloured lights to vary the scene. We were greeted by two decorations called the elephant and the lion welcoming guests to their special world (Plate 6.3). Other decorations were labelled with culturally significant names or scenes from folklore e.g. "The Heavenly Pool", and "The Performing Arena in the Palace in the Moon" (guang han wu tai). Below one set of pillars a photographic stall had been set up and for 15 yuan the setting was floodlit and you could have your photograph taken sitting on a flow-stone called 'The Dragon's (Emperor's) Throne'. The content of the guide’s talk was based on characters in Chinese folklore such as the 'Journey to the West' and its legendary figures e.g. the Monkey King, the Devil Ox King, the Ugly Pig, the Emperor and the Empress of the Heaven. The medium of interpretation was Putonghua (mandarin) even though there were at least one Caucasian and one Japanese visitor, neither of whom understood Putonghua.

The second cavern was reached through a tunnel that had been artificially widened and heightened. Here, the guide flicked more coloured lights off and on and she was a little more interactive, asking the visitors to identify certain formations like the Immortal Peach, and the Eight Immortals at a banquet. There was another ‘photo opportunity’ stall (Plate 6.4) with its own bank of floodlights ready to focus on another quite impressive set of stalagmites and stalactites should someone want their photograph taken among them. (Some of my group did). There was also a small rest place with a stall selling drinks.

When the guide led us to the 3rd cavern, she said the essence of Yaolin was in this cavern - the `33 levels of Heaven’ - a huge limestone formation that extended from the floor to the ceiling that showed 33 different layers of precipitation of CaCO3. It was a very impressive formation and the colourful neon lighting had created the aura of 'fairyland' in the context of 'an altogether different world' (Plate 6.4.) However,
Yaolin brochure depicting its geological emblem called Jade Pillar. The inscription to the left was written by a Song Dynasty poet (circa 1000 A.D.) extolling the wonders of the cave in terms of representing the hidden entrance to ‘the Land of Peach Blossoms’ (referred to in Chapter 4). This is a 400 A.D. Chinese version of ‘Shangri-la’, a hidden valley to which a group of people have retreated to lead an idyllic existence safe from the constant warfare around them at the time. The poem was inscribed on the wall of the cave at the time it was developed for contemporary tourism, in 1982.

Welcoming Lion, first cavern, Yaolin

‘Fairyland’ – first cavern, Yaolin
PLATE 6.4

Yaolin column – the ’33 levels of Heaven’

Photo opportunity with a range of traditional costumes to choose from.
there was no geological information involved in her interpretation. At one stage I thought she was going to give some information of karst decoration: At the 'Waterfall plunging down from the Milky Way', she said: "How is this waterfall formed? There is a crack at the top of the cavern. The water has seeped through the crack (the Milky Way) and flows down" (the waterfall-like rock formation). [This was the only factual information/semi-scientific explanation during the whole visit.]

Leaving the viewing point of the 33rd Level of the Heaven, the guide took us to a very big, brightly lit raised concrete platform (still in the 3rd cavern) on which at least 100-150 people could stand. There were four souvenir stalls and another one selling drinks and snacks. Quite a few concrete benches were placed around to sit on. There was a photo stand, too, the third one in the Cave so far. The guide encouraged us to take a rest, a standard ploy in caves all around China to give the stall operators more time to entice you to buy their souvenirs. The stall operators started trying to attract business. It was quite noisy and my group had already scattered. Then the guide turned up her amplifier, (adding to the noise levels which were already high), summarized what we had gone through in the Cave and advised us that her guiding would end at this point. She gave a few instructions for us to self-walk through the last four caverns and left. Not until then were we aware that the guide would not escort us right through the cave system.

A path along a tunnel that is entirely artificial and lit with neon lights led to the fourth cavern. This cavern – and the next three - were absent of virtually all of their geological decorations but had been filled with artificial attractions - 19 depictions of famous scenes or sites from Chinese history and folklore. I guessed the guide left because there were no more natural attractions for her to present. Although subsequently I asked the Management about the absence of geological decorations in the last four caverns I did not get a clear answer. The Manager said that it was necessary to install artificial attractions to ensure that customers got their money's worth and the caverns were a good place to set them up. I suspect that although there may not have been many decorations originally, those that were there would have been removed and sold as souvenirs at the stalls and the town market. (You could buy big and small stalactites and stalagmites, rock crystals and other interestingly shaped
karst decorations). Basically while the caverns were part of the cave complex inside the mountain, they were little more than giant rooms.

The first artificial attraction is a mock-up of the entrance to 'Heaven'. It is an elaborate structure with three bridges constructed over an artificial pool leading to a brightly lit Imperial Gateway modeled on the entrance archway to the Forbidden Palace in Beijing. The Chinese characters on top of the gate read: "The World of Celestial Immortals". Traditionally the three bridges represent Longevity, Prosperity and Happiness and you choose which one you want to pass over. The whole setting was in full technicolour, with the traditional costumes of the Emperor and Empress ready for tourists to slip into for a photo opportunity! Visitors were queuing to pay their 15 yuan for a Polaroid 'moment of glory', positioned between two massive karst columns (about the only surviving decorations in the whole cavern) (Plate 6.5).

Passing the Imperial Gateway there was a tall Goddess of Mercy statue with its eyes blinking once every ten seconds (electronically controlled). Most visitors were caught by surprise with the unexpected eye movement of the statue. There was an altar in front of the statue, and somebody had placed a small offering bowl at the feet of the statue. Some of my group members put money in when they were passing by (Plate 6.6).

Further along we faced a fork in the path. There was no signage - in either Chinese or English - to advise visitors which way to go. One way led upwards about 50 metres by a series of dimly lit stairs to a barely discernible opening over the 'wall' formed by the collapse of the roof a long time ago, and thence presumably into the next cavern. The other led downhill to a landing by an underground river with boat operators trying to persuade visitors to take the boat to the next cavern (Plate 6.6). They were saying (in Chinese of course) that it would take more than one hour to go through the old uphill route which was without lighting, but it would only take 15 minutes by boat. It costs 2 yuan for the boat ride. I took the boat.

The 'underground river' was in fact completely artificial, only about five years old and part of the development of the cave. The surrounding banks of the stream were decorated like the 'Garden of Eden' with a plastic model of a nude life-size female
The World of Celestial Immortals is entered by the three bridges representing Longevity, Prosperity and Happiness. The visitor can then dress up in the emperor’s robes or the imperial gown of the empress for an instant photo.
Yaolin’s Fourth Cavern

Entrance to the Yaolin’s ‘tian’ (Heaven), in the fourth cavern. The characters in blue read: ‘The Immortal Crossing’. Note the highly polished concrete floor, pot plants and formal suits.

A ‘garden’ inside the cave featuring the mythical goddess, Nuwa. Note the complete absence of all interpretation.
Chinese version of `Eve' (Nuwa), plastic trees, life-size plastic animals and artificial bird singing synchronized with the operation of colourful lights. Legend has it that Nuwa was a goddess who created human beings and patched with stone blocks the holes in the sky made by Gonggong, the Spirit of Water, in a conflict with Zhuanxu, the Spirit of Fire. Chinese know this story well from their schooling (Plate 6.6).

Each boat took six passengers and a boatman. It took less than two minutes to ride through the 75m long `river'. Once I got ashore, I looked back up the slope and estimated that the old route would have taken only 3 minutes!!! As we entered the fifth cavern I was overwhelmed by more artificial attractions. They included dioramas of life size figures. The first one is of the Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea (without riding on their normal vehicle - a cloud). [The meaning to Chinese visitors is immediately clear because there is a set of folk stories known to virtually all Chinese about how the Immortals use their different forms of power/emblems/ trickery to compete with each other to the best of their ability. Each Immortal has a different form of power/emblems/ trickery and in this case they use those powers to cross the sea without getting wet. While non-Chinese would probably be bemused by this display, which has a label but no story, it is instantly recognizable to all Chinese and forms a significant component of cultural journeying.]

The second attraction was an interactive display of a Daoist version of the beginning of the universe (a deity called Pan Gu separated heaven and earth). If a coin was thrown into a crack in the display which represented the crack in the universe that Pan Gu used to separate the two worlds, there would be thunder and lightning (provided by a laser sound-and-light system) and the universe would open. Again there was a label but no interpretation for non-Chinese visitors.

Then came:
✧ Seven fairy maidens (understood by Chinese to mean 'daughters of the emperor') having a bath in the heavenly pool/river (i.e. understood by Chinese to mean the Milky Way).
✧ The Princess of Iron Fan (the wife of the Devil Ox King) - connotation: woman with bad temper.
- Cave of Waterfall at the Hill of Flowers and Fruits (the residency of the Monkey King)
  - connotation: plenty of food and abundance of water for the monkeys. There was another photo stand and the display was lit up when visitors passed by in order to attract business.

- Banquet of Peaches of Immortality (Pantao). Immortals are invited to a banquet to celebrate the birthday of the Empress of Heaven (Queen Mother of the West). The Peaches of Immortality which are served in the banquet take one thousand years to ripen.

- Two Saints of Chess in competition - connotation: fortitude on display. Somebody had lit an incense stick and put an offering of money at the feet of the two statues (Plate 6.7).

PLATE 6.7

Two Immortals locked in a 3-year long chess battle. A small offering box is placed in front of the depiction.

All of these characters/depictions belong in caves and present no question of incongruity to Chinese eyes, although my observations of western visitors suggested they had difficulties with such displays.

I moved into the 6th cavern and was confronted with more artificial attractions:

- Chang’e fleeing to the Moon. She is the Chinese moon goddess "who in mortal life stole the herb of immortality" from her husband "and fled to the moon, where she became immortal but was cloistered forever" (Beijing Foreign Language University 1995)
✧ Hou’i shooting the suns. He is the husband of Chang’è. Once upon a time, there were ten suns in the sky which made the earth burning hot. Hou’i shot nine of them and gave the earth relief.

✧ Jiutian Xuannu 九天玄女 Jiù tiān - the highest heavens, Xuannu - Goddess of war and fertility)

✧ Laojun kai lu - God of medicine/herbs - opening the furnace. Lao Tzu is regarded as the founder of the Daoist religion and also the god of medicine/herbs. Sun Wukong, the Monkey King had offended Laojun for misbehaving himself during the banquet of peaches of immortality. Lao Tzu threw him into a furnace for punishment. After 49 days he opened the furnace believing that the Monkey King had been smelted down into a pellet. Unexpectedly, out came the Monkey King without any harm but a pair of refined eyes with which he could see in the dark and thousands of miles away.

✧ Yaolin Dragon Den (longxue). The display is of three 6mX3m long dragons, a spectacular light show with flashing coloured lights ‘running’ up and down the length of the roaring mythical animals. Also another photo stand there. I was told two stories about the dragons by two different dragon ‘minders’. The first one (I think) is a very recent folklore/legend tailor-made for Yaolin Karst Cave. It described that while the Immortals were happily living in the Heaven, they discovered a place on Earth which was as good as the Heaven. They made a cave and lived there - it is Yaolin Cave! The second one is that five days after Nezha, a divine warrior (a character in ‘The Investiture of the Gods’) was born, he had a bath in the East Sea and offended the Dragon King. There was a battle between them (Plate 6.8). Finally Nezha killed the Dragon King’s nine sons.

After passing this display I entered the 7th cavern, where some more artificial attractions were waiting!

✧ The Buddha’s Four Warrior Attendants (Jingang)- One of their duties was to maintain favourable weather in order to bring good harvests and ensure that the elements were propitious, that the country prospered and that the people were at peace.
Yaolin’s Sixth and Seventh Caverns

The dragons of Yaolin

Peacock constructed of small porcelain bowls, Chinese spoons and plates.

*Milu* (deer sacred to emperors) made of beads and polished stones.
The God of Wealth (Wu Lu Caishen) This is an interactive display. By putting some coins in a slot, the God would tell you from which direction your wealth would come. Somebody had put up a small shrine with burning incense and money.

Huangdi - One of the Five Lords (Legendary rulers of remote antiquity) The display indicated that he is a god but came down to earth to govern the people. Legend has him as the 'father' of the yellow race - Chinese. There was another photo stand here. [The same Emperor Huangdi referred to in Chapter Five.]

From here I arrived at the last rest platform and the exit of the Cave. When I arrived, the exit was closed. We were asked to take a rest and to wait for a few minutes before the staff opened the gate for us. There were souvenir and drinks stalls on the platform and I realized that the closed gate was a device to try to sell more items to visitors as the vendors hassled us. A 2mX4m peacock made with blue and white Chinese porcelain dinner sets (spoons, plates, bowls) and a milu (a deer sacred to emperors) made of beads and polished stones were on display (Plate 6.8).

A long, steep staircase (181 steps) led upward to the exit of the Cave. At the top there was a platform at which visitors emerged from the cave about the mid-level of the mountain, and I appreciated the bench on the platform because I really needed the rest! There more souvenir and drinks stands and two coin-operated shoe polishing machines. A small train took us downhill and again the stall holders hassled us while we waited (the train ride was included in the entrance fee). The train journey is only 660m long (the staff said it is the shortest train journey in the world) and from the windows I was able to see the farmlands and settlements down below.

After getting off the train, the only path is one leading down the precipitous slope to a wax museum called 'The 36 Stratagems' (Sanshiliu Ji) which takes its name from the famous ancient military classic "Secret Art of War: The 36 Stratagems"\(^1\). There were thus 36 displays (three dimensional life-size dioramas), each one illustrating an

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\(^1\) Some 400 years ago, towards the end of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644A.D.) an unknown writer published "Secret Art of War: The 36 Stratagems" writing down for the first time war stratagems which first appeared in the official history of Southern Qi about 1500 years ago. It is a military classic of ancient China and has its emphasis on deception as military art.
example of the way in which a stratagem was applied on how to win a battle or political conflict. Some of the dioramas utilized the original military incidents used in the classic to illustrate the stratagems, others are drawn from famous events in history, yet others are based on fictional events from literature, and some are drawn from folklore (Plate 6.9). The name of each stratagem and a brief outline of the example were written in Chinese on a board placed around the diorama. Virtually every Chinese is familiar with most of the stratagems, and will know about the events depicted in the wax museum because of their renown even if they do not know all the details. There was no local guide in the wax museum. I was viewing the displays at my own pace. The same question bothered me: How would non-Chinese visitors understand the displays? Even if there was another language (e.g. English) used in the displays, how could a non-Chinese absorb so much in such a short time?

The displays are housed in a series of galleries built in the style of a traditional 16th century mandarin’s residence, so the wax museum also combines some of China’s ancient architectural heritage. There are covered corridors linking up each building.

The only exit from the wax museum leads visitors further down the mountain to a walled penjing garden, better known as Bonsai after the Japanese who imported the skill from China - water and mountain artfully put together in miniaturized landscapes with miniaturized trees. About 20 big penjing landscapes plus over 50 smaller ones were displayed (Plate 6.9). The colour and the mineral patterns of the stone panels resembled some of the famous shan shui (mountain and water) scenery e.g. Huangshan Penjing displays are very abstract and replete with symbolism drawing upon Confucist and Doaist precepts of man in harmony with nature, and the five key elements. There were at least three signs which read: "If you borrow the scene to take a photo, the cost is one yuan each picture." If the visitor took photos of the penjing only without any people posing in front of them, it was free of charge.

Non-Chinese would probably see just an artificial landscape but Chinese would see a poem, a shan shui painting through the arrangement of stones, rocks and miniaturized plants, and an understanding of Chinese philosophy translated into landscapes. They ‘read’ the penjing.
Depictions of dioramas of the 36 Stratagem (Source: Sanshiliu Ji Wax Museum Booklet, n.d.).

The giant penjing garden
After leaving the garden, a granite-paved path shaded by beautiful tree canopies led us to the town market and after a few turns, we finally found our tour bus.

All external attractions - the train and railway track, the Sanshiliu Ji Wax Museum, and the penjing walled garden - were owned and constructed by the Yaolin Cave Management.

COMMENT

The development of Yaolin Cave captures many points that are common to caves-as-tourist-attractions all around China. In effect a tour of this cave constitutes not one but four separate cultural encounters with China’s heritage.

The first is a journey through Chinese folklore. The first three huge caverns are filled with some of the largest and most complex and beautiful karst cave decorations I had seen. But the entire commentary by the guide described how each decoration (highlighted in red, green, blue, purple and yellow lights) was the Monkey King, the tiger and the turtle, the phoenix rising to confront the dragon, or the seven fairy maidens (the seven daughters of the Heavenly Emperor) having a merry time, etc and etc. Not one single word about the geological processes at work was provided by the guides. Accompanying the descriptions of the decorations were many stories, myths and legends from Chinese folklore and history. No explanations were provided so to any listener not familiar with Chinese common knowledge the trip would have been ‘a mystery tour’. The cave was not presented as a cave: rather the setting was ‘tian’ and each decoration was presented as, and represented, a folkloric character. Interpretation, as guides present it in western cave experiences, was non-existent.
The geological formations of the cave play dual roles. They are representing the cave as their ‘signature images’ used for marketing, advertising, and promotion. In this context the focus on stalactites, stalagmites, flow-stones, columns, stone flower crystals and other decorations constitutes the elements that differentiate cave landscape from ‘external’ or ‘exterior’ landscapes outside the cave, and one cave site from its competitors, of course. However, the geological formations are not presented as physical entities derived from processes that can be explained scientifically but as symbols of folklore, religion and classical literature. The cave is not presented in terms of what I call its ‘intrinsic geological attributes’ but as ‘symbols of Chinese culture’.

The second cultural journey in Yaolin takes the visitor through four caverns almost devoid of geological decorations but populated with 19 depictions of famous scenes or characters from Chinese history, religion and folklore. In these caverns the cave is reduced to little more than walls, a roof and a floor, and they become a substitute theatre and stage rather than a cave. The tourists are transformed into ‘performers’ and the entrepreneurs into ‘stage managers’, with opportunities for visitors to become actors through the medium of posing for photographs dressed up in theatrical robes or inter-positioned among the backdrop/stage props, while their fellow visitors become the audience. A form of ‘musical chairs’ is performed as the actors and the audience change places: the actors ‘undress’ and resume their original roles in their own clothes as onlookers, and the onlookers ‘dress up’ and become the actors. Such ‘performance’ has been theorised as tourists in some circumstances becoming performers, acting out roles, and enacting ‘scripts’, through which they organise and add meaning to their experiences (Dann 2002); and I would suggest that this is an apt description of much of the activity that is enjoyed by Chinese tourists in caves in China.
The attractions have the same dependency as those in the first three caverns of an everyday familiarity with the content of Chinese common knowledge for visitor appreciation. The knowledge needed to comprehend the attractions extends well beyond familiarity with the names of famous characters drawn from different milieu to their deeds, the surrounding social, political and philosophical environments of the time, and values associated with them. The ‘garden of Eden’ may appear as particularly bizarre to non-Chinese eyes but it is entirely appropriate in its cave setting, enlivening an otherwise dull scene as an example of ‘man improving on Nature’ and producing an enhanced appreciation of the experience by its Chinese viewers. Note also the way in which Chinese visitors have added an element of religious veneration to many of the scenes by lighting incense sticks or making an offering at the foot of the particular character depicted. This is a form of behaviour that is absent from non-religious karst caves in western countries that demonstrates the vitality and dynamic quality of ancient religions in modern China, integrating humans and their gods in a natural landscape. As such it combines elements of both anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism.

The difference between the first and the second Yaolin journey is bound up in issues of what is and is not natural and what is and is not authentic. The first journey is an encounter with imagination: natural formations are interpreted anthropomorphically and/or through folklore. The tourist is told that the decoration “looks like the Monkey King” or is invited to guess which character from the *Journey to the West* another decoration most resembles. With the second journey the figures become more realistic. Natural formations are replaced by human-made models of some of the same folklore characters. You do not need to use your imagination because you are looking at the
Monkey King. Both of course are imaginary in that the Monkey King is a creature of imagination. The paradox is that the first image is ‘natural’ and the second image is a human artifice but the second image appears more realistic (is more realistic?) because it accurately depicts the known image of the Monkey King in all its detail (robes, eyes, paws, tail, etc). So which is authentic? Can any figure from folklore be ‘authentic’? But don’t both images depict authentic folklore heritage? The Monkey King is not newly created like the Yaolin dragon so surely it is authentic. And could not the Yaolin dragon be considered ‘authentic’ because it is drawn from Chinese folklore generically? Does not newly created folklore underline the dynamic processes of culture, and therefore be ‘authentic’ because it has integrity with its cultural past, a form of Cohen’s (1988) ‘emergent authenticity’? These are not questions to fuss Chinese visitors; in our eyes both forms have their own reality.

The third cultural journey in Yaolin, the wax museum, is an integral part of the visit because it cannot be avoided. The mandarin’s residence must be passed through to get to the bottom of the hill. Its 36 dioramas of famous scenes from China's history and legends are instantly recognizable to the Chinese audience and it takes its viewers on another cultural journey founded on Chinese common knowledge. It is another cultural journey which non-Chinese visitors would find difficult to comprehend in the absence of detailed interpretation.

From the wax museum the visitor steps out into a fourth cultural journey, miniaturized landscapes or penjing. This garden introduces the visitor to an ancient Chinese art form dating back more than 2500 years, another extension of using Chinese culture for touristic experience of landscape. But, paradoxically (or is it a contradiction in terms), it
is a GIANT penjing garden, with giant penjing representations. Some of the 'plates' are 10 metres long and about 15cms deep (normally they are shallow dishes about one third of a metre or less in length and three or four centimetres deep), the mountains about 5 metres high, and the penjing trees - very old - but about 1-2 metres high instead of the more 'normal' one third of a metre high! More play on authenticity! Penjing is authentically Chinese art so it is reality. But highly stylized miniaturized landscapes artificially contrived are symbolic of mountains, water, forests and sky and not reality. However, miniaturized landscapes are reality not replicas and as original creations they are themselves a new reality. With twenty of them assembled together they constitute a new landscape so creating another reality - a penjing garden. They are authentic penjing and thereby have their own authenticity. Artificiality cannot always be regarded as synonymous with inauthenticity.

The penjing garden experience produces one more profound aspect of Chinese culture that would almost certainly escape the western tourist gaze. It relates to the signage concerning photography. Charging a fee for a photo is an illustration of entrepreneurship, exploiting a resource for monetary gain. To take a photo of a person with the penjing landscapes as the backdrop thus invites a fee of one yuan (USD 12.5 cents). Take the person out of the photo and the photo is free. This may be interpreted as the fundamental Chinese belief in the indivisibility of humans and nature. Nature without humans is meaningless. So visitors are free to take as many photos as they like of the landscapes without people because they are worthless. The anthropocentrism of the traditional Chinese value system is apparent in this approach to photography, and it is also a graphic example of the Chinese relational gaze (see Chapter Eight).
The commercialization of other aspects of the tour through Yaolin Cave with its many photographic opportunities, souvenir stands and refreshment stalls (repeated to varying degrees in all other caves in China) also requires explanation. On interviewing the cave management, I discovered that the displays, the photo equipment and other operations all belong to the cave management. Every year the employees of the cave can put in a tender to run the services. If they succeed, they will come off the payroll and normal duties. What they earn will be the balance of the revenue of that business and the agreed tender price to the cave management. After a year, the tender process will start all over again and any unsuccessful tenderers will be put back on the payroll and assigned other duties. It explains why the operators were so aggressive and dishonest in marketing their product. However, the refreshment stalls are in fact another manifestation of the anthropocentrism of the traditional Chinese value system at work. As noted in Chapter Five regarding tourism planning principles, for the comfort of tourists there should be a kiosk every 1.5 kms (about twenty minutes walk) and caves are no exception.

As with Yaolin, most of the caves that I visited in China illustrated a range of different additions that might seem inconsistent with a western concept of what a visit to a cave should entail. In this context, each of the vignettes which follow have been selected to highlight one or more different aspects of cave tourism in China; each however has in common a strongly anthropocentric approach that usually encompasses anthropomorphism as well since many decorations will be given human traits or characteristics. While each vignette illustrates the same common foundation of cave development embedded in culture, each one also highlights different aspects of Chinese common knowledge, values or culturally determined behaviour.
Vignette Two

Ruijing Cave
Zhejiang Province
7th October, 1998

(Excerpts from my visit to this cave were used in the opening paragraphs of Chapter One, with particular reference to its circular stairway, and the difficulty of translating Chinese common knowledge into a format that would provide understanding for non-Chinese visitors)

Extract

In the 2nd cavern, there was a scene called ‘Donghai Longgong’ (The Palace of the Dragon King of the East Sea). In the centre of the cavern there was a pillar extending from the top to bottom named ‘Ding Hai Shen Zhen’, the Magic Pillar of the Sea (Plate 6.10). To understand these two features required knowledge of the mythical novels ‘The Investiture of the Gods’ and ‘The Journey to the West’. When questioned, my guide Ms Tong said that for overseas visitors she would simply describe them as “the palace of the King of the Ocean” and “the magic stick that stops the ocean collapsing”. In this way, non-Chinese visitors did not require any knowledge of the classic nor to have an image of the Dragon King before they could visualize the scene.

At the spot next to ‘Qingzang Gaoyuan’ (this label is applied to a natural setting which is like a miniaturized version of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau), Ms Tong let me pass through a one metre high metal bar gate to see the stalagmites and stalactites on the other side of the gate. She hit one of the pillars with a small metal baton and a crystal clear sound rang out. She continued making different notes by striking different parts of the pillar. Ms Tong explained that in the beginning when the cave was first opened, visitors were invited to play music on the pillars. But several had been broken so now normal visitors had to stay ‘behind bars’ and only the guides were allowed to provide a demonstration. However special VIPs might be invited to ‘play’ music on the pillars.

We descended to the 3rd cavern. It was huge with high and vertical rock/cliff faces on three sides. This karst cavern was not well developed geologically and due to relatively
Ruijing Cave

‘The Staircase to Heaven’
(Source: Ruijing Cave Brochure)

‘Ding Hai Shen Zhen’, the Magic Pillar of the Sea.
(Source: Ruijing Cave Brochure)
recent faulting which had collapsed much of the roof there were not many stalactites and stalagmites left. Ms Tong pressed a button on the control panel which was carefully disguised as an artificial stone pillar. One of the cavern walls was immediately floodlit by a red laser light accompanied by the sound of roaring which reverberated around the cave. After a few seconds, the ceiling of the cavern was gradually lit up by green laser light that came with a howling sound, like wind in a storm. Then the red light and roaring slowly faded away. Ms Tong explained that the red laser light `re-created' the `Flaming Mountain' in the `Journey to the West'. The green light represented the magic weapon of the Princess of Iron Fan, her `Banana-leaf Fan' which the Monkey King borrowed to put out the flame of the mountain so his master, the Monk, and other disciples could pass through to the West. This laser `performance' was totally computerized and lasted about two minutes.

COMMENT

This vignette illustrates two major characteristics of cave visitation in China that are significant departures from western environmentally oriented management. The first is the interactive nature of a Chinese cave experience that extends much further than just verbal interaction. Good practice in western interpretation will engage the audience, but in China there will be a series of highly interactive ‘games’ with tourists, such as guessing the identity of a particular feature, looking for the next scene/action of the story, and this will be accompanied by much shouting and laughing. Tourists may be invited to play musical notes by hitting different stalagmites and stalactites with a metal bar, as above. In the San Yu Cave (Three Travellers Cave in the region of the Three Gorges of the Yangtze River) a stalactite is called the “Sky Bell” because when the guide invites visitors to strike it a clear sweet ringing sound is heard. In the same cave another formation is called the “Ground Drum” because when the visitors stamp on it drum beats echo around the cavern. Yaolin Cave also has its “Lucky Drum” and visitors are invited to beat it with their hands.
The second departure from general western practice for environmentally sound cave management is the use of computerized laser light–sound displays, as part of the use of multi-coloured lighting for exhibition purposes. In this context it is important to emphasize again that the English words used to translate the Chinese ‘tian’ are imperfect. Heaven, fairyland, wonderland, paradise – all lack the connotations that accompany the Confucist, Daoist and Buddhist meanings of the word tian 天 in Chinese.

It is necessary to draw a distinction between early European fascination with caves as ‘fairylands’ and the use of rainbow coloured lights to highlight particular features or reflection pools on the one hand and the Chinese use of such devices for their cave ‘wonderlands’ on the other. The western cave fairyland may be based in European concepts of childhood stories (Hans Christian Andersen’s famous “Fairy Tales”) but they hold little significance beyond that of fantasy. The use of coloured lights was simply to beautify the site and the colours held no particular significance beyond that of being ‘pretty’. The Chinese concept of tian however is embedded in a philosophical and socio-religious value system extending over several thousand years with a cultural continuity of enormous dimensions. The Chinese use of coloured lights in caves is not haphazard or simply ‘artistic’ but selected for specific purposes because of their linkage to China’s cultural heritage. Different colours, as outlined earlier, carry enormous symbolism. Whether it is their use in the laser light-sound system of Ruijing Cave’s symbolic depiction of the Monkey King’s fight with the fires of Flaming Mountain, or in highlighting different decorations, the colours will be carefully selected because of their associated meanings and symbolism.
The Monkey King’s battle depicted in Ruijing is also of course another example of the reliance on Chinese common knowledge to make an interesting spectacle for Chinese visitors, and an example of the accepted need to improve on Nature where it is imperfect (in this case a chamber with little intrinsic geological attributes), hence its enhancement with symbols of Chinese culture.

**Vignette Three  Ling Shan Huanjing (Spirit Mountain Dreamland)**  
Zhejiang Province  
15 September 1998

**Extract**

The brochure for this cave provides virtually no geological information. Instead it focuses on the footprints of cultural celebrities who visited the site in the past, recording the cave’s history as far back as the Tang and Song Dynasties. It lists famous people rather than geological attributes, including the Tang poet Bai Juyi, who was the provincial governor of Hangzhou (822-824 A.D.), who wrote a poem after visiting the cave; and Su Shi (Su Dongpo) who was deputy mayor of Hangzhou from 1071-1074 A.D., and wrote an essay about touring around Ling Shan.

After leaving the lower cavern we climbed a 48m high and 85 degree steep staircase to the upper cave: Qing Xu Dong (Pure Void Cave, related to the meditational state of a Daoist who has emptied his mind of all earthly thoughts).

We exited the upper cave, and I found that we were outside at the top of the hill. There was a huge statue of `the Buddha of the Future’, with the Golden Boy and the Jade Maiden (both famous young boy and young girl servants in the Daoist fairyland) sitting at both sides of the exit, and four warrior attendants guarding them. The statue was built in 1992 and was the biggest statue of `the Buddha of the Future’ in Hangzhou. [It was interesting to note that the Golden Boy and the Jade Maiden were actually attendants of the Daoist immortals, an example of the general public mixing up the myths of different religions, resulting in religious syncretism.] When asked why these statues were built as part of the cave complex, my guide Miss Han responded
that natural scenery alone was too simple, it needed human-made additions to enrich the scene.

Further along, there was a building called Qing Xu Lou (Pure Void Pagoda), echoing the name of the upper cave. In the foyer of the pagoda a human size statue of one of the immortals, He Xiangu, was displayed. Inside the pagoda were dioramas of ‘The Journey to the West’ depicting seven of the eighty-one adversities which the Tong monk encountered in ‘the Journey to the West’.

We had to walk around the brow of the hill to the next cave entrance along a path with musical instruments built with reinforced concrete on either side. ‘Gu yue zhi lu’, The Path of Drum Music, was 390 metres long, and was built in 1995 with investment from Fujian Province to improve the 390m ‘dull’ journey along the ridge of the hill to the entrance to Xian Qiao Dong (Immortal Bridge Cave). The musical instruments were at least 2.5m high and were painted in different colours. They were as follows: guitar, drum, suona, gong (3m high), piano, cymbals, yueqin (4m high), and erhu (5m high). Then, before the final three instruments there was a giant mushroom shading a park bench for a rest stop, followed by a harp, trombone, and pipa. Also featured halfway along the path is the ‘Canghai Ge’ (Seven Seas Pavilion). The pavilion’s name was taken from the poet Yuan Zhen’s (779-831 A.D.) famous lines:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{‘Ceng jing canghai nan wei shui,} \\
\text{Chu que Wushan bu shi yun’}
\end{align*}
\]

‘Speak not of lakes and streams to him who has once seen the sea;
The clouds that circle Wushan are the only clouds for me.’

(Beijing Foreign Language University 1995, p.100).

COMMENT

Ling Shan Huanjing Cave provides an example of a major difference here with Australian (and other western) cultures in terms of preserving the natural environment unsullied by human-made objects, especially ones which appear to have no intrinsic relationship with the surroundings. However, caves and Daoism are integrated in Chinese culture, and The Journey to the West and Buddhism are also fused with both, so
that symbols of Chinese culture are entirely appropriate to a Chinese tourist gaze. Thus
structures such as the Pure Void Tower and the dioramas depicting aspects of the
*Journey to the West* are not seen as incongruous; and the musical instruments and
*Canghai Ge* (Seven Seas Pavilion) are also acceptable since there is an obvious (to
Chinese planners) need to improve on an other-wise ‘empty’ walk. Again, no
interpretation is provided, because none is needed: all educated Chinese will know that
the term ‘*Canghai*’ comes from Yuan Zhen’s poem. And the reliance on a poet to
enhance the experience further emphasizes the literary and cultural heritage of the cave,
as evidenced in its brochure.

**Vignette Four**

**Double Dragons’ Cave Complex**

***The 36th Daoist Cave Heaven***

Jinhua, Zhejiang Province

22 September 1998

**Extract**

One of the guides Mr. Ji Qin Hua led us from the outer exposed cavern to the 'real
entrance'. We went down a flight of narrow stone stairs and reached a small shallow
inger at the back of the chamber. There were two wire cables in the water, with a
boat at the end of one of the cables. The river was about four metres wide. All we
could see was that the river disappeared into a small opening at the bottom of the
cliff face about 8 metres away. This we were told was the entrance to the cave! We
had to lie flat in the boat because from the water surface to the top of the opening
was about one metre high only! (Plate 6.11)

On entering the boat we thought we would enjoy a ride of several minutes but in fact
it lasted only 20 seconds. This waterway or 'underground river' was only fifteen
metres long! It was actually a spring fed pool and its water level was regulated. When
the water level was too low, extra water would be pumped in otherwise the boat would
get stuck in the mud. When the water level was too high and the boat could not fit
under the opening in the wall, the water would be pumped out.
It was an experience to go through the low opening. We had to lie as flat as possible in the boat. The tunnel was about 5 metres long. At some parts, we were only about 30 cm from the ceiling. This entrance way added drama to a cave that was not particularly inspiring.

PLATE 6.11

Entrance to the cave is by boat which glides underneath the rock outcrop on the left
(Source: Double Dragons’ Cave Brochure)

COMMENT

The two peaks containing the Double Dragons Cave complex form a large forested park dotted with a number of Daoist temples. As the Daoists’ 36th Cave Heaven, the entrance to Double Dragons Cave by boat is an attempt to create an experience that is appropriate for entering ‘a passageway to Heaven’. It represents a reflection of the Daoist belief in line with the common Chinese saying “bie you dong tian” (‘an altogether different world’). Given that more than 300,000 people enter the caves
each year, and that there is at least one other entrance/exit by conventional means, the ‘river’ entrance with its cumbersome, time-consuming practice of only four people entering at a time lying flat on their backs is a testimonial to the Daoist influence and a Chinese gaze which puts the symbolism of the experience before convenience. It can also play a dual role in marketing terms since it allows the cave management to distinguish the experience of this cave from others.

**Vignette Five  Crown Cave  Guilin, Guangxi Province  15 January 2000**

**Extract**

Crown Cave is a very famous cave because the karst peak within which it has formed is shaped like an emperor’s crown and has been recorded in Chinese literature for more than 2000 years (Plate 6.12). However, the cave’s formations are less impressive than many others, so in developing the cave, China’s culture was drawn upon differently.

To enter the cave, you catch a monorail which runs for about 250 metres through a landscaped garden beside the Lijiang River (Plate 6.13). The guide meets you inside the first cavern as you disembark. She uses typical Chinese folklore and guessing games to identify different decorations, and then leads you into another cave where there is a large waterfall - which is artificial (Plate 6.13). The waterfall flows down a river, which is also artificial, and a dragon boat train takes you through a tunnel (also human-made) into another cavern. The lead ‘carriage’ on the boat train has a big carved dragon’s head, and it tows about 12 small ‘carriages’ behind it.

On foot you then explore another cavern before arriving at a tall funnel-like cavern with an opening to the sky at the summit. To ascend to the very top of the cave, which is also the top of the peak, an elevator with glass windows takes you up the equivalent of about seven or eight storeys (Plate 6.13). You exit the cave from the top and walk down the hill through groves of landscaped peach trees and terraces to a small temple, pavilion and souvenir complex.
PLATE 6.12

Crown Cave, Lijiang River, Guilin
PLATE  6.13

Crown Cave, Lijiang River, Guilin

Monorail – earth and metal

Artificial Waterfall

Temple – wood

Elevator in the central cave, with the exit at the top –
Riding the air on the dragon
After visiting the cave, I interviewed the Management in Guilin City. They explained how they had hired a professor to develop a theme for the development of the cave. He had come up with the idea of utilizing the five main elements of the Chinese concept of the physical universe (environment) - metal, wood, water, fire, earth and a new sixth, air. Through the application of modern technology these elements would provide visitors with a series of journeys to make the Crown Cave experience different from all others.

COMMENT

Crown Cave provides an initiation into a different aspect again of Chinese common knowledge, that of the Chinese concept of the physical universe. The six applications to ‘capture’ the six elements (above) involve sophisticated technology and the construction of dominating artificial features both inside and outside the cave, with little concern for conservation of the natural environment in a western sense. The six applications are as follows:

(i) Metal and (ii) Earth: to take people into the cave a monorail has been constructed at ground level. And the monorail is made of steel. This is the first journey – along the earth on metal.

(iii) Fire: the caverns inside the cave are illuminated with red, yellow and other coloured lights to represent fire. This is the second journey - visitors travel through ‘fire’ as they follow the guide inside the peak.

(iv) Water: there was a small natural flow of water through the cave. Pumps have been installed to increase the flow, an artificial waterfall installed, and a 500 metre-long tunnel cut through the mountain to make a canal or waterway along which visitors are taken in ‘dragon’ boat trains – this is the third journey. (Dragons also breathe fire so the symbolism is reinforced with this technology).

(v) Air: the Daoist concept of flying through the air on the back of a dragon to Heaven is captured in the glass elevator to exit the cave from the top of the peak. This is the fourth journey.
(vi) Wood: a wooden pavilion and temple have been erected outside the entrance. This provides visitors with the opportunity for a spiritual journey.

My observations of visitors indicated that they generally enjoyed the novel applications of technology in Crown Cave. Some of the more educated ones grasped the symbolism behind each journey more or less spontaneously. I suspect most western visitors would find a visit to such a cave more like a visit to a western theme park and would not begin to understand or appreciate the deep cultural underpinning of its development. I think it requires the Chinese tourist gaze to see the invisibilities below the surface.

**Vignette Six  White Dragon Cave**

*Guilin, Guangxi Province*

*19 January 2000*

**Extract**

As we pulled into the car park of this newly developed cave I was struck by the elaborate entrance and the expense of constructing it. A large artificial lake had been constructed at the foot of the karst outcrop which formed the outer shell of the cave. A zig-zag bridge with a large pavilion in the centre of the lake had been built across the water to an entrance to the cave (Plate 6.14). Apparently there had been a small seepage pool (the White Dragon Spring after which the cave takes its name) which had eroded the cave wall and exposed it to the outside. However, until the construction of the bridge, a raised boardwalk inside the mouth of this entrance, and then the excavation of a tunnel large enough to walk through with a staircase up to the middle level cavern, the cave had been inaccessible from this point. Water is very important in *feng shui* and this cave, like a lot of other sites, had a large body of water constructed in front of it (probably 50 times bigger than the original seepage pool). Because *shaqi* (evil ghosts) can only travel in straight lines with no elevation, the bridge was deliberately designed to zig zag, with eight steps up to the pavilion (eight is a lucky number in Chinese because it rhymes with the sound of the word for 'prosperity').
A long time ago this cave had been a Buddhist temple for the worship of the Goddess of Mercy and the original path to the temple opening was still accessible above the lake from a newly built restaurant, museum of karst decorations, souvenir shop and ticket booth.

PLATE 6.14

White Dragon Cave, Guilin

The entrance to the cave has been designed according to *feng shui* principles

COMMENT

Elaborate entrances to caves are a feature of Chinese caves, and the principles of *feng shui* will often be employed to enhance the site and ensure that good fortune will flow from opening the cave as a commercial venture. Non-Chinese visitors may be able to appreciate the ‘picturesque-ness’ of such constructions because of their recognizable Chinese qualities even if they lack the understanding behind them. They seem to accept that they do not necessarily jar the senses as such elaborate entrances would if transposed into an Australian bush setting, perhaps because of their quintessential
Chinese-ness. White Dragon Cave with its large *feng shui* body of water, its zig-zag bridge and raised pavilion, is typical of many cave sites in China (Plate 6.14).

Huge imperial gateways are also a common feature such as those at the entrance to Ling Xiao Cave in Guangdong Province (Plate 6.15). Such edifices are not regarded by Chinese as ‘Man’s dominance over Nature’ nor are they regarded consciously as artificial. They ‘belong’ in the landscape equally with natural features and the placement of seven such structures at the entrance to the new Huangdi Yuan Valley tourism development is testimony to this acceptability (see Plate 5.18, Chapter Five).

Since Daoism invokes a responsibility to bring imperfect nature into harmony with humans, external improvements to the landscape will be extended to include internal improvements inside the cave and the vignettes provide many such examples. It is not uncommon to see a group of stalactites and stalagmites or other karst decorations removed from their original setting and artfully arranged in a new way. In the centre of the main cavern of Ruijing Cave, for example, a huge *penjing* tree made up of different decorations had been erected. When I asked why, the guide explained: “Since there aren’t many natural features here, some man-made ‘natural’ features had to be added to increase tourists’ interest.” In Hongpin Cave in Hubei Province a stalactite has been transformed into a fountain surrounded by a circle of white cave stones and a bracelet of twinkling red lights. The original shallow pool lacked a focal point and the construction is seen as an example of ‘Man improving on Nature’ to bring Nature into harmony with Man (Plate 6.16). The new creation is good *feng shui*. Crown Cave in Guilin is perhaps an extreme example with its ‘hi-tech’ innovations, but every cave that I visited in China showed evidence of similar improvements to the cave-scape. It is essential to note that
Where a focal point is lacking, or the *feng shui* aspect of a place could be enhanced, intervention to improve on the imperfections of nature is standard.
all of these improvements are embedded in China’s cultural heritage, that Crown Cave and White Dragon Cave are no exception, and that Chinese common knowledge is required to appreciate them.

**Vignette Seven**

**Dixia Changhe (Underground River Cave)**

Lanxi, Zhejiang

Monday, 21st September, 1998

**Extract**

Dixia Changhe opened in 1982. The cave was formed by water erosion with an underground river flowing through it. The chemical erosion formed the delicate decorations in the cave. Visitors normally enter the cave by small boats and exit by land route or vice versa. The land route is 1200 metres long, while the water route is 750 metres in length. Visitation numbered about 180,000 per year.

My guide Miss Duan led me onto a small boat waiting at a lake which was made by damming the river flowing out from the cave. The boatman rowed us into the main cavern and then we took the land route to explore the other part of the cave. After 30 minutes, Miss Duan guided me onto a narrow path still inside the cavern high along the riverside that led us back to the entrance. All the way there were different limestone decorations and many of them featured Buddha and animals. For example:

- **Fo shou san die** 佛手三叠 - Buddha's three sets of hands reposing in prayer
- **Pan long gu tan** 蟠龙古潭 - dragons coiling in an ancient pool
- **Shui wen shi gui** 水纹石龟 - a stone tortoise showing its water marks
- **Hong yan xiang yun** 鸿雁翔云 - a wild goose circles in the clouds
- **Xi niu tan jiang** 犀牛探江 - a rhinoceros explores the river
- **Ya shang Shi lin** 崖上石林 - stone forest growing on top of the cliff

In this cave, there were hardly any decorations named after folklore characters. Even though Miss Duan conducted the guiding in a story-telling style and her transition skill from one scene to the other was excellent the classics were not part of the content of interpretation but mythical creatures and beings were prominent. For example, when we were at the scene of **Panlong gu tan** 蟠龙古潭 (dragons coiling in an ancient...
pool), her interpretation was as follows: "On the ground, the resultant feature created by water erosion acting on the limestone formation looks like two ancient dragons whispering between each other. Listening to others whispering is impolite, so we had better look at the Shilin (stone forest) growing on top of the cliff! Shilin is where the fairies are wandering around. Can you find who and where the fairy is?"

We looked up and tried to find the fairy but couldn’t. Miss Duan then pointed her torch at one particular decoration among the 'stone forest' and asked "Does it look like Snow White?" I was fascinated by this ‘western fairy-tale’ labelling and was told that it was named by a domestic tourist. In fact there was another decoration Shui wen shi gui (the stone tortoise showing its water marks) which one visitor thought looked like "Titanic". Now the guides relate both the ‘original’ and the ‘alternative’ names.

According to Miss Duan, the most common responses from the visitors about the decorations were "hao xiang!" 好样！ = "very alike", or "bu xiang!" 不像！ = "not alike". Sometimes when the tourists considered that a particular decoration was not like its designation they would suggest other names they felt more suitable, for example Snow White and Titanic.

The cave's manager, Miss Tang, said there was a general saying in cave guiding: “San fen xiang xiang, qi fen xiang xiang; bu xiang bu xiang, yu xiang yu xiang” 三分相像，七分想像；不想不像，愈想愈像 - “30% similarity, 70% imagination; no imagination, no likeness; the more you imagine, the more alike it is.” Her management allowed the guides to be flexible in giving free rein to their guiding, “ziyou fahu” 自由发挥 - "use your own free thoughts."

**COMMENT**

As with all other caves this cave relies upon Chinese common knowledge but there is a heavy concentration on ‘four characters’ labels, which emphasize the relational
feature of socio-linguistics of Chinese. Each of the decorations is described in terms of its relationship to another, often with an active verb such as ‘the wild goose circling the clouds’, and ‘the rhinoceros exploring the river’. The whispering dragons are related not only to each other but to the spectators (tourists), who are enjoined by the guide not to listen to the dragons. This relational aspect of labels is typical of four character descriptors in particular, whereas western labels of nature formations are often simply ‘names’ devoid of any relational context, e.g. ‘Dog Rock’ and ‘Wave Rock’ in Western Australia and ‘The Three Sisters’ in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales, Australia. Dixia Changhe’s labels also provide additional examples of the Chinese relational gaze (see Chapter Eight).

The wenyan Chinese linguistic style that always tries to utilise four individual characters which combine to form a stand-alone phrase or expression is very common in the labelling for caves in China. Often the four characters will be compressed to tell an entire but precise story of what is being described or explained. Thus, Chinese culture, embedded in its linguistic format, will provide a complex description of most decorations of caves; and the presentation in this case of cave decorations in the four-character phrase for caves throughout China is very difficult to capture for non-Chinese visitors. For example, a common label for a particularly-shaped karst decoration is made up of the following four characters: lan = orchid, hua = flower, miao = elegance and shao = hand. When combined the four characters are translated as ‘The Goddess of Mercy’s elegant hand gesture’, a label which is reserved exclusively for the Goddess. The four-character phrase cannot be applied to any other’s gesture. When used by e.g. actresses in a Chinese opera, a Chinese audience will automatically discern it as the Goddess of Mercy’s elegant hand gesture. Caves thus depend upon a Chinese tourist
gaze for interpretation, but this interpretation is never explicitly expressed because of the reliance on Chinese common knowledge as the conduit for understanding. The succinctness and rhyming of four-character phrases such as this also provide a rich imagery for Chinese visitors.

There is a small echo of globalization in Dixia Changhe with the re-naming by Chinese domestic visitors of two of the decorations as “Snow White” after Walt Disney’s famous character, and “Titanic” after the Hollywood ‘blockbuster’ movie of that name. Localization sits comfortably with these newly introduced labels for the original four-character descriptors of a Chinese fairy from the Shilin stone forest and a turtle showing its water marks, and Chinese visitors will be appreciative of both.

Vignette Eight  Alu Cave
Luxi, Yunnan Province
20 October 1999

Extract

Inside the entrance there was a small cavern which had very few karst decorations. On one side was a curtained off area with a stage. Floodlights were switched on, and a group of Sani Yi musicians with ethnic instruments came from behind the curtain and began to play. At the same time six Sani Yi girls in traditional ethnic costume appeared and began a cultural performance of traditional singing and dancing (Plate 6.17). This show lasted nearly ten minutes. We were then offered a cup of tea, and the opportunity to buy some souvenirs of traditional head bands and costume jewellery. There were also photo opportunities and for 10 yuan you could use your own camera to have one of the staff take your photo with the performers. For 20 yuan you could don a traditional costume and have your photo taken with the troupe.

Only after this did the tour of the cave proper begin. This was an interesting tour because it mixed traditional elements of Chinese common knowledge (Daoism,
Buddhism, *shan shui* poetry and prose, classical stories, etc) with Sani Yi Minority folklore (Plate 6.18).

**PLATE 6.17**

Alu Cave Cultural Performance

At the entrance several stands are occupied by calligraphers who will write your name or engrave it for you in a very fancy style which combines the Chinese art with Sani Yi folk art. The calligraphers are all of Sani Yi ethnicity.
Alu Cave

The Cavern of the Leaping Crocodile, a Sani Yi folk story
(Alu Cave is in the sub-tropical south of Yunnan, near the Thai border, the former habitat of the now extinct Chinese crocodiles.)
(Source: Alu Cave brochure)
This decoration is labelled ‘The 1000 Years Immortal Peach’
(that takes one millennium to ripen)
and is straight out of Daoist myths.

COMMENT

When probing the vignettes for differences between standard western and Chinese
management regimes, another distinction that presents itself is the way in which many
caves in China feature cultural performances, particularly if one of China’s 55 ethnic
minorities inhabits the region. Alu Cave, which is under management by the ethnic
minority Sani Yi people in Yunnan Province is but one of many such examples. In
many other caves, such as Crown Cave, traditional Chinese tea making ceremonies by
traditionally dressed courtiers are also common (Plate 6.19).

PLATE 6.19

_Crown Cave, Guilin: tea ceremony_
Photographic opportunities for visitors, often by being robed in traditional dress, are invariably part of this activity. It is noted that occasional cultural performances may be held in caves in western countries, for example, one of the Margaret River caves in Western Australia may host an annual symphony orchestral concert; but generally such performances would be perceived as inimical to sound environmental management. By contrast, cultural performances in Chinese caves will often be presented on a daily basis with perhaps as many as ten performances each day. Interestingly, my observations suggest that this is one form of cultural production inside caves which non-Chinese enjoy. The cultural gap in terms of detailed understanding may still be as great but since ‘exotic other’ cultural performances are daily fare on television in western countries and a common component of many destinations globally, they are probably regarded by
many non-Chinese cave visitors as getting close to an ‘authentic experience’. They may not appreciate the full cultural significance of what they see but the experience of exoticism is sufficient compensation.

An additional activity related to calligraphy which is common to many caves around China is the presence of calligraphers who may sell copies of wall inscriptions, or write the visitor’s name in a highly decorative manner to commemorate their visit to the cave, or engrave a traditional seal with their own ‘chop’ (signature). When combined with the artistic traditions of ethnic minorities, as is the case at Alu Cave, the result is an innovative art form of considerable merit.

Vignette Nine  
Putuo Shan  
Zhoushan, Zhejiang  
8 September 1998

Extract

After a cool morning boat ride we arrived at the island of Putuo Shan, a rugged mountain that has been venerated by Daoists and Buddhists for several millennia. It is one of the four great sacred mountains of the Buddhist faith in China, along with Wutai Shan, Emei Shan and Jiuhua Shan, with a famous temple for the Goddess of the Mercy, Guan Yin. We climbed up the slope to Fo Ding Shan or Buddha Peak along an ancient path, every rock outcrop inscribed with calligraphy, a mixture of Daoist and Buddhist origin with some of the inscriptions more than 2000 years old. Near the summit we arrived at Meifu Temple and bought tickets to visit Liandan Dong, ‘the Alchemist's Cave’ (Plate 6.20) located in the cliff at the back of the temple.
It is a granite cave and quite small compared to most karst caves. There were no tour guides to entertain us with stories, no guessing games, no laser lights and sound blaring forth. It is a temple, and its attraction does not rely on the tian (cosmos) that the karst decorations form. Three Buddha sculptures have been carved into the cave wall, and an altar placed in front of them. The rugged ceiling of the cave is darkened by oil fumes from pilgrims’ offerings as they light the lamps and burn incense sticks. At the other end of the cave, there is a natural cleft with underground water seeping out. This in fact is the reason for the cave site being venerated as a temple because Putuo’s history goes back to ancient times when it was a favored site for those seeking the elixir of life, and the chemical properties of this water were renowned.

Originally, Putuo was a site venerated by Daoists, and this cave was the abode of Mei Fu, a Daoist recluse in late Han dynasty who lived on the island in the ten years before 1 A.D. He made elixir with the water from the cave. Many other famous alchemists also lived on Putuo Shan. The first one recorded was the Qin dynasty occultist, An Qishan (between 221-205 B.C.), and those after Mei Fu included Ge Hong, the most famous alchemist of the Jin Dynasty (circa 300 A.D.). All of these were Daoists. Now the legendary water from Liandan Dong is sought by every visitor and pilgrim who is welcome to buy a plastic bottle to take this xian shui (magic water) home.

An interesting note: it was huang-lao Daoism that Mei Fu practiced in his era. But now the temple that bears his name is in fact a Buddhist temple, an example of religious syncretism. In 1214 A.D., the Southern Song court issued a decree making the Goddess of Mercy the only god allowed to be worshipped on Putuo, formally making Putuo Shan exclusively Buddhist. But because of syncretism in fact Daoists also flock to the island mountain.

After we left Meifu Temple we walked to the south east end of the island to visit the Chao Yin Dong (Pounding Waves Cave). It is a blowhole, a former fault line in the granite eroded by the constant wave movement which over time formed a sea cave. From the small opening of the blowhole at the top of the cave one can see into the bottom of the cavity many metres below. The characters of Chao Yin Dong are etched
into one side of the sea cave wall (Plate 6.20). They are Qing Emperor Kangxi’s (1645-1722 A.D.) own calligraphy inscribed by one of his craftsmen.

When the sea is at its most furious and the pounding waves echo from the cave like thunder, according to the legend the Goddess of Mercy would reveal herself amid the waves. In the past it was not uncommon to have devotees jump into the waves from the top of the sea cave believing that would bring them to the western paradise (Buddhism) or that they would become immortals (Daoism). Now a stone tablet has been erected by the government to warn against such rashness. As many as one million pilgrims visit the cave every year; it is a more or less compulsory site/sight on any visit to Putuo Shan.

COMMENT

Putuo Shan provides an example of two different geological types of caves from those described in other vignettes – one a small granite cave and the other a sea cave. Both are very famous however and host more than one million visitors each year, and they share with virtually all other caves in China a religious heritage that stretches back for at least two thousand years. They also share a feature common to many caves and associated sites – calligraphy engraved on their walls or on rock faces around them.

PLATE 6.20

Putuo Shan
Entrance to Liandan Dong, ‘the Alchemist’s Cave’

Three sculptures of Buddhas are carved into the rock above an altar.

“Buddha’s Precious Rock” inscribed with various Buddhist mantras

The trails that link up different sites around Puto Shan Island are lined with calligraphy carved into the living rock.

Entrance to Mei Fu Buddhist Temple

Chao Yin Dong (Pounding Waves Cave) with Emperor Kangxi’s calligraphy (arrow).
One of the most famous in terms of its calligraphy is San Yu Cave, which was discovered in 819 A.D. by three of the most eminent poets of the Tang Dynasty, including Bai Juyi. They were so awestruck by the beauty of the cave that they each inscribed a poem in the rock face before they departed. 137 years later, another three famous poets of the Northern Song Dynasty, Su Xun and his two sons, Su Shi (Su Dongpo) and Su Zhe, also visited the cave and were similarly inspired, engraving another three poems in the rock. In *shan shui* tradition, ‘beauty’ is not confined to the physical attributes of the cave but to the human feelings they aroused in the poets, and the cultural symbolism that the formations represented to them (Qu 2003). The two groups of three poet travellers have made this cave famous all over China, their calligraphy capturing both high art and high literary merit. A visit today may reveal that some enterprising person has climbed the rock face and painted the inscriptions in red or

**PLATE 6.21**

Calligraphy is a common feature enhancing caves all over China:
Qiyunshan Daoist Cave, Anhui Province.
blue or yellow high gloss paint. As noted, Westerners might think this desecration of priceless heritage fabric, even graffiti, but colours in China have their own symbolism, and the touch-up will enhance the experience of seeing the calligraphy for contemporary Chinese visitors who ‘read’ the symbolism. Caves inscribed with calligraphy are common and the Chinese tourist gaze captures the varied symbolism inherent in it.

**Summary**

The nine vignettes presented above underline the fact that in China all caves are cultural sites and a visit to a cave is cultural tourism, whether the cave is one that has been extensively utilized as a place of Buddhist or Daoist worship for centuries with temples, monasteries and pavilions, or whether it is a recently developed karst cave. Where in the past the main Chinese use of caves may have been religious in form and motivation, the re-use of caves today as touristic sites retains the ancient cultural values and allows contemporary Chinese to span the centuries of their rich past. With reference to karst caves that have not been utilized as a sacred or religious site in the past, it is probable that to be a successful commercial tourism venture today a karst cave must be naturally endowed with high quality karst decorations – what I term ‘intrinsic geological attributes’. But those attributes by themselves must be presented in terms of cultural artefacts if they are to attract visitation. Where karst caves have no long history of visitation and have been newly opened for tourism, they all still inherit the mantra of being “bie you dong tian” 别有洞天 (‘an altogether different world’), most graphically illustrated with the symbolic leaving of this world in Double Dragons’ Cave by floating under a rock wall lying flat in a tiny dinghy. Even less well endowed karst caves,
provided that they have a past history of fame such as Guilin’s Crown Cave, can still draw upon what I term ‘symbols of Chinese culture’ and ensure that they find acceptability and approval by Chinese visitors. When Chinese visit a karst cave they will expect to see beautiful decorations but they are not satisfied primarily with the intrinsic geological attributes; their focus will be on the cultural symbols of their heritage. As is evident from my vignettes they will expect to have fun in a playful way, like the Immortals, and enjoy themselves as they journey through the passage to ‘Heaven’. To the Chinese tourist gaze caves are cultural sights not natural sites. Purely scientific geological and biological interpretation is generally not welcomed or appreciated. This results in what I have termed ‘the ludic gaze’ which is part of an over-arching Chinese tourist gaze; and I return to this ludic gaze in my final chapter.

The playful, interactive nature of cave visitation in China is another major departure from western environmentally oriented management. In addition to the specific activities outlined above, such as ‘playing music’ and engaging in a range of photo opportunities, there will usually be other things to ‘do’ as well such as climbing onto or into a formation which is likened to the emperor’s throne or a lion or a dragon (Plate 6.22).

In caves all over China visitors are invited to touch and feel and stroke formations for happiness, for good fortune, for longevity, or perhaps to receive blessings (when the formation represents a god or goddess). These actions are designed to provide satisfaction for humans in the Chinese context of ‘man and nature in harmony’ (Nature giving humans what they need). Burning incense inside the caves at the foot of decorations that are believed to represent a deity is not only tolerated but often
encouraged with the sale of incense sticks and matches/cigarette lighters on the spot. Western concerns about environmental degradation are mostly absent.

PLATE 6.22

Photo opportunity – the Emperor’s Throne, White Dragon Cave, Guilin

The interactive nature of a Chinese cave experience is also demonstrated by the commentary material provided for guides to Jinshi (Golden Lion) Cave in Yiling District, Hubei Province, which aims at engaging the visitors (Jinshi Cave Management Committee 2002):

✧ “We are now standing in ‘The Fairy Ballroom’. In order to bid a fond welcome to our visitors the fairy boys and jade maidens (those formations over there) are going to have a welcoming dance. Ladies and
gentlemen, let’s join them to dance freely in the fantasy ballroom to experience the feeling of freedom from the cares of the world! Take your partners – Dance!”

✧ “Look! Now standing in front of us is a majestic lion! But the only demerit is that the lion has no tail. That’s alright, it is not necessary because there are no mosquitoes to brush away in Fairyland. But if you stand next to him, or sit on his back, you can have your photo taken brushing away the flies for him.”

✧ “Look! This is water dripping on stalagmites like raindrops falling all year round. Touch them! How smooth they are!”

✧ There is the monkey king waving to you! Let’s all wave back!”

This kind of presentation of Chinese caves for tourism may appear to western eyes to be superficial, whimsical, bizarre even; but it holds very deep cultural meaning and the commentary, while playful, will nevertheless be imbued with often profound symbolism.

In this context, when a cave is to be developed for tourism in China, the expert called in to write the script for commentary and training of guides will often be a historian or classicist, rather than a geologist (and I know of no instance of a biologist being so utilized). If some scientific research has been carried out then that information may be utilized but it will not be foregrounded. Generally a theme, or series of themes from history, religion, a literary classic, or myths and legends, will be selected around which to weave the guided tour. Individual karst decorations will be likened to and labelled after famous characters (human and non-human) from history, myth, legend, folklore, religion and literary texts.

In this context the entire experience of caves in China, their myths and mythology, their folklore and history, their calligraphy and naming, their presentation and development, all of the many manifestations of Chinese culture that are apparent, collapse time. That is, they are messages passed through the ages and over the generations, kept fresh by use
and re-use. They deny the break from the past that western society confronts. They are active agents for maintaining continuity between the past and present, bridging time.

In more closely examining the differences between East and West, I note that Kirk (1963) referred to a dichotomy between the phenomenal environment - of empirical facts about phenomena; and the behavioural environment - the environment as perceived. While Kirk was not referring in any sense to different oriental and western perceptions, we can see the same differences applied to interpretation of caves in western societies and their development in China. Western interpretation is built around scientific empirical fact. The Chinese commentary (not interpretation) is perceived, symbolic, and emanates from millennia of cultural heritage. Because of the global spread of the western paradigm of conservation and its adoption to set the management parameters of ‘best practice’ for cave tourism in many countries, once underground in a western cave there is no way to distinguish whether you are in Australia, the United States or Europe. Individual features may be different but the interpretation will be similar – geological explanations interspersed with biological data about the life forms which inhabitant a particular cave. Education is dominant over entertainment, an example of Kirk’s “phenomenal environment”. But a visit to a cave in China is right outside that homogenized, globalized pattern. Localization triumphs over globalization. Once inside, the experience shouts the message – you are immersed in the culture of my China.
CHAPTER SEVEN
MYTHOLOGIZING A NATURAL PHENOMENON FOR TOURISM

Introduction

Rivers have been an important component in the role of cultural heritage as a
determinant in the touristic development of natural landscapes in China. As noted in
Chapters Three and Four, since ancient imperial times there have been five sacred
mountains and four sacred rivers. However, the major philosophies and religions
(Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism) which have shaped Chinese world view do not
elaborate on rivers to any great extent, and certainly not to the same degree as mountains.
Even though ‘learning from nature’ emerged as a major theme among the philosophies
as noted in Chapters Three and Four - for example, Confucius taught that: “The
benevolent adore mountains, while the wise admire waters” (The Analects of Confucius)
– the latter was diffused among lakes, waterfalls, springs, and so forth. Because
Confucius accentuated ren 仁 (benevolence) a little above wisdom so too the mandarin
class tended to look more to mountains than rivers. For its part, Daoism viewed
mountains as the abode of Immortals. Rivers barely appeared in its canons. In fact, when
exploring the history and myths and the deification of persons related to rivers, tragic
heroes such as Qu Yuan, Wu Zi Xu and the mythical Liu He’s mother all ended their
lives in rivers (see below for details), so the emphasis was on mortality, the very
opposite of one of the chief Daoist beliefs about mountains. Chinese Buddhism which
over time syncretized with Daoism and Confucianism, basically omitted rivers from its
constellation of beliefs and value system. In general terms we may say that rivers were
perceived as agents of mortality because of the deaths of illustrious individuals, combined with the periodic floods and mass drownings caused by the Yangtze, the Yellow River and Pearl River and others, in contrast to the connotation of immortality attributed to mountains. Even the great Li Bai is mythologized as having fallen into a river and drowned while drunk and trying to catch the moon reflected there-in. He was not transformed into an Immortal which might have happened had he died in a mountain cave. (In fact he fell ill and died in bed!)

Thus, unlike India for example where the Hindu belief system has imbued rivers such as the Ganges with great religious significance, rivers in China have operated outside that context to a large extent. The might of the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers, the beauty of the mist-shrouded peaks of the 400km long stretch of the Yangtze known as the Three Gorges, and other scenic spots such as Tiger Leaping Gorge on the Lancang River, have captured the imagination of poets and *shan shui* literature is sprinkled with well-known verses such as Su Shi’s “Reflections on Red Cliff”. But for the most part the focus has been on scenic aspects which are then related to human factors and feelings or on the dangers posed by rivers, and in general they have not attracted the attention - religious, philosophical, or in other ways - that mountains and caves have attained. Even the ‘China Tourism Scenic Series’, which consists of eight volumes, fails to mention rivers although it has volumes on ‘Famous Mountains’, ‘Famous Lakes’, ‘Famous Waterfalls’, ‘Famous Springs’, ‘Famous Caves’, ‘Famous Islands’, ‘Famous Temples’ and ‘Famous Pagodas’ (Yu Jinbiao 1994).

However, there is one river and the natural phenomenon of its tidal bore which is in contradiction to this trend. It also demonstrates the durability of traditional culture in the
face of economic rationalism, and provides a graphic example of the strength of cultural
determinants in shaping touristic development in China. This is the phenomenon of
‘Watching the tidal bore’ - Guan Chao - in which the Qiantang River tidal bore has
developed a 'culture' of its own that, once again, verifies a Chinese-specific tourist gaze.

The activity of watching the bore has been mythologized over many centuries and
celebrated in historical records and literary works for more than 2000 years. The
fundamental myth is that the tidal bore occurs on the 18th day of the eighth lunar month\(^1\)
even though the bore in fact is visible on at least 10 days every lunar month, 120 time
each year. The significance of this date lies in the belief that it is the birthday of the God
of the Tide. For more than 1000 years, this particular date has been celebrated in the
annual festival of Guan chao, an event which in the past was graced by emperors and the
royal courts, and which now attracts more than 1 million tourists each year. As a
contemporary tourist event it serves the dual purpose of portraying aspects of Chinese
culture while attracting millions of fee-paying visitors whose expenditure makes a very
significant contribution to the local economy. But attempts to exploit the physical reality
of 120 potential days of bore watching per year have failed because of cultural resistance.

This analysis delves into the cultural elements that have evolved out of ceremonies
associated with the tidal bore and explores the way in which Chinese common
knowledge underpins the dynamics and interrelationships between political, socio-
cultural and economic forces in the environment of sustainable tourism. In this context, I
have analyzed the contemporary attempt to maximize the commoditization of tidal bore
watching in an historical framework which encompasses the mythologizing, de-

\[^1\] The eighth lunar month normally falls between September and October, which is also the month of the
Chinese Mid-Autumn Moon Festival.
mythologizing, re-mythologizing and selective de-mythologizing of the legendary aura of the Qiantang River. First, though I need to define ‘myth’.

**Defining ‘Myth’**

In this chapter I have adopted the definition of ‘myth’ along the lines of Hennig’s (2002, pp.173-174) conceptualization of myths as “clusters of ideas” that:

i) refer to ultimate values that are generally accepted without question and express the relationship of human beings to a ‘sacred cosmos’ beyond everyday life;

ii) they contain ideas of redemption, of deliverance from the limits and sufferings of ordinary existence;

iii) they are accompanied by a collective obligation, either for the whole of society or of certain groups, calling for action grounded in moral claims;

iv) they are represented in different forms of images and narratives in literature, the arts, and popular culture. They are never isolated but pervade social discourse in various forms.

Following Emile Durkheim, Claude Levi Strauss and others, Hennig argues that solutions or approaches to issues and problems that are not possible within the realm of normal every day social life become embedded in myths. The myth then serves the function of dealing with the problem(s) in ways that are not accessible through society’s conventional wisdom or practice. Myths will usually centre around a mythical hero whose powers extend beyond the normal human limits so that otherwise inconceivable solutions can be applied to reach a satisfactory outcome. However, it is essential that ordinary people become involved in actualizing the alternative options usually by way of
cere monies, festivals, sacrificial activities, and so on in support of the hero - “otherwise the myth becomes relegated to mere literature” (Hennig 2002, p.174).

Levi-Strauss (1966, 1990) treats myths as stories which, intellectually and emotionally, serve to satisfy or ‘resolve’ personal and social enigma (puzzles or difficulties). Levi-Strauss derived from the famous French anthropologist, Emile Durkheim, the idea that myths shift the difficulty elsewhere without ever really explaining the underlying issue, and suggested that myths are vehicles “of forgetfulness and failures to communicate – or overcommunicate – with oneself and others” (Levi-Strauss, 1990, p.898). Thus a myth may simultaneously reveal and conceal, according to Selwyn (1996). In a touristic context, a people or place may be presented as harmonious, happy, ‘ideal’, and this will often be an over-communication, which conceals dissonance and actual fractures. Berndt & Berndt (1964), while referring more specifically to Australian Aboriginal society, make the point that myths need to be understood in their social setting, and that without the context of the time in which they originated their symbolism (meaning) is difficult to understand. To examine how a natural phenomenon evolved into the Qiantang tidal bore watching festival and its associated myths I therefore go two millennia back in time. The chronology of the tidal bore’s place and status in society in China lends itself to a sectionalized analysis of the processes involved in mythologizing, de-mythologizing, re-mythologizing and selective de-mythologizing and I shall approach its millennia of recorded history from this perspective.
Fact and Myth of ‘Watching the Tidal Bore’ (Guan Chao)

Fact

The tidal bore of the Qiantang River in Zhejiang Province is a natural phenomenon which occurs as incoming tides sweep across the vast expanse of Hangzhou Bay (over 100kms wide) and are forced into the relatively narrow entrance of Qiantang River, gaining height and force as a mini tidal wave. As the tidal wave moves at a speed of 10 metres per second, the body of ocean water moves over the top of the outflowing body of river water. The compression of the ocean tide into a section of the Qiantang River less than 3kms wide and only one third the depth when approaching Haining results in a high wall of water termed a tidal bore (Wang & Hong 1992). It can reach heights of more than 3.5 metres (Plates 7.1 and 7.2). According to Chinese meteorological data, tidal bores occur twice each lunar month for a total of 12 days, between the 1st to the 6th days and the 15th to the 20th days. Therefore every year there are at least 120 days when one can watch the tidal bore (Wang & Hong 1992). However, as noted above, just one day of the year has been mythologized as the tidal bore watching day when the bore is believed to be at its highest and most powerful. In fact it is not necessarily the day when the bore peaks.

Myth-Making

Historical fact and myth have become entwined in the telling of the story of the festival of ‘Watching the tidal bore’ (Guan Chao). Following Durkheim, Levi-Strauss and others we can say that the element of myth-making arose because of the absence of scientific understanding to comprehend the natural powers involved in the regular appearance of the tidal bore, and the technology to control the destructive flooding that
Plate 7.1

(Source: Haining City Information Office, 1998)
The Tidal Bore (Source: Haining City Information Office 1998).
occasionally accompanied peak tides, sometimes exacerbated by typhoons that created a tidal surge. In the context of the prevailing belief system of 2000-3000 years ago, mythologizing the phenomenon was a rational response to deal with it. Two perceptions formed over the centuries about this natural phenomenon: as a disaster and as a spectacle. With reference to the former, propitiation of the angry gods and spirits to mitigate the destructive impacts of the tidal bore led to the development of a series of rites and ceremonies. Appreciation of the forces of nature as a spectacle grew more or less simultaneously and evolved into an annual festival. Thus these two aspects of the ‘culture’ of the tidal bore, magico-religious ritual and ceremonial festival, co-existed and over time became synthesized into propitiation/appreciation.

One myth relates to the Chinese belief that the habitually bad-tempered Dragon King is responsible for storms at sea and other turbulence, created when he would emerge from his palace under the sea - especially on his birthday - to inspect his ocean kingdom. In the case of Haining this journeying was held responsible for the great tidal bore. Different coastal regions of China propitiate the dragon king on his birthday on dates as varied as the 2nd day of the first lunar month and the 13th day of the sixth lunar month, but in Haining it is propitiated with the occurrence of the highest tidal bore of the year, traditionally acknowledged as the 18th day of the 8th lunar month (Chen & Xiao 1992).

Another popular myth recounts that about one thousand years ago near the confluence of the Qiantang River with Hangzhou Bay there lived a simple boy named Liu He (‘Six Harmonies’) from a fishing family. His mother was swept to her death by the tidal bore. Enraged at this callous act by the Dragon King, he began throwing rocks into the waves. With no sign of his mother and his anger unabated he continued to throw rocks into the
sea for so long that eventually they formed a barrier (sea wall) which controlled the regular flooding caused by the bore. Credited with calming the tides a six storey high pagoda named after him was constructed at the spot from which he had hurled rocks into the sea. The pagoda is still in existence and is known to this day as the ‘Pagoda of Six Harmonies’ (Chen & Xiao 1992).

Perhaps the most widely accepted myth, which is referred to as ‘folklore’ in the official websites for the Guan Chao, tells the story of Wu Zi Xu. He was an upright and honest loyal courtier to Fu Chai, the emperor of the Kingdom of Wu during the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476B.C.) but he was killed by Fu Chai because the emperor took offense at his sound advice. His body was thrown into Qiantang River reputedly on the 18th day of the 8th lunar month in 484 B.C., almost two thousand five hundred years ago and, angered by the injustice of the emperor, Wu’s wrath found expression in creating the tidal bore. It became known as the “Zi Xu wave”, he became deified as the ‘God of the Tide’, and local people still call it by this name. This myth appears to have been syncretized to a degree with the myth of the dragon king’s destructive birthday travels since the 18th day of the 8th month has been celebrated for more than one thousand years as Wu Zi Xi’s birthday, not as the day of his death.

When the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279A.D.) located its capital at Hangzhou, only 45kms from Haining, the tradition of watching the tidal bore reached its zenith, and the area around the Pagoda of Six Harmonies became the imperial site for acts of propitiation. The regular personal participation of the Emperor saw the event become ever more elaborate and it developed into a major festival activity of the southeast region of China. Every year from the 11th day to the 20th day of the 8th month of the lunar
calendar, thousands would come from miles around to witness the event, offer sacrifices, burn joss sticks, and organize temple fairs. The rich and famous and the imperial mandarins would build grandstands or rent dwellings along the bank of the river. Imperial naval exercises and a ‘sail past’ of hundreds of vessels of the imperial fleet were also organized (Lin 1994). When the Southern Song imperial court organized its annual review of the fleet, acts of propitiation, tidal bore watching and tidal bore surfing 2 all on the 18th day of the 8th lunar month, it reinforced the myth that this was the best day to watch the highest tidal bore of the year (Jiangnan Tourism News, 1994, September 16, p.1). In order to appease the God of the Tide, and/or the Dragon King, a series of sacrificial rituals also developed. Three main animals were sacrificed: a bull, a sheep and a pig. A Sacrificial Offering Platform, flanked by Bell and Drum Towers, was built some time before the Tang Dynasty at the current site of the Six Harmonies Pagoda. The drum was beaten as a warning signal that the tidal bore was approaching. The bell was rung to signal that the bore had passed and the seas were calm. Gradually other buildings were constructed, such as the Divine Turtle Pagoda (1612 A.D.) with two cast iron bulls guarding it. They are known as the water-calming bulls (Plate 7.3).

Over the centuries, as the tidal bore and the river floods continued to wreak death and destruction, in Durkheimian fashion additional myths attributed significant events, deeds or the need for appeasement to others in addition to Wu Zi Xu who were also sanctified as gods. Thus, circa 1640, Little Putuo Temple, a famous Buddhist temple, was built at the end of Ming Dynasty in order for Liu He’s symbolic mothers, the nuns of the temple, to propitiate Wu Zi Xu. According to ancient literature, there was a tradition that on the night of the 17th day of the 8th lunar month, the nuns in the temple

2 One element present in ancient times but now banned was the sight of hundreds of body surfers (nong-chao-er) who would leap into the crest of the bore holding banners and umbrellas above their heads.
Plate 7.3

*Zhan’ao (Divine Turtle) Pagoda*

Bull-Calming-the-Sea

Cast bronze calligraphy telling the story of the sacrificial bull that calms the tidal bore
would throw joss sticks to the tidal bore when it rolled in (in 1994). In this instance both major myths, that of the fishing boy hero Liu He and the murdered courtier Wu, were amalgamated into a unified representation of cause and effect, Daoist-origin tales being actualized by Buddhist adherents.

In 1729 A.D., Qing Emperor Yong Zheng issued an imperial order to release fund to build a temple in Haining county for the ‘Gods of the Sea’ (Zhu 1994). Inside the temple, statues of the loyal courtier Wu Zi Xu and others who had made significant contributions to managing tidal disasters, were placed (Plate 7.4). Collectively they were all called the ‘Gods of the Sea’. At the rear of the temple, an imperial tablet was erected instructing people to venerate the Gods of the Sea (Plate 7.4). After the temple was built, on the traditional tidal bore watching day sacrificial offerings would be made in the temple (Zhu 1994). The temple was severely damaged during the Cultural Revolution, but it has since been restored.

**Literary Heritage**

The tidal bore of Qiantang River since ancient times has attracted the attention of the literati throughout the centuries. Their descriptions have varied from perceptions of awful disaster to awe-inspiring spectacle. There are more than 1000 poems and essays of literary note. One of the first recorded descriptions which encapsulates both perceptions – that is, of disaster and spectacle - dates back to the 4th century B.C. when the philosopher Zhuangzi wrote:

*The waters of the Crooked River will roll on rising waves high as mountains and towers, creating a thunderous roar and gathering up a force which threatens to engulf the sun and the sky.*

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PLATE  7.4
Temple of Gods of the Sea, Yanguang Town, Haining

Main Pavilion of Temple of Gods of the Sea

God of the Tide, Wu Zi Xu

Statue of one God of the Sea, Chan Mao

Decree issued by Emperor Qian Long instructing his people to venerate the Gods of the Sea
High on a hill behind the Six Harmonies Pagoda is the Taoguang Temple referred to in Chapter Five for which the Tang dynasty poet, Song Zhiwen, wrote a pair of couplets about the Qiantang tidal bore, followed 900 year later by the Ming Dynasty scholar, Yuan Hongdao. Perhaps the most famous poem was penned by Su Dong Bo (1036-1101A.D.):

*What on earth can match the wondrous sight
Of the Qiantang bore tides
On the eighteenth of the eight month at night?*

My original motivation for visiting Haining and watching the tidal bore was not as a case study for this thesis but to validate my personal understanding of the wonder of the phenomenon gleaned from my exposure as a child to the poems by Song and Yuan, Su Dongpo and other poems and prose about the tidal bore.

**De-Mythologizing the Tidal Bore**

With the overthrow of the Qing Imperial Dynasty in 1911 under the leadership of Dr Sun Yat Sen and its replacement by the Republic, the imperial offering ceremonies ceased. There was no longer a ‘Son of Heaven’ to lead the nation in propitiating the angry gods of the tidal bore and without imperial sanction and participation the raison d’etre for the annual festival lost much of its significance. However regime overthrow rarely results in total destruction of magico-religious belief systems, and in fact the offering ceremony was still practiced for some time. For example, “In 1915, the governor of Zhejiang Province sent his minister of finance and minister of salt delivery (salt was a very important trade commodity) and other officials to Haining on the 17th day of the 8th lunar month so as to conduct the sacrificial offering on the 18th day.” (Zhu Guanliang 1994). In 1916 Dr Sun Yat Sen watched the tidal bore although this was as a spectacle rather than out of any religious sentiment. For about eighty years, from 1911
until the late 1980s’, tidal bore-watchers were mainly limited to residents from Hangzhou and its nearby counties and provinces. There were very few from further afield. Heritage and cultural sites were in a run-down state with the passage of time and lack of maintenance, compounded by the attempt by communism under Mao Zedong from 1949-1976 to destroy the ‘four olds’ - old ideas, old customs, old culture, and old habits, which included religion, ‘superstitions’, and imperial ceremonies and festivals. During the height of this ‘total iconoclasm’ (Lin 1979) from 1966-1976 the Red Guards of the Cultural Revolution damaged or destroyed many of the temples, pavilions and pagodas erected along the banks of the Qiantang River for tidal bore watching. Myths and legends of the past were castigated as ‘unscientific’ and condemned for holding back the modernization of China and progress towards a truly communist state (Meisner 1986).

**The ‘New Culture’ – Tourism and the Re-Mythologizing of the Tidal Bore**

Following Deng’s economic reforms in 1978 and the approval of tourism as an appropriate form of development in 1984, the number of visitors to watch the tidal bore in the 8th lunar month each year began to increase. By 1992 the Haining City People’s Council had noticed the tourism potential of the tide bore (Wan 1996) and it sponsored the ‘1992 Haining Tidal Bore Festival’. It was the first attempt at organizing the informal ad hoc nature of tide-watching activity as a touristic event. Prior to the festival, press conferences were held in the national capital at the Great Hall of the People, Beijing and another one in Shanghai (Shen 1998). They were designed to publicize the event outside Zhejiang Province and focused on the ancient heritage and cultural significance of the *Guan Chao*. The local government restored the ancient Fish Scale
Stone Seawall and the Divine Turtle Pagoda, and re-cast the legendary Iron Bulls, destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, that had been calming the sea for centuries. The myths and legends of antiquity had gained a new respectability. According to City Council records, during the festival visitation reached 150,000 and press coverage amounted to more than 70 articles (Xiang 1996).

The following year the local government again sponsored the ‘1993 Haining Tidal Bore Festival’. At the same time, it started restoring the ‘Temple of the Gods of the Sea’, and organized investment and trade talks, and consumer products exhibitions. Visitation reached 350,000 (Xiang 1996).

By then the success of the festival had drawn the interest of the Provincial Tourism Bureau and the Provincial Government and they were both willing to contribute resources. In 1994 they organized the first ‘China International Qiantang River Tidal Bore Festival’. (Adding the words ‘China’ and ‘International’ required approval by the Provincial Government and the China National Tourism Administration in order to initiate marketing the event internationally.) Restoration of other monuments and sites was carried out, including the reconstruction of the Zhongshan (Sun Yat Sen) Pavilion, originally built to commemorate his visit in 1916 (Plate 7.5), and the Tide-Watching Pavilion. 400,000 visitors were recorded for the Festival that year.

In 1995 the ‘Tablet Pavilion for Mao Zedong’s Poems in Praise of Tide-watching’ was constructed to commemorate Mao’s 1957 visit to watch the tidal bore (Plate 7.5). A boutique hotel was also constructed on the banks of the river adjacent to a walnut tree

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3 Mao’s visit was kept secret until the Tidal Bore was declared ‘open’ for international visitation in 1994, presumably because in 1957 Mao was campaigning vigorously against superstition and ‘the four Olds’. 
Plate 7.5

Sun Yat Sen Pavilion

350-year old Chinese walnut tree planted by Emperor Qian Long, with stone tablet telling the story of his tidal bore watching Mao’s poem (1957) inscribed in his own calligraphy on a stele in the Mao Pavilion

Mao Zedong Pavilion
planted by the Emperor Qian Long in 1762 A.D (Plate 7.5). Visitation that year exceeded 500,000. Thus the mythology of the Guan Chao finds continuity from the first records taken from the imperial archives more than 2000 years ago to the twenty-first century and the creation of the new Peoples Republic of China. Its status as a great cultural event has been constantly validated by the authority of China’s leaders whose visits have continued unbroken from imperial ‘Son of Heaven’ to communist party chairmen.

In April 1996 Haining decided that its festival needed greater direction and so the City Council organized the “Tidal Bore Culture Seminar”. This proposed that tourism development be centred around ‘the tidal bore culture’ which was defined as: History, Folklore, Art, Tourist Goods, Lantern Fair, and Cultural Performances. In pursing these development objectives, and consistent with construction that had already taken place, a new Sacrificial Offering Platform was erected with new Drum and Bell Towers, a new Little Putuo Temple was built and an Imperial fleet of replicated ancient warships was constructed (Plate 7.6). Costs were more than 20 million yuan (AUD 3.3 million).

The inclusion of the Lantern Fair is particularly interesting. It was based around the Haining county town of Xiashi, whose Lantern Festival started some time during the Tang Dynasty (circa 750A.D.). It reached its peak in the Song Dynasty when Xiashi’s ‘coloured lanterns’ were listed among articles of tribute paid by the City authorities to the emperors. The lanterns have won numerous national and international awards, including international recognition at the Chicago World Trade Fair in 1934. Traditionally the Fair was held between the 13th and 18th day of the first lunar month as the conclusion of the Chinese New Year celebration. It was decided that henceforth the
Lantern Fair would be held during the Tidal Bore Festival to enhance that event, an example of what Getz (1998) has termed ‘event flexibility’ which he advocates as possibly being necessary to ensure the sustainability of an event. This re-scheduling of the Lantern Fair from January/February to October as part of the renewed emphasis on the ancient cultural heritage of the Guan Chao was accepted without any apparent resistance partly because it coincided with the holding of this fair in southern China as part of the mid-Autumn Festival (the 15th day of the 8th lunar month) and hence was an appropriate cultural fit for many millions of Chinese. For the past nine years up to 1000 lanterns have been displayed and lit up at night along the major streets and in the ‘Tidal Bore Viewing Resort Park’ for the week around the 18th day of the 8th lunar month. One ancient tradition has been subsumed - but not destroyed - by a new cultural fusion.

In 1996 the China National Tourism Administration designated the festival as one of the key attractions for the ‘97 Visit China Year’ (Xiang 1996), and in 1997 almost 900,000 visitors were recorded. The success of the annual Festival continued to grow and to cater to the huge influx of visitors, a new “100-li (50 kms long) Cultural Tourism Corridor” along the shore of the river, encompassing the best observation points and sites for resort and hotel development was initiated. In just five months a 16.5 hectare ‘Tidal Bore Viewing Resort Park’ was completed (Plate 7.6). In addition to more pavilions and restored sites, hotels and restaurants, the foreshore was upgraded with seating and tiered grandstands, imposing imperial gateways to the park were erected and the grounds landscaped, and a stage and amphitheatre with capacity for several thousand people were constructed for cultural shows.
PLATE 7.6

Haining Tidal Bore Watching Resort Park

Traditional Gate at the entrance to the Tide Watching Resort Park

Little Putuo Temple (restored) inside the park

Landscaped amphitheatre and stage for cultural performances

Landscaped gardens of the park

Amphitheatre seating

New Bell and Drum Tower

Hotel inside the resort park

New seating and grandstands stretch for 1 km.
In 1998 when I made a field trip on the 18th day of the 8th lunar month the crowds were dense (Plate 7.7, Plate 7.8, Plate 7.9). Our convoy of 200 large (50-seat) tour buses was escorted for the entire 45 kms (one hour) journey from Hangzhou to the Tidal Bore Watching Resort Park by police cars and motorbike outriders. Because of traffic congestion, all traffic lights and crossroads were controlled by police as we swept unimpeded through the countryside in a fashion we felt was reminiscent of the way in which the emperors must have travelled with their court. At the river bank, the crowds stretched for several kilometers many hundreds deep. This was the auspicious day for tidal bore watching and the crowd was estimated at almost one million.

When I re-visited the tidal bore the following day there was still a festive air but less than one tenth of the number. The arrival of the bore itself remained the focus of attention, but the smaller numbers served to emphasize the cultural significance of the 18th day of the 8th month as the bore watching day. In fact the lack of congestion facilitated visits to a range of sites such as the Temple of the Gods of the Sea, with other visitors seemingly enjoying the greater freedom of movement. Many of them were propitiating the gods, not only at the temple but at other memorials such as the Bulls-calming-the-sea and the Divine Turtle Pagoda. The sight remained dominant over the site(s). That second day we traveled in a 16-seater bus, the roads were free of congestion, and no police escort was necessary.

Over the five-day period of the Festival, total visitation was estimated at more than 1.2 million. By 2003, an estimated 1.1 million visitors watched the Tidal Bore over a five-day period in October of that year.
QIANTANG RIVER TIDAL BORE FESTIVAL
Thousands of spectators cram the sea wall to observe the bore.
In 1998 more than 1.2 million visited this spot over a 5-day period.
In 1998, on the 18th day of the 8th lunar month, the main car park held more than 500 buses.
QIANTANG RIVER TIDAL BORE FESTIVAL

Re-enactment of the Sail-past of the Imperial Fleet
Commoditization of the Tidal Bore Festival and Associated Commercial Development

From the very beginning of its initiative to resurrect the Tidal Bore Watching Festival as a tourist venture, the government authorities embarked on a parallel series of more commercial undertakings. While the Festival per se was culturally centred, numbers of other opportunities were actively pursued to take advantage of anticipated visitation. Thus in 1992 the Hainan City government also mobilized the local business community to set up the largest quilt-cover street market in China to capitalize on sales potential. This was repeated in 1993 and in 1994 trade and investment seminars were organized and 200 million yuan (US$25 million) was invested in constructing the Zhejiang Leather Garment City. The first National Leather and Leather Garment Exhibition was held in Haining during the festival period that year. This Exhibition attracted more than 300 Hong Kong and Taiwanese manufacturers, more than 290 department store buyers, representatives from 15 Chinese provinces, and thousands of tourists, resulting in total sales of more than 260 million yuan (US$32.5 million). The underlying slogan was: ‘Use tourism to attract business, use business to promote tourism’. The economic impact and benefits of the Festival and Exhibition were reported to have changed the mindset of the conservative small scale agricultural economy of Haining (Jiangnan Tourism News, 1995, September 8, p.1).

The 1996 decision to establish the “100-li Cultural Tourism Corridor” was an extension of this activity, and the hotels, restaurants and other facilities constructed inside the ‘Tidal Bore Viewing Resort Park’ drew more than US$3.75 million in investment. The investment seminars, trade talks and Leather Exhibition were repeated. Overseas investors were invited to participate in nine approved tourism projects (hotels, resorts, restaurants and shopping centres). According to newspaper reports the 1997 five-day
festival period generated business turnover for Haining’s third Leather Garment Exhibition of 443 million yuan (US$55.35 million), and seven joint-venture projects were negotiated totalling US$19.98 million investment (Plate 7.10). According to a sample survey, in 2001 the Tidal Bore Festival brought about 560 million yuan (US$70 million) in direct economic benefits to Haining. In 2002 that figure rose to US$87.5 million. In 2004, it was reported that five new projects worth a total US$739 million, including US$610 million in foreign investment, were negotiated (Zhejiang Online, 2005 April 22, Retrieved September 15, 2005 from http://www.zjol.com.cn).

PLATE 7.10

Opening of the 1997 International Leather Garment Exhibition, Haining
(Source: Haining City Information Office, 1998)
Xiaoshan - ‘To Grip the Tide’

In the past, Xiaoshan City on the opposite side of the river had always regarded the tidal bore as a threat, and in 1993 some 40 people had been swept away and drowned. However, observing the success of Haining’s newly re-created festival they also realized that the threat could be turned into a significant tourism resource. In April 1993 the Xiaoshan Government proposed a 10-year plan to develop a tidal bore watching city on the south bank of the river to rival Haining. Its slogan was ‘To Grip the Tide’. The City formed the first limited company to organize tidal bore facilities, activities and businesses. Xiaoshan City invested 6 million yuan (US$750,000) in 1994/95 to build a complex called ‘Tidal Bore-Watching City’ which featured a replica of the ancient fortress from which the imperial navy sail past was reviewed by the emperor and his generals. Twenty-eight imperial warships were also built. However, by 1996 the Xiaoshan authorities realized that the 6 million yuan investment was actually being used for only a few days a year and being wasted for the other 360 days. How to maximize the economic return became a challenge. In 1997 “Xiaoshan Tidal Bore City Company Ltd” invested over 30 million yuan (US$3.75 million), knocked down the original grandstand and built a new modern integrated resort. The construction was finished at the end of September and opened for business for the 1997 festival at which the first re-enactment of the review of the imperial fleet took place.

The competition between the two cities raised the profile of the tidal bore to such an extent that where-as prior to 1993 it was difficult for travel agents to sell tours (everybody used to visit free of charge), by 1994, over 100 yuan (US$12.5) per entry ticket was standard. “The old reality was regarded as no scenery/no paying tourism. But the old reality was replaced by a new reality of the tidal bore as ‘an event attractive to
thousands of tourists’ with the vantage points walled off and for which entry tickets had to be purchased” (Gu 1994).

According to the manager of Xiaoshan “Tidal Bore City”, in 1997 there were 300,000 visitors to that city and the Xiaoshan Business Exhibition & Trade Fair had a turnover estimated at more than 80 million yuan (US$10 million). The commercial sector focused on Xiaoshan’s existing manufacture of down garments and automobile electronic parts (personal communications). In 2001, the City authorities reported that 72 projects worth a total of US$390 million had been approved, and at the 2002 Business Exhibition a further 95 projects worth more than US$634 million were approved. Foreign investment accounted for more than one third of the total: 34 projects in 2001 valued at US$150 million, and 54 projects in 2002 valued at US$241 million (Xinhua News Agency (Chinese Language), Zhejiang Branch News Information Centre, 2002 September 20). An inspection of Xiaoshan in 2004 revealed that much of the investment was in new infrastructure (highways, a new airport), real estate, resorts, theme parks, and facilities for the 2006 World Leisure Expo. Investment figures for 2003 and 2004 were not available.

In 1999 the central Government in Beijing designated tourism as one of four major ‘pillars for national economic development’ and established its ‘Golden Holiday Weeks – Chinese New Year (January or February, depending upon the lunar calendar), the May Day holiday (1st May), and the National Day holiday (1st October). That year almost one million visitors paid 180 yuan (US$22.5) each to enter the grandstands constructed by the two cities. On occasions the National Day holiday will coincide with the tidal bore festival (as in 2004) and its capacity to attract additional visitation is therefore enhanced.
Selective De-Mythologizing of the Guan Chao

Given the huge amount of investment (over-investment) in plant and facilities, and the enormous revenue that was generated during this seasonal event, both cities looked for ways to transform the annual five-day event into a year-round activity. Meteorological data provided a possible answer. It indicated that there were on average ten days per month when the tidal bore occurred on the back of daily tides that raised its height to more than one metre. Science was to be used to counter culture and persuade visitors that the tidal bore could in fact be seen 120 times a year, and not only on the birthday of the God of the Tide, extolled by Su Dongpo 1000 years ago as the best time to watch the tidal bore. In 1997 both cities began in earnest the task of commoditizing the annual event into a year-round spectacle.

However, realizing that science alone could not counter the influence of Su Dongpo’s declaration and behaviour validated over 1000 years or more, the authorities attempted to negate culture with culture by using the first two lines of a poem by another Tang Dynasty poet Bai Juyi (772-846 A.D.). Bai Juyi, who wrote over 3000 poems - more than any other member of the Tang literati - and who has been likened to the English literary giant Shakespeare, was appointed Governor of Hangzhou 200 years before Su Dongpo. His authority could therefore be assumed to match that of Su Dongpo and his words to carry weight enough perhaps to gainsay those of his later fellow poet:

潮
早潮才落晚潮来
一月周流六十回

The Tide
The morning tide recedes, the evening tide returns,
A cycle repeated 60 times each month.
In 1998 Haining Tourism Bureau thus coined the slogan:

海宁天天可观潮，潮乡月月有大潮。

Every day you can watch the tidal bore in Haining
Every month you can find the tidal bore in the Homeland of the Tides.

The Bureau then developed the marketing theme - “Tidal Bore Watching in Four Seasons”, and in 1998 it held the first “Tidal Bore Watching in Spring” event which attracted 80,000 visitors. This was followed in 1999 by the first “Tidal Bore Watching in Summer” event which attracted 60,000. A second Spring event was held in 2000 and 182,000 visited Haining in combination with other attractions that were given parallel promotion (Zhejiang Online, 2005 April 22, Retrieved September 15, 2005 from http://www.zjol.com.cn). However, the attempts to transform the Guan Chao into an ongoing, continuously-running attraction failed to reach expectations and the Four Seasons tidal bore watching campaign was discontinued after 2000.

I tested my presumption that this attempt to selectively de-mythologize accepted lore would have little effect and that few people would visit the tidal bore outside the designated day with a second field visit to Haining’s ‘Tidal Bore Watching Resort Park’ during April, 2004 when the first high tidal bores for that lunar month were due. On the first day, a Saturday, there were less than 100 people. On the second day, a Sunday, which was advertised as the best day with the highest tidal bore for that period, there were less than 250 people (Plate 7.11 and Plate 7.12). About 150 of them arrived in four tour buses. On that day (but not the first day) about 20 small business entrepreneurs erected stalls to sell souvenirs, with tables and chairs set up for tea and snacks; but they
began to dismantle their stalls even before the tidal bore had arrived, obviously disappointed in the tiny crowd and rationalizing that their time could be spent more

Plate 7.11

The boulevard was almost deserted as spectators awaited the arrival of the tidal bore, Sunday 4 Apr 2004.

Sunday 4 April 2004 was the main day for that month for watching the tidal bore. Less than 250 people were present despite the Sunday weekend.
The Authorities have been unable to extend Tidal Bore Watching outside the 18th day of the 8th lunar month despite massive expenditure in facilities and marketing and promotion.

On 4 April 2004 vendors began dismantling their stall even before the arrival of the tidal bore because of the very small numbers and lack of patronage.

There was no cultural show and only five children occupied the other-wise deserted amphitheatre.
The hotels inside the park were closed in April 2004. They only open for a week around the 18th day of the 8th lunar month.
profitably elsewhere. For most of the two days in April 2004 the two kilometre-long
walled viewing foreshore was deserted. The hotels inside the Park were shuttered and
closed. Repeated attempts to elicit from the Park Management the actual numbers of
visitors for periods outside the Festival were deflected, with the standard response that
there were ‘many’. Interviews with travel agents indicated that while the occasional bus
tour of Hangzhou’s surrounding countryside included a visit to the river on the one or
two days each month when a reasonably high tidal bore was forecast, no other tours
were arranged. Most visitors will simply not travel to Haining or Xiaoshan to watch the
tidal bore outside the traditional, culturally legitimated (and therefore authenticated) date
of the 18th day of the 8th lunar month.

The failure of the attempt to selectively de-mythologise the significance of the 18th day
of the 8th lunar month is substantiated by the Zhejiang Online News website for the
“2005 China International Qiantang (Haining) Tidal Bore Watching Festival” which
quotes the Haining Daily of 8 September 2005 that at all other times of the year outside
the 8th lunar month the riverfront is very quiet (Plate 7.13 and Plate 7.14) The lack of
spectators is further highlighted on this website by quoting a line from another famous
poem by Bai Juyi, “The Pipa Song”, which has become part of Chinese common
knowledge:

门庭冷落车马稀

Fewer and fewer horse carriages call at the door

Originally coined to describe how the life of a famous Beijing pipa musician’s life
changed as her beauty faded, the phrase is now widely used to comment generally on
how slow business is.
“Where have all the people gone?”
Haining Tidal Bore Watching Park, Sunday 4 April 2004
Summary

The following diagram illustrates my charting of the history of tidal bore watching over the last 4000 years, from 2000 B.C. when animistic worship led people to fear the spirits of the river, to 2000 A.D. when the phenomenon has been commoditized for tourist consumption. The history of tidal bore watching has moved from mythologizing to demythologizing to re-mythologizing to selective de-mythologizing, and different outcomes have resulted at each turn of the cultural screw.
QIANTANG RIVER TIDAL BORE

2000 B.C.  
A NATURAL PHENOMENON  
Animistic worship

500 B.C.  
DUALITY OF PERCEPTIONS  
Disaster  Spectacle

400 B.C.  
MYTHOLOGIZING  
Influence of Daoism

100 B.C.  
PROPITIATION  APPRECIATION

200 A.D.  
RITUAL  LITERARY ARTS
Pilgrimage  Recreational visitation

1000 A.D.  
COMBINED FOR SIMULTANEOUS RITUAL AND SPECTACLE  
Addition of other activities, e.g. temple fairs, review of imperial fleet, construction of more temples, pagodas, pavilions

1729 A.D.  
Qing Emperor Yong Zheng constructs the temple to the Gods of the sea and orders his subjects to worship them.

1900 A.D.  
DE-MYTHOLOGIZING: CESsATION OF IMPERIAL RITUAL  
After 1911 overthrow of the court and declaration of the Republic of China, imperial ritual ceased. Some individuals however continued to propitiate the angry spirits.
1949-1976
ACTIVE DE-MYTHOLOGIZING
1960’s – destruction of built heritage during the Cultural Revolution and criticism of ‘the four olds’
All religious practices (superstition) banned

1978
GRADUAL CULTURAL REVITALIZATION
1980’S – Open Door policy: early development of modern tourism in China,
Tidal bore watching, a low key activity for domestic visitation and pilgrimage with some re-activation of ritual after
1976 legislation on ‘freedom of religion’.

1990
RE-MYTHOLOGIZING
1990’s – very active re-creation and development of the “Guan Chao” –
“Tidal Bore Watching Festival”
Spectacle uppermost,
New ceremonials, festival activities introduced
Traditional rituals re-permitted

1994
The Festival achieves national recognition and with the support of the CNTA its status is elevated to ‘China International Festival’ and targets the international market for the first time.

SHORT-TERM TOURISTIC & ECONOMIC GAIN
Achieved with a degree of over-capitalization and under-utilization of facilities because of very short time frame of Guan Chao

1998 to Present
SELECTIVE DE-MYTHOLOGIZING
Attempts to de-mythologize the 18th day of the 8th month as the only date for watching the tidal bore and to schedule bore watching 10 times each month throughout the year

2005
FAILURE AT DE-MYTHOLOGIZING
Result: Guan Chao continues to expand:
Sustainable Festival but – Unsustainable year-round tourism.
Discussion

The chart clearly illustrates the way in which Chinese society has approached the tidal bore over the past 4000 years. Even in the twenty-first century where scientific knowledge has provided a rational explanation of the phenomenon, the ancient religions of China still hold sway for many people. At every building, pagoda and statue along the Haining foreshore, whether inside or outside a temple, people may be seen burning incense sticks and praying to their gods. The attempt by the authorities to de-mythologize the significance of the 18th day of the 8th lunar month for tidal bore watching has, after eight years, proved a dismal failure. Deep culturally embedded values rather than the plans of tourism authorities and developers have determined when and how Chinese will visit the site. The Guan Chao as a five day festival remains in the ascendancy and the expensive attempt to harness the tidal bore as a year round attraction has not produced the anticipated financial results.

Part of the answer lies in the fact that for hundreds of years festivals of all kinds have been important in China - a crucial part of the culture. One special element of these festivals is the 'rènao' 热闹, roughly translated as 'lively', so it would mean very little for people to go and see the tidal bore on any days other than the Guan Chao festival - there would be no one there. As one informant told me: “What's the fun in that? Besides I’d miss out on all the special festival performances!” Another informant, a gentleman perhaps over 60, told me that he had enjoyed coming to the viewing point before the Festival began because it was quiet enough to be able to hear the distant thunder of the tidal bore, and the increasing roar as it drew nearer. But he had to come to the Festival because that was really the best time to enjoy the spectacle. ‘Best’ may be interpreted not only as allowing the effects of the collective tourist gaze to be enjoyed but as a
personal validation for him of his knowledge and understanding of the culture of the tidal bore. In another instance, a group of high school students from Hubei Province on a field trip to the Tidal Bore Watching Park in July 2005 sponsored by the Haining Tourism Bureau queried whether they could see the tidal bore outside the 18th day of the 8th lunar month (*Haining Daily*, 2005 July 22), evidence of the durability of Su Dongpo’s prescribed gaze.

The Tidal Bore Watching Festival of Haining has managed to survive the turbulence of centuries of China’s history. Adaptations to the way in which it has been organized, and changes to its objectives and its form have mirrored changes at both the regional and national levels. From its origins as a traditional magico-religious ritual to pacify the God of the Tide and/or the Dragon King involving the living god in the form of the Chinese Emperor, it is now sharply directed by the authorities towards tourism and financial gain as China moves towards a market oriented economy. Yet in the eyes of many Chinese tourists, the magic of ancient myths remain: the physical spectacle is completely integrated with abstract social, cultural and religious values. Their presence is self-validation of their knowledge drawn from 2000 years of chronicles about the occurrence, the Festival representing a climax for them of actualizing that knowledge. The Chinese gaze of the *Guan Chao* captures both the visible and the invisible, in a distinctly collective tourist gaze.

In this context, the promotion by the Government authorities of the Tidal Bore as a resource for tourism, and its development of the Tidal Bore Viewing Resort Park on the one hand, and the one million plus visitors who participate in the Festival each year emphasize that there are two main agents in myth-making in the touristic sense – the
tourist, and the ‘product maker’. The key role of official tourism organizations which actively create new images (and myths) to re-position their product or destination, to market their difference, needs to be acknowledged (Sofield 2001).

In terms of myth-making, the origins of the current tidal bore festival provide insight into active practices of political and social agents who have not simply enacted culture but have reinterpreted and re-appropriated its myths in their own ways for their own ends. It provides an example of the way in which cultural forms are reworked and transformed by political, social and economic processes for touristic purposes, with the end product being presented as an authentic spectacle linking ancient culture to contemporary society. Government authorities have capitalized on the cultural traditions of the event and created an environment in which Chinese visitors may use the event and the site for both myth and recreation in ways which allow the working class to ‘rub shoulders’ in a manner of speaking with the political, economic and social elite of a fantasized past, i.e. the imperial court and all of its splendour. Chinese visitors are able to ‘connect’ to a sight which has been immortalized in their culture for centuries. While the festival is firmly grounded in such elements it is suggested that the authorities were more concerned with contemporary economic conditions than cultural space: the re-presentation or re-invention of authentic heritage disguises to some extent their quest for economic benefit. The failure to transform the tidal bore into a year-round attraction perhaps lies in the misjudgment by the authorities of the strength of public attachment to the iconic cultural festival and the general public’s resistance to any dilution of that event as a 120 day per year occurrence.
This concern with authenticity provides us with another way of seeking to understand the multiple values of the Guan Chao, and that is to place the festival in the context of Dann’s (1996) classification of four major theoretical perspectives on tourism and their socio-linguistic correlates and apply them to the touristic representations of the Festival. One of them is discussed here because of its particular relevance, the authenticity perspective.

Dann’s ‘authenticity perspective’, derived from the works of authors such as MacCannell (1976, 1989), Graburn (1977, 1989), Pearce (1988) and others, suggests that the tourist journey could be interpreted as “a pilgrim of the secular world paying homage to many and varied attractions which were symbolic of modernity and represented the differentiations of society” (Dann 1996, p.7). MacCannell (1989) utilised a semiotic treatment of attractions, in which the attraction is a sign, “it represents (marker) something (sight) to someone (tourist). The marker or signifier provides information (e.g. name, picture) about the sight, and as a representation of the sight is usually the first contact that the sightseer (tourist) has with the sight. Markers are either off-sight (e.g. travel books, stories of people who have previously visited the sight) or on-sight (e.g. notices). Since off-sight markers anticipate the sight they are often superior to the sight” (Dann 1996, p.9). “Off-sight markers can also stereotype a destination by highlighting certain ‘must see’ features” (p.9) and the inclusion since 1997 of the Guan Chao in most of the tours offered by the national government’s China Travel Service (CTS) fortifies its stereotyping. As Dann notes, “Markers may additionally be regarded as symbols, that is they stand for a represented object” (1996, p.10) and just as Uluru can represent Australia so the Guan Chao represents Haining’s China for the tourist.
For non-Chinese tourists to the Guan Chao, most of their off-sight markers will have been formulated by the tourism promotion bureaus of Haining and Xiaoshan, while for Chinese their off-sight markers will be internal, incorporating the ballads and poems of past ages, Sun Yat Sen’s visit, and Mao Zedong’s literary efforts. Dann suggests that most off-sight markers “are formulated by outsiders. … Local voices rarely constitute markers in contemporary tourism” (1996, p.10); but with regards to the Guan Chao it is a variety of local agents such as the two cities’ administrative authorities and the CTS which are vigorous in expounding and perpetuating the myths associated with the Festival. The language of touristic images of the Guan Chao promotes and reinforces its authenticity.

In the case of the Guan Chao, its authenticity resides in the sight rather than the site. While in many other respects ‘Man improving on Nature’ will be accepted, in this instance the major investments in multiple constructions along the river foreshore - improvement of the site - as part of the integrated attempt to improve on the sight (by re-designating the sight to dates other than the one authenticated by history) have failed the test of authenticity, even when many of the site improvements have been directly embedded in former historically legitimated buildings and monuments.

The Guan Chao also illustrates the dynamic nature of tradition and heritage. They are not unchanging ‘things’ but part of an ongoing process of interpretation and reinterpretation as each succeeding generation responds to new understandings, new experiences and new inputs from an ever-increasing range of sources, both internal and external. What was regarded as ‘traditional’ in the eighteenth century is quite different from what is regarded as ‘traditional’ now. Historiography (the study of writings of...
history) reveals that contemporary values and circumstances always influence the interpretation of historical fact. Interpretation may change to suit or satisfy particular needs because heritage, its ownership and its presentation will involve considerations of changing values, power structures and politics. Heritage is thus not static in time, but through continuous interpretation may be viewed as an active process. The *Guan Chao* has not been immune from these forces. It remains consistent with the values of its society even as those values have changed, been re-invented to meet contemporary needs, or reinstated to enhance continuity with the past. The *Guan Chao* fulfils the ‘test’ of cultural continuity in terms of sustainability. The same cannot be said however for the attempt to promote tidal bore watching OUTSIDE the dates of the annual Festival where it would appear that the authorities have not held values consistent with those of the general Chinese tourist.

An historical analysis also allows us to set the dynamics of the *Guan Chao* in the context of globalization and localization. In its modern form it displays a complex mix of local and global forces in its presentation. At one level it draws upon several thousand years of tradition. Some of the original motivation for staging the festival remains. But the contemporary commoditization of culture and the form of its current staging, with tourism and the marketing of investment in manufacturing and industry paralleling the display of the tidal bore, are entirely modern and a reflection of both national change in China and global trends. Visitation, touristic purchases of goods and services, and investment inspired by the trade and commercial activities of the towns, also reflect this duality. According to Leiper (1999) one of the ten most frequent myths of tourism is that creating a special event will inevitably transform a quiet backwater into a hive of activity which will bring substantial economic benefits to those involved in its making. While
there may be more mirage than reality in some special events, the re-creation of the Guan Chao by Haining in 1992 has delivered impressive economic returns by linking it into modernization and foreign investment opportunities. This dual embrace of tourism and its entrepreneurial development (vide the 100-li ‘Cultural Tourism Corridor’ along the Qiantang River, and its promotion of Haining as the Leather Goods capital of China and Xiaoshan’s Business Exhibition & Trade Fair) are consistent with Getz’s (1998, p.13) definition of festivals “as tourist attractions, catalysts for other forms of development, image makers, facility or site animators (designed)... to promote an attractive image for investors or potential residents”. The staging of the Guan Chao thus illustrates both the globalization process and specific adaptations to local internal aspects of China’s tourism development.

Many eyes scan the Guan Chao; many perceptions shape the views of its visitors; and the images they take away will reflect their different makers. To paraphrase Selwyn (1996), there is both a synchronic and diachronic dimension to the experience for the Chinese visitor to the tidal bore. Whether expressed in the context of the myths and history and the thousands of dead who have been drowned by the wrath of the Qiantang River, or whether it is in attention paid to specific places along the banks such as the temple of the ‘Gods of the Sea’ and the Divine Turtle Pagoda, a deep sense of solidarity with past generations of Chinese is established. The eulogizing of Sun Yat Sen and Mao as recent Chinese heroes reinforces the role of myth-making in linking the present and the past and underscores the active participation of government agencies in this myth making. Hollinshead (2002) makes the point that heritage tourism rewrites history with each telling. In the act of interpreting historical sites, the tourism industry represents the views of specific interest groups: thus, heritage tourism is a powerful force in shaping
society's view of itself and its past. In the case of the Qiantang tidal bore, however, the power of the industry has been insufficient to counter the strength of cultural tradition: the ghosts of the *Guan Chao* have proved more than a match for the financial might of investors and developers. It may therefore be suggested that cultural antecedents and heritage, embedded in Chinese common knowledge, have been the key determinant in the contemporary resurrection of the *Guan Chao* as a tourist festival.
CHAPTER EIGHT
A CHINESE TOURIST GAZE

会当凌绝顶，
一览众山小。

When shall I reach the top and hold
All mountains in a single glance?

Du Fu (712-770 A.D.)
Final two lines from the poem: “A View of Taishan”

Just as Confucius enjoined his students to seek wisdom from nature and the Tang dynasty poet, Du Fu, strived for greater understanding by climbing Taishan, so in the preceding pages have I attempted to tease out some insights into the forms of contemporary tourism development of natural resources in China by journeying through its landscapes chapter by chapter. Each chapter represents one more ‘world’ of my metaphorical xiàngyá-qíú (series of concentric spheres carved one inside the other) of Chineseness, delving deeper with each passing chapter into the complexities of the foundation of China’s contemporary tourism development. I summarize each of these chapters below and then embark on a brief exploration of aspects of globalization and localization that are present in China’s contemporary tourism development to set the scene for a more detailed examination of what in my view are distinctive characteristics of a Chinese tourist gaze. This over-arching gaze embodies other gazes that capture core values of Chineseness such as a ‘relational gaze’ and a ‘harmony gaze’.

In this context, in examining my research questions, the various examples, illustrations and evidence of contemporary forms of tourism development denote that Chinese common knowledge is a major determinant in the forms that much of this development
takes. This common knowledge in turn encompasses a Chinese world view in which anthropocentrism is a strong, sometimes dominant, element. It is thus distinct from the contemporary western paradigm for tourism to natural areas that is based on the ideal of a sustainable ecological/environmental biocentric model where humans are relegated to observers and are not embedded in Nature but separated from it. My research thus points to a conclusion that there is a Chinese tourist gaze with its own distinctive characteristics, part of which is a Chinese ‘harmony’ gaze that stands in opposition to Urry’s romantic gaze. The centrality of Chineseness refutes significant aspects of Urry’s gaze as being less than universal, and while Urry’s work in this field is seminal there is a Eurocentric bias to substantial components of his tourist gaze that do not ‘fit’ with Chinese values and perceptions. In this chapter I provide details of my construct of a Chinese tourist gaze that counter the Eurocentrism of Urry’s tourist gaze.

**Chapter Summaries**

In Chapter One I outlined a series of research issues to be explored, seeking to understand in particular the role of cultural heritage and Chinese common knowledge as a basis for the development and presentation of contemporary forms of tourism based on the landscapes and natural features of China. This chapter also raised the questions of anthropocentrism and anthropomorphism and their relevance to the notion of a Chinese tourist gaze. I also set out my methodology, which defines both emic and etic frames, utilizing concepts from both Chinese and western traditions of scholarship. In this approach, my Chinese voice predominates.

In Chapter Two, a summary of the sociolinguistics of the Chinese language laid the foundation for reaching an understanding of Chinese common knowledge, and the way
in which a consistent and continuous stream of knowledge has been passed down the centuries in an unbroken manner through its linguistic traditions. For Chinese people history has not ‘ended’: the past is not past but present: there is no historical endpoint as the past is fused with the present in an unbroken line; and much tourism by Chinese visitors to Chinese sites is not a backwards journey of nostalgia but a connecting to this merged, continuous and living past/present entity. Poems and poetry are key agents in amalgamating past and present and the poem as the most developed form of Chinese classical literature was highlighted as part of the process of transmitting Chinese common knowledge. This chapter also emphasized the role of calligraphy as a sail on the vessel of Chinese common knowledge, the way in which it has captured and utilized wenyen as a key role in connecting the past with the present, and the pervasive presence of calligraphy at tourist sites all over China today.

The major belief systems on which Chinese views of nature are based constitute Chapter Three. I outlined a generally accepted Chinese world view and the importance of correlative and relational thinking; the teachings of Confucius; the philosophical and religious structures of Daoism and Buddhism; the para-science and practice of feng shui and the way in which it often determines the location, placement and type of human structures and human presence within Chinese landscapes; the importance of China’s classics and other literary works in their relational connection to space and place; and the extent to which an anthropocentric view tends to be significant. Very many aspects of these belief systems are intrinsic to Chinese common knowledge and form the basis on which much contemporary tourism development in China depends.
Utilizing the more theoretical framework of the first three chapters, the next four chapters (Four, Five, Six and Seven) turned to the application of much of that theory in tourism development, presentation and management of mountains, caves and river sites. Chapter Four outlined the history of mountains and their role in and significance for travel around China over many centuries, with four clearly defined stages. This chapter also underlined the role of culture in so-called nature sites in China, accentuating the correlative and relational aspects of *shan shui* literature and *shan shui* paintings. Chinese common knowledge with its emphasis on literary heritage before the sciences enjoins Chinese tourists to interpret their mountains and national park experiences through the culture of *shan shui*, thus contributing to a Chinese tourist gaze.

The correlative and relational aspect of landscapes in which the *tezhi* (‘essence’) and *jingjie* (‘scenic ambience’) are identified in order to assist in planning for human presence and developing sites for human use were explained in Chapter Five, and these concepts emphasize the anthropocentric approach combined with anthropomorphism that are present in many Chinese tourism sites, attractions and resources. One conclusion arising from this chapter is that if a site is not invested with cultural, historical and heritage values supported by literary works of sufficient merit to be part of Chinese common knowledge, then the success of that site as a sustainable tourist attraction for domestic Chinese visitors may be doubtful. (Attractions constructed around ethnic Minorities are excluded from this conclusion since, as noted in Chapter One, they do represent the ‘exotic Other’ for both Chinese and non-Chinese visitors and so more closely fit Urry’s notion of the ‘away’ component of his binary ‘home and away’ tourist gaze). Another perspective on the cultural character of Chinese touristic landscapes expounded in Chapter Five is that often an authoritative figure associated with that site
will be utilized to validate the importance of the site and imbue it with a degree of
cultural significance that will act as a ‘pull’ attractor.

Chapter Six which explores the Chinese development of caves for tourism strongly
emphasizes that such sites are cultural before they are geo-physical. In this context it is
suggested that while some planning, influenced by western paradigms and a small
number of western experts, is currently trying to change the overwhelming
anthropocentrism and accompanying anthropomorphism of such sites, the cultural
significance of caves - especially in Daoist terms - is so strong that any change in
development, presentation and management of caves for tourism is likely to be a long,
slow process.

The penultimate chapter (Seven) is a study of a natural phenomenon, the tidal bore of the
Qiantang River, as a tourist attraction. It charts the failure of a multi-million dollar
investment in tourism facilities to develop a year-round tourist site, a failure that can be
largely attributed to the fact that the cultural values of watching the tidal bore are so
deeply wedded to a single three-day period of the year. The Guan Chao, the bore
watching festival whose traditions extend back for at least 1000 years of recorded
history and which are part of Chinese common knowledge, takes place around the
eighteenth day of the eighth lunar month, and this is regarded as the only ‘proper’ time
to enjoy the spectacle. This is despite the fact that the bore occurs on at least 120 days of
the year, ten times each calendar month. Notwithstanding the power of the tourism
industry to shape and reshape heritage, traditions and images (Hollinshead 2002), in this
instance the power of Chinese common knowledge has proved too strong for the dollar,
which has proved less than almighty.
In this sense the *Guan Chao* is a triumph of localization over globalization, and I now wish to return to one of the research questions that I posed in Chapter One – the tensions between globalization and localization as modernization is embraced by China – before analysing the Chinese tourist gaze.

**Globalization and Localization**

With an economy that has been driving forward at an annual growth rate in excess of 10 percent p.a. for more than a decade, modernization invariably means the construction of something and everything for everything and something. As is apparent from many examples throughout this thesis, but given specific point in Chapter Five when five cases were outlined in detail, various tourism developments may be seen as vehicles for modernization and thereby contributing to globalization with their five star hotels and their modern restaurants. Yet these five cases all encompass distinct features that are unambiguously Chinese, definitely anthropocentric, and grounded firmly in strongly-held Chinese values about nature. The developments of Moli Scenic Reserve, Tenchong Volcano, Longjin Gorge, and Huangshan (a few among many) all provide evidence of this duality – an embrace of aspects of modernization that are global, but expressed in a Chinese, that is, local form. This expression of the local is not just physical or architectural but extends into a range of intrinsic values drawing upon thousands of years of cultural heritage that underlie or are imbued within a particular approach or site for its new use and purpose – that of tourism. In this context the motivation for visitation by Chinese tourists to such sites is allied to and reinforces a mosaic of local stimuli, expressed through a Chinese tourist gaze that contributes to localization. It may be distinguished from the motivation that guides many new age tourism and postmodern ‘western’ tourists in their search for greater self-actualization, manifested for example in
much greater numbers of ‘free independent travellers’ (FITs) rather than group tour
travellers, a western movement that is part of “the global ecumene” as Hannerz (1994,
p.56) described it. It is probable that China will gradually move away to some extent
from group touring, but at present individual touring is still an extreme undertaken by a
tiny minority, and the enduring Chinese value system with its emphasis on collective
responsibilities rather than individualism will act as a brake on such social change
occurring swiftly.

As I noted in Chapter One, Palsson’s (1994) suggestion that movement towards a global
village is not inevitable, is not driven by an irresistible force and that humans have a
great capacity for maintaining locally determined futures, has validity in terms of
China’s contemporary approach to tourism. Where globalization certainly produces
continuities in the anthropological sense across cultures and countries, this does not
necessarily lead to cultural homogeneity; and the way in which China has developed its
caves for tourism is a graphic example of the reverse. In the context of justifying or
simply being the reason for a particular investment in time and money, the constant and
continuing reliance for much of China’s tourism development upon Chinese common
knowledge, that incredibly rich well-spring of Chinese-ness, is further evidence, if such
was needed, of the power of the local over the global. Particular Chinese reasons are
adduced for particular activities that may have little or nothing to do with tourism
development in other parts of the world. The tidal bore development would seem to bear
more relationship at first to global tendencies – huge investment in a festival site
complete with hotels, auditoriums, and spectator stand as if it were a sports venue, which
has then been linked into manufacturing, trade and commerce with China’s largest – and
therefore one of the world’s largest – annual international exhibitions of leather
garments and leather ware. Yet the tidal bore has its own cultural heritage deeply embedded in many hundreds of years of continuous celebration, immortalized in poems and essays and calligraphy; and the local in many ways predominates. Certainly in terms of trying to exploit this heritage for a year-round tourism activity instead of an annual festival, the local has proved superior to the global. Modernization has failed to ‘touristize’ the place, in space and time, of the spectacle of the tidal bore to suit its own ends (largely economic): culture has ‘won’.

This brings me back to my main argument that contemporary tourism of and to natural sites in China has been largely determined by its cultural heritage. As Guarassi (2001, p. 226) argued (although not in relation to China): “All landscape whether inhabited or not is culture: that is, a means of signification and communication.” This definition rests on the key assumption that the environment or physical world “is seen not as external to culture but rather incorporated within it through semiosis, the ‘cultural act’ par excellence” (Guarassi 2001, p.226). In a Chinese context we could thus say that ‘natural’ space and culture become indistinguishable, the physical flowing over in to the emotional - and often anthropomorphized - as evidenced by shan shui literature. Guarassi (2001, p.227) quotes “the renowned scholar of Orientalism”, Augustin Berque (1994) to argue that landscape is in fact for the western world a relatively modern concept, but that the Chinese have conceptualised the idea and ideal(s) of landscape since at least the 4th century A.D. Translating this into China’s transformation of landscape as tourist attraction we may accept that the Chinese have over the centuries maintained culturally profound ways of perceiving landscapes, that in moving to Modernity and the twenty-first century, the advent of tourism as an acceptable form of economic development after 1984 reveals that the Chinese have been energetic and
vigorous in “crafting new spatialities” (to use Guarrasi’s term, 2001, p.231) – but in a
localised way, channelled and designed and pre-determined through their ‘Chineseness’.

Central to my argument that cultural determinants guide much tourism development in
China is that when working with natural landscapes, the Chinese designers will often
manipulate the space (void) to create boundaries: elaborate trails will enclose a space; a
bridge across a chasm (another type of void) will be constructed; a pavilion will be
strategically placed. In other words a range of various ‘markers’, appropriate to Chinese
understanding of space, will be constructed into landscapes in a manner which is
diametrically opposed to the western concept of ‘wilderness’. This deliberate
manipulation of images that will ‘fit’ the Chinese Daoist aesthetic standard incorporates
and encapsulates key aspects of Chinese cultural heritage, both in terms of the concrete
and in terms of the philosophical/abstract. Localization takes precedence over
globalization and this complex utilisation of ‘natural’ space is fundamental to the
Chinese tourist gaze. It constitutes a point of departure from Urry’s romantic gaze, since
the application of the two principles (tezhi and jingjie) that are used to guide
development provide a stark contrast to that ideal western perspective which endows
nature with its own intrinsic qualities and often decries any cultural (i.e. human)
presence as contrary to pristine wilderness and ‘unspoilt Nature’. In China the thinking
is often reversed: human presence does not ‘spoil’ the environment/scenery/attraction
but rather is necessary to enhance it; it is not perceived as dominance of humans over
nature nor as the intrusion of humankind into a pristine natural environment but as ‘man
improving on nature’ – all further manifestations of localization. This in turn points to
the wide-spread acceptance of an anthropocentric approach which is adopted as the
‘natural’ thing to do and which in most cases does not include biodiversity, conservation
and environmental impacts as essential factors in planning for tourism development of
natural sites. This situation is of course not absolute: China is changing. Its education
system is encompassing many aspects of western environmental science; and officials in
the China National Tourism Administration and academics in some universities are
introducing more biocentric forms of planning for tourism. But even in this changing
environment there are many more examples of planning and development that follow
long-established Chinese precepts for developing natural sites for tourism.

A Chinese perspective on what is acceptable and appropriate for tourism of and to
natural sites, embodying a degree of anthropocentrism and/or anthropomorphism, may
be said to constitute an emic understanding of the situation in contrast to what
Hollinshead (1998, 2002) has described as characteristic of an etic standpoint, that is,
“an unthinking, derived, western, metropolitan, colonialist domination of the imagery
and production of culture for tourism” (Hollinshead 1998, p.77). Said, in his seminal
work on Orientalism (1978), noted that efforts to interpret cultural and related
differences are necessarily problematic because they incorporate an evaluation of
‘Otherness’. But in this thesis by acting as a bridge cross-culturally, as a participant
observer not restricted by the one boundary, I have included ‘self’ in determining that
‘Otherness’ (which is not otherness to my Chinese ‘self’ but ‘same-ness’), an approach
that seems to me to be absent from the mass of tourism literature that seeks to analyze
cultural difference in touristic terms.

The emic perspective emphasizes localization, since the identity of place and space is
Chinese before it is anything else. On the other hand, the embrace of tourism is
archetypal globalization, as Urry (2003) states in his essay expanding on the
globalization aspects of his original ‘Tourist Gaze’. He suggests that: “In certain cases becoming a tourist destination is part of a reflexive process by which societies and places come to ‘enter’ the global order” (2003, p.2). All tourist space has similar core components that are part of a global ordering of tourism and there are innumerable ways in which “huge numbers of people and places get caught up within the swirling vortex of global tourism” (Urry 2003, p.2). Part of this reflexivity consists of systemized procedures to identify and set apart each ‘place’ in order “to maximise their location within the turbulent global order. Such procedures ‘invent’, produce, market and circulate, especially through global TV and the internet, new or different or repackaged or niche-dependent places and their corresponding visual images. And the circulating of such images advances the very idea of the ‘globe’” (Urry 2003, p.3), or what Franklin, Lury and Stacey (2000) have termed the global nature/global culture of tourism. It is perhaps, as suggested by Smith (2001), Cox (1997), and others, that globalization is necessarily and simultaneously accompanied by localization - it is Swyngecouw’s (1992) ‘glocalization’.

PLATE 8.1 ‘Glocalization’

Visitor Information Centre, Jiuzhaigou World Heritage Listed Nature Reserve, Sichuan Province

Visitor Centres are “a new cultural institution, arising exclusively from the needs of the tourist industry. Unlike hotels, highways and other transport facilities, the visitor centre is typically purpose built just for
tourism” (Pearce & Burke 2003, p.525) and is therefore part of the globalization of the tourist industry. The design of this Visitor Centre is based on traditional Tibetan monastic architecture with a Chinese admix and is therefore a manifestation of localization. This construction brings globalization and localization together in an example of ‘glocalization.’

**A Chinese Tourist Gaze**

I now wish to consolidate the various comments on a Chinese tourist gaze that are spread throughout the previous chapters and combine them into a single more comprehensive analysis of the characteristics that contribute to its Chineseness. This gaze is highly structured through sociolinguistic parameters which feature correlative and relational thinking (in which no individual entity exists in isolation but is connected to all things around it in dynamic relationships), and this has produced what I have termed ‘the relational tourist gaze’. Another key part of a Chinese tourist gaze is what I have termed the ‘harmony gaze’ which encapsulates those attributes that encompass ‘man and nature’. In terms of the broader Chinese tourist gaze, this harmony gaze is a logical extension that flows out of the centrality that my thesis gives to natural resources and natural landscapes in China’s tourism development. However, a Chinese tourist gaze is more wide-ranging than just the harmony gaze, embracing such aspects as a different world view, a partial deconstruction of Urry’s binary division between ‘home’ and ‘away’, the role of the journey in Chinese tourist travel, and the fusion of past and present, which distinguishes it from Urry’s themes. The chief attributes of a Chinese tourist gaze are summarized below:

1. Correlative and relational thinking provides a world view that sets the parameters for a Chinese tourist gaze (a relational gaze)

2. A Chinese tourist gaze is much more structured and institutionalized through the medium of Chinese common knowledge and Chineseness than the more amorphous western tourist gaze.
3. This gaze centralizes humans in tourist space so that all landscapes in China are imbued with anthropocentrism and/or anthropomorphism.

4. When considering natural resources and landscapes in the context of Chineseness, this produces a ‘harmony gaze’ denoting ‘man in harmony with nature’ so that –

5. The focus on human presence and human construction (including calligraphy) improves nature, thus enhancing the touristic experience for Chinese.

6. The harmony gaze displaces that aspect of Urry’s romantic gaze which venerates ‘wilderness’ devoid of human presence.

7. A range of invisibilities is captured in the Chinese tourist gaze (and the harmony gaze) through the lens of Chinese common knowledge.

8. A Chinese tourist gaze dissolves some of the sharp divisions between ‘home’ and ‘away’ that are a feature of Urry’s gaze.

9. The time/distance to the destination is to be endured not enjoyed and many Chinese leave to arrive; often the journey is not part of the experience.
10. To many Chinese the countryside has negative connotations, not a blissful rural idyll as Urry argues for his romantic gaze (Oh Dangerous! Oh Beautiful!).

11. In China the past blends into the here-and-now; the two are part of a single entity, not separated as in the west. Similarly the natural blends into the cultural, hence all natural sites are also cultural sites.

12. There is thus a unity or ‘wholeness’ about sites that means they are not fragmented in the western sense of a site being dislodged from its original, natural, historical and cultural contexts.

13. Since there is no ‘death of history’ there is a lack of nostalgia in much Chinese visitation, in opposition to Urry’s romantic gaze where this sentiment is held to be a central motivation for travel.

14. There is an absence of self-actualization in much Chinese tourism, with a concomitant prominence on the collective gaze as the norm.

15. A generalized attitude about tourism stresses entertainment and rejects deep scientifically based interpretation of tourist sites, since ‘being educated’ is regarded as a kind of ‘work’ not leisure; and this leads to a rejection of a common western view
that deep interpretation will enhance visitor satisfaction (a ludic gaze).

In examining each of these attributes of a Chinese tourist gaze, it is obvious that my research supports Urry’s contention (2002, p.1) that: “There is no single tourist gaze as such. It varies by society, by social group and by historical period.” However, the characteristics of a Chinese tourist gaze as outlined above challenge Urry’s assertion that there are nine common or “minimal characteristics of the social practices” which constitute tourism and thus the universal “baseline” for the tourist gaze (2002, p.2). His set of common (universal) characteristics is in my view somewhat Eurocentric. Several of them are not applicable to a Chinese tourist gaze. Several of them have a different emphasis from a Chinese perception. Only two or three of them may be applied without amendment to Chinese touristic space and tourist behaviour. And there are other characteristics of a Chinese tourist gaze that are absent from his construct.

The first attribute of my Chinese gaze, correlative and relational thinking – inherent for all Chinese tourists - immediately distances the Chinese gaze from a western gaze. In such circumstances, the socio-linguistic and psycho-linguistic framework of ‘being’ Chinese pre-determines the way in which Chinese mentally approach touristic sites, the way in which they perceive those sites and locate themselves within those sites. Because of Chinese common knowledge the resultant gaze is more institutionalized than its western counterpart and much more structured than Urry’s gaze. From the over-arching Chinese tourist gaze it is thus possible to identify a specific ‘relational gaze’. The relational gaze applies to all ‘Ten Thousand Things’ that comprise the Daoist universe and to the fact that nothing exists in isolation from other ‘things’. There is a dynamic
relationship that connects every individual entity in association with other ‘things’.
Many examples have been provided in the preceding chapters of this relational theme
that is a core aspect of Chineseness. The naming of individual objects, where they are all
linked into their surroundings or other ‘things’, as with cave decorations, (‘the
rhinoceros explores the river’, ‘a wild goose circles the clouds’); exemplifies the way in
which this theme runs through Chinese thought at all levels.

The values inherent in correlative and relational thinking make it inevitable that
anthropocentrism and/or anthropomorphism are integral to the Chinese tourist
experience and thus contribute significantly to a distinctive gaze. Natural landscapes in
China therefore are equally cultural landscapes to a Chinese tourist gaze.

Since it is a gaze which does not separate humans from their surrounding natural
environments, I have called this aspect of a Chinese gaze the ‘harmony tourist gaze’ to
embody that other essential attribute of Chineseness – that ‘man and nature’ coexist in
harmony and that where they do not ‘man’ has a responsibility to improve on nature.
This value is intrinsic to the harmony tourist gaze, allowing many elements in a
particular setting, both natural and artificial, to be viewed as complementary, as
balancing each other, where western eyes might see incongruity or clashes. Hence my
assertion that in a Chinese tourist gaze and the ‘harmony gaze’ all natural sites are
simultaneously cultural sites. This ‘harmony tourist gaze’ challenges that aspect of
Urry’s western ‘romantic gaze’ which venerates ‘wilderness’ devoid of human presence;
as noted in Chapter Three for Chinese an absence of humans in a landscape indicates
that space is useless for humans (the relational world view) – it is “huangye” or ‘bad-
lands’. Since this harmony gaze is also derived from Chinese common knowledge it
opens up a range of invisibilities (as illustrated with numerous examples in the preceding chapters) that become part of this gaze for Chinese tourists.

The harmony gaze is obviously ‘relational’ in its fusion of ‘man’ with nature; but it is differentiated from the relational gaze by the way in which its focus is on ‘man’ as pre-eminent with the heaven and the earth, where-as the relational gaze incorporates all ‘The Ten Thousand Things’. The harmony gaze appraises how ‘man’ manipulates physical space with physical additions or modifications to the environment that are centred around the presence of humans or of human (artificial) effort in a given landscape. Thus ‘feng shui’ may be regarded as the example par excellence of the harmony gaze since it requires ‘man’ to locate ‘his’ presence in a very structured way in the landscape in order to ‘improve’ on nature to achieve the best outcome for ‘man and nature’. The siting of villages and temples or tourist facilities, and the construction of specific things, whether it is a body of water, a line of trees across a gap in the hills, or a zig-zag bridge according to the principles of feng shui – all are calculated to bring ‘man’ and nature into harmony. The harmony gaze discerns all of the anthropocentric and anthropomorphic elements in a touristic sense, drawing upon Chinese common knowledge to ‘see’ into a landscape.

Moving onto my second set of characteristics about a lesser emphasis on the differences between ‘home’ and ‘away’, the fundamental element of tourism – that it involves movement through space and time - is of course shared by Chinese tourists. However, where Urry then goes on to state that this movement and stay in various destinations necessarily involves travelling “to a new place or places” (2002, p.2), differentiating strongly between ‘home and ‘away’, I would suggest that for many Chinese the
distinction is often not as clear-cut. Frequently the places are not ‘new’ in the sense that they are familiar, have been known to the traveller long before he/she physically visits, and hence ‘departure’ is not quite as strong a concept for much Chinese tourism as it is for western tourists. As I have mentioned several times in the preceding chapters, travel is a connecting to, a joining with, ‘old friends’ who have been familiar since childhood school days, not a departure from the known into the unknown. ‘Old friends’ here does not refer to people but to any familiar thing, site, place, etc – and the Chinese have a common expression – “fang yu gu ren” 彷遇故人 - which means: “It seems as if I am encountering an old friend.”

In further questioning the basic binary differential between ‘home and away’ of Urry’s tourist gaze, his third universal point, that “the journey and stay are to, and in, sites outside the normal places of residence and work” (2002, p.3), has an import that is a little different when viewed from a Chinese perspective. As foreshadowed in previous chapters, while Chinese domestic visitors may be going outside the walls of their normal residence, the places they are going to are also ‘home’. All of China is our home and the common every-day descriptors of ‘homeland’ and ‘motherland’ reflect this intimacy and familiarity with even distant places. I would argue that there is thus less stress in the Chinese psyche on going ‘away’ from ‘home’ when we are linking into places with which we are familiar through Chinese common knowledge. ‘Home’ extends into ‘Homeland’ and is not separated out.

In this partial deconstruction of the ‘home and away’ dichotomy, there is another aspect of much Chinese travel that in my view can be interpreted as a reinforcement of a lesser emphasis on departure. This relates to the general observation that for many thousands (I
would in fact suggest millions) of Chinese the journey from home to destination is NOT part of the experience. It is to be endured. It is most commonly endured by sleeping (or playing card games in between naps). Trains and buses are all equipped with curtains and even before departure in many instances the curtains are drawn and passengers have settled down to sleep. In the past ten years I have travelled thousands of kilometres in China, often in the company of tourism academics and tourism professionals, and their behaviour is the same: even before departure the majority of them have closed their eyes. They depart to reach their destination, not to go on a journey. In this sense they only arrive and while of course they depart and move through space and time, in terms of experiential excitation of the senses that westerners normatively associate with travel (Urry 2002, p.152), many Chinese do not undertake travel as part of the experience of the departure. On my most recent visit to China as part of a tourism planning team it was noticeable that the windows of trains and buses now have advertisements at eye level to be read from the INSIDE. A recent Vietnamese experience revealed the same use of window space, and my Ph.D supervisor (a westerner) on a conference trip to Pattaya in October 2005 commented that he had “experienced this on a mini-bus in Thailand and was able to remove the advertising so that (he) could see out.” (The similarities across Asian national boundaries may be explained by the fact that Vietnam was under Chinese governance for over a millennium and ancient Chinese culture e.g. feng shui and Confucian thought formed the foundation of Vietnamese culture. Likewise, Chinese cultural influences have extended into Thailand for many centuries).

Windows of transport modes in other words are not for looking through: they are not automatically part of a Chinese tourist gaze, and the physical travel (Urry’s sensual corporeal movement) is for many Chinese not part of the gaze and in a sense therefore
not part of the journey. This represents a marked contrast with Schivelbusch’s ‘mobility of vision’ in which the traveller sees the world through the machines that transport them (1986, p.66); or as Urry (2002, p.153) states, the technologies of travel produce “swiftly passing panoramas, a sense of multi-dimensional rush … a variety of tourist glances, the capturing of sights in passing from a railway carriage, through the car windscreen or the camcorder viewfinder”, resulting in a “mobilized gaze”. For many Chinese this mobilized gaze is absent from their touristic experience in any major sense: the windscreen of the car or coach, or the window of the train is not a looking glass onto the swiftly passing world outside.

Another facet of a deconstruction of ‘home and away’ that Urry does not really explore but which is central to a Chinese perspective might be summed up as ‘attitudinal’. For example, the American author, Caren Kaplan, discusses the issue of mobility in the United States which has reached such proportions that she can describe it as “a culture” of constant travel (1996, p.ix). And Urry himself concludes that “if households are forever on the move then distinctions of home and away lose their power” (2002, p.157). For both authors this is an attempt to make a distinction based on frequency of travel and measuring the time that one ‘inhabits’ one space or another. Neither author indicates what the travellers consider to be their ‘home’ and their ‘away’. If we look at Bhabha’s (1994) ‘hybrid populations’ – the Mexicans who over a 20 year period spend 11 months of every year working in the United States and only return to Mexico for one month each year (their holiday) - have they gone ‘home’ or are they ‘away’? If we look at Tasmanians who own a ‘weekender’ and go there every weekend, calling it ‘my real home’ and whose ‘home’ in the city is ‘just where I sleep to go to work’, what is home, and what is away? Yes, the weekender is ‘away’ from work, it is where they may enjoy
recreational time, but attitudinally it is ‘home’ not ‘away’. Similarly, I would argue that for many Chinese the journey to a special place (‘old friends’) is not ‘going away’, it is going ‘home’ to the very roots of what ‘home’ and ‘mother country’ mean to them. It is attitudinal and cannot be measured by either a distinction in terms of work and not-work, or in terms of spatio-temporal separation of perhaps hundreds of kilometers and many hours of travel between residence and destination.

This general attitude to travelling raises another point which merits further consideration. For many Chinese ‘the countryside’ conjures up negative images that have been moulded over the centuries by the grim realities of peasantry, of poverty, hardship, privation, starvation, and death, most recently reinforced in living memory by the enforced banishment of millions to isolated rural areas for re-education as labourers during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Perhaps one unconscious response to this is that by sleeping to arrive, the metaphorical journey through negativity is in a sense avoided. Urry, citing Schivelbusch (1986) notes that the speed of modern transport has ‘annihilated’ space and time, and if I translate this into the widespread, common Chinese way of dealing with travel I would suggest that sleeping through the journey is a demolition of spatio-temporality that hastens the moment of arrival. Thus, hours that might otherwise be there to reflect upon dismal connotations of the landscape through which one is passing are removed, eliminated by sleep. Such a proposition might also be linked to Baudrillard’s (1988) suggestion, (cited in Urry 2002, p.154) that driving through the vast empty landscapes of the American desert “constitutes a metaphor of endless futurity, the obliteration of the past … and seeing the ever-disappearing emptiness framed through the shape of the windscreen”. For the Chinese traveller, the frame of the window is replaced by the frame of sleep, so there is no seeing; but there is
the emptiness and an obliteration of the past. So I would argue that home and away are linked as an entity rather than separated by the heightened sense of disconnection that the passage through time and space produces for many western travellers. There is “a co-presence” (Urry 2002, p.155) between the two physically disparate places. I have not undertaken any survey to substantiate the proposition that sleep is a response to avoid the cognitive journey through the countryside. I simply advance it here as a phenomenon that may be worth closer examination. It is also a topic to which I will return below when further considering Urry’s notion of the ‘romantic gaze’.

In China there is also less differentiation between ‘home and away’ in other ways. For example, in many western national park settings the difference between home and away will be accentuated by the kind of accommodation provided: it will often try to capture the ‘simple’ things in life (as in ‘a simpler way of life in the past’) and provide eco-lodges and cabins built of rammed earth, rough sawn timber, and logs with hand-adzed shingle roofs, no television, no telephones or internet access, and so forth. Such accommodation will range from backpacker budget style to five-star luxury accommodation. By contrast there are few Chinese tourism developments in similar settings that feature such rustic, simple, ‘local’ dwellings, furniture and furnishings (ethnic minority areas excluded). In China such a style of accommodation would be regarded as ‘primitive’ or ‘budget’. Three and four star ‘modern’ hotels and resorts, often located deep inside nature reserves and national parks all over China, tend to be the standard. Of course the location is different; they are ‘away’; the furniture and furnishings are different; but the standards are not. In short, at present there is no discernible demand in China by Chinese domestic travellers that has produced the sort of demand/supply side ‘simple’ or ‘rustic’ accommodation that is a feature of many
western national park destinations. Mostly, the opposite is the case, and in a recent field trip to the far northwest of Xinjiang Province, more than 150 kms from the nearest town, a new 5000-bed ‘tourist town’ (Jiadengyu) for a new national park located in a verdant uninhabited valley consists entirely of ‘modern’ three to four star ‘European alpine’ style hotels and villas (Plate 8.2). A Danish physical planner described it as “urbanization owing nothing to its setting; it could be in any city anywhere in China” (Hans Jacobsen, personal correspondence, July 2005). In other words, there is in China not always the distinction between ‘home’ and ‘away’ that can be made for many western national park destinations where the architectural styles may reflect the locality.

In examining the dissolving of some of the differences between ‘home and away’ there is also a Chinese behaviour that can be readily observed at tourist sites all over China, which frequently draws comment from westerners, and this relates to attire. Many Chinese office workers, for example, do not dress differently as tourists but wear the same clothes they wear ‘at home’, in going to work, or going shopping, or to a social function. Thus, male visitors to a national park can be seen climbing the innumerable stairs to the top of a mountain dressed in suits and polished shoes (Plate 8.3). Women will wear stockings and high-heeled shoes and carry a handbag not a backpack (Plate 8.3). They are not ‘dressing up’ to go touristing, they are simply wearing what they wear at home when they ‘go out’, including to the office (i.e. to work). For younger generations the same often applies. They can be observed in national parks, heritage sites and other tourist places dressed in jeans and sneakers and carrying backpacks. While this might seem appropriate for hiking it is often the ‘normal’ attire of younger contemporary Chinese at home or going to school and they have not necessarily dressed specifically for the tourist occasion; home and away is un-differentiated. In terms of
shoes, as mentioned in previous chapters, most trails in China are hardened and not left unmade with sand, mud and grass underfoot, so there is no need to choose the footwear
PLATE 8.2
The new tourist town of Jiadengyu in Xinjiang Province is completely divorced in architectural style from its cultural environment and could be in any urban centre in China, rather than in a high alpine meadow.

Jiadengyu is located in the cultural environment of the indigenous nomadic Kazak ethnic minority whose distinctive yurts follow a centuries’ old traditional style (Yurts near Lake Salimu).
PLATE 8.3 The Dress Code for Chinese Tourists is often similar to the apparel they wear at home, so that the distinction between ‘home and away’ is lessened.

Suited tourists posing for photos, Jade Valley (above); and Jiuzhaigou Nature Reserve (below)

Suits in rivers and mountains

Suited tourists in Shilin karst ‘Stone Forest’, Yunnan.
that is often necessary for much nature based tourism in western countries. The differences between ‘home’ and ‘away’ are thus reduced.

A Chinese tourist gaze also diverges in a relatively subtle way from the differentiation that Urry (2002) draws between tourism as a leisure activity and its opposite, work, and that the two are separated out by the way in which leave and holiday periods are regulated and differentiated from one’s time engaged in paid work. In this Urry agrees with MacCannell who reached the same conclusion in his seminal book, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976). MacCannell argues that tourist attractions and activities are differentiations, not as between attractions but as between work time and not-work or re-creation-al time that frame modern society. MacCannell’s analysis of the rise of tourism is based on his perceptions of social structural differentiation – “the totality of differences between social classes, life-styles, racial and ethnic groups, age grades, political and professional groups, and the mythic representation of the past to the present” (1976, p.24). Labour and production are separated from their original context (in a Marxist sense) and become objects for sightseeing. Applied to the Great Wall of China, MacCannell’s analysis would detach it from its original social, political and strategic meanings so that it now signifies to western tourists a monumental representation of “abstract undifferentiated human labour” (MacCannell 1976, p.25), a manifestation of Urry’s semiotics of the ‘tourist gaze’. Sightseeing in the view of MacCannell and Urry is thus a kind of collective striving for a transcendence of the modern fragmentation, a way of attempting to overcome the discontinuity of modernity, of incorporating its separate components into a unified experience. The differentiations of modern society have the same structure as tourist attractions: elements dislodged from
their original, natural, historical, and cultural contexts, hence Urry’s acceptance (2002, p.122) of MacCannell’s conclusion that the differentiations are the attractions.

In my view, however, while this may accurately reflect how western tourists see touristic landscapes, it does not necessarily reflect a Chinese stance since at the start of the 21st Century China’s society does not (yet) exhibit the same ‘fragmentation’ that dislodges its tourist attractions from their original, natural, historic and cultural contexts. The sociolinguistics of Chinese, Chinese common knowledge, and Chinese-ness all combine to provide a certain cohesion rather than a fragmentation. There are of course differences between ‘home’ and ‘away’ but there are linkages and similarities too that from a Chinese perspective diminish the differentiation-as-attraction concept that Urry advances for his tourist gaze. There is no ‘death of history’ (Fukuyama 1992): rather, for Chinese society there continues to be a strong continuity between the present and the past with a concomitant reduction of difference.

In this context, and in returning to my more general thesis that much contemporary development of natural sites and sights for tourism in China by Chinese is culturally determined, I wish to emphasize the linkages between the 'everyday'/non-everyday' differential that denies to some extent the binary division between the past and present that Urry and others ascribe to contemporary western society. Since there is no 'death of history', visiting a thousand year old heritage site is not in a sense going away, it is simply extending the everyday into an additional dimension, so that the everyday phrase or poem or saying associated with that site or sight is connected with and to the individual in a personalized way. It is not a yearning for the past, nor a nostalgia for some exotic or romantic past as the motive force, nor for authenticity. This fusion of the
past and present is (after Said 1978) a major philosophical difference between the East and West. When considering the presence of the past in the here-and-now of China, as a Chinese I consider that it is more accurate to talk about ‘familiarities’ in contrast to ‘memories’ or ‘remembrances’ or similar phrases since they have obvious connotations of a past. Thus when Schoppa (1989, xiii) writes about the continuity of the past and present in contemporary China he uses the word ‘remembrances’ but my preference is for ‘familiarities’, thus:

Macropolitical remembrances [familiarities] take the form of epochal or dynastic histories; local remembrances [familiarities] are histories of provinces, prefectures, counties or geographical units, as well as nonverbal memorials such as shrines to outstanding local leaders; family remembrances [familiarities] include genealogies and ancestral rituals and shrines. With a plethora of written records, shrines, memorial arches, ancestral tablets and an acute awareness of ancestors, the Chinese present is surrounded by and infused with the past (my emphasis) (Schoppa 1989, xiii).

The separation of past and present is integral to Urry’s notion of ‘the romantic gaze’ - his entire Chapter Six (2002) is devoted to exploring what he terms “Gazing on History”. Quoting Lowenthal (1985) that ‘nostalgia’ is a physical affliction dating from the seventeenth century Urry states that: “the … disease of nostalgia seems to have become a contemporary epidemic” (2002, p.95). His comments are contextually all about European attitudes, places and developments, and in my view we must therefore subject Urry’s notion of the romantic gaze to scrutiny through Chinese spectacles. And when we do we find aspects that are seemingly contrary to those of a western-oriented romantic gaze as nostalgia is largely absent in Chinese visitation. Since Urry also suggests (2002, p.43) that contemplation of rural landscapes, and ‘undisturbed natural beauty’ are central to the romantic gaze, views about ‘the countryside’ and ‘wilderness’
are part of this difference. I contend that for most Chinese visitation to heritage sites, natural landscapes and ‘the rural way of life’ there is little that is ‘nostalgic’ in the sense of Urry’s use of the term. As noted above, despite the extolling of peasantry since 1949, a negative image of ‘countryside’ is part of the lived experience of many millions of Chinese urban dwellers today. Furthermore, the current modernization of China which requires millions of labourers for building sites has seen ‘migrant workers’ from the rural areas registered to work and live temporarily in cities in their millions. One estimate is more than 200 million (Xinhua News Agency report, 2005 July 2), and Chinese colleagues suggest that another 100 million ‘illegals’ could be added to that figure. The generally accepted motive is that they are ‘escaping’ from the poverty of the countryside. And this highly visible, semi-organised mass movement of people from the rural areas to the city – more dynamic and on a scale unknown in most countries so that it would be a misnomer to describe it in the usual terms of ‘rural/urban drift’ (my emphasis) - bears testimony for the Chinese population at large of the disadvantages of the countryside. Even the often appalling conditions of urban building sites are regarded as superior in terms of earning a living in the countryside, and daily reports in the Chinese media (newspapers, television, radio) of a wide range of ‘human interest’ stories bring the differences to the front of national consciousness. ‘Going to the countryside’ in a nostalgic search of a golden era of a purer, simpler life as argued by writers such as Huysssen (1990) and Sutton & House (circa 2000) for Postmodern and ‘New Age tourists’ thus has restricted appeal for many millions of Chinese, and I would argue cannot be incorporated into a romantic Chinese tourist gaze as Urry argues for a western tourist gaze. The general view of ‘wilderness’ as huangye (bad-lands) adds to its negativity. (As a personal aside, some recent photographs of myself on horseback in a very isolated part of China – Lake Kanasi, Xinjiang Province – in a high alpine meadow
a metre thick in wildflowers with no trail, obviously ‘wilderness’ – draws an unsolicited response from Chinese viewers of “Oh! Dangerous!” while western viewers say “Beautiful”!) (Plate 8.4)

How then does one take into account the fact that *shan shui* literature (and art) provides images of landscapes that are imbued with positive - and romantic - connotations? My view is that one can differentiate between specific sites that carry such imagery, and the countryside in general, and this may account for the fact that for many Chinese the journey to a distant rural place is to be endured, and is undertaken to arrive. “The journey”, highlighted in much western travel writing, is not part of ‘the travel experience’ for many Chinese. In other words, where the western postmodern or New Age tourist may infuse the countryside and rurality with romanticism (Sutton & House n.d.), the Chinese will differentiate between specific sites and the countryside in general. This view may change as China continues to modernize at a swift pace, but for the present Chinese attitudes incorporating negativity and lack of nostalgia about travel to the countryside are significantly different from those that Urry attributes to many western tourists. Chineseness forms the basis for this difference.

There remains at least one other feature of Urry’s romantic gaze which is largely alien to Chinese behaviour and thought. That is its emphasis on the self and self actualization, and in this context Urry foregrounds his view that romanticism has become “widespread and generalized” with the romantic gaze attempting “to make everyone sacralise nature in the same sort of way” (2002, p.44). China is a collective society where individualism has been subordinated for millennia to the need for an orderly society and harmony with an emphasis on social responsibilities to family and clan and country in contrast to
PLATE 8.4

Oh Dangerous! / Oh Beautiful!
western values of personal achievement, satisfaction of personal needs and individual freedoms (Manrai & Manrai 1995). The collective approach is foundational to Confucian thought and a number of his most famous texts embody the need for the individual to learn how to inter-relate with different levels of society, from the immediate family (filial respect) to the extended family, clan affiliations, and so on right through to imperial veneration. It is uncommon for Chinese to embark on travel as an individual for reasons of personal fulfilment. Thus when we look at the Chinese collective gaze and the emotions and values it encapsulates, it could be said to include aspects of Urry’s romantic gaze that Urry basically reserves for individuals. I should therefore like to re-label Urry’s romantic gaze as a Chinese ‘harmony gaze’, which in Confucian ‘middle way’ style brings some elements of the two concepts of romanticism and collectivity together.

The ‘Collective Gaze’, bound up in mass tourism, necessitates the presence of large numbers of people (Urry 1990, p.45). Other people provide atmosphere, a carnival spirit, a sense of excitement (contrast a deserted summer beach and a deserted city-scape), and opportunities for social interaction: it involves “conviviality” (Urry 2002, p.150). The presence of other tourists in numbers does not just generate congestion, but may be necessary for the enjoyment of a sight, provision of services, group interaction, and so on. Given the combination of (i) China as a collective society, (ii) the psychological ‘comfort’ of being in strange places with a group of known people, and (iii) the sheer numbers of visitors to China’s tourist sites in any case, then it is valid to conclude that the collective gaze is more appropriate for typifying Chinese tourists. The same sight may be gazed upon by both the romantic gaze and collective gaze. Mount Tai will retain its majesty, beauty and grandeur whether gazed upon simultaneously by 1000 tourists or
one tourist. But the *experience* will be different, dictated by their different gazes. The single western tourist seeking the romantic gaze may find the experience less enjoyable because of the presence of 999 others, even though Tai Shan retains its characteristics. For Chinese, in general the absence of 999 others could make the experience apprehensive and therefore less enjoyable, an opposite reaction to the western traveller to Tai Shan.

Returning to Urry’s differentiation between leisure and work, his fourth universal characteristic is that: “The places gazed upon are for purposes not directly connected with paid work and they normally offer some distinctive contrasts with work (both paid and unpaid).” This holds true for the gaze in China: work is not involved. For most Chinese however it probably goes even further than for many westerners for whom a journey may be taken because of its ‘educative’ content or part of self-actualization, and for whom classes in art, wood-working, cookery, pottery making, and so on, will be recreation and be the specific focus of a holiday. Many Chinese visitors by contrast will ignore or even be impatient with attempts at deep scientific interpretation, which may be perceived as ‘educating’ them, a kind of ‘work’ that is regarded as contrary to the purposes of recreation. For example, scientific environmental interpretation of a cave’s geological processes and habitats which western visitors may expect when touring caves would be regarded by Chinese in China as ‘going back to the classroom’ because what they want is ‘fun and games’ not ‘education/work’. Likewise if a lecture on *feng shui* aspects of a particular landscape were given, Chinese would tend to regard it as ‘work’ and not part of their recreational activity, where-as many westerners would receive it as interpretation to complement their enjoyment of a site. It is of interest in this context that the Visitor Information Centre (referred to in the section on globalization and
localization above) is a western ‘invention’, and the Jiuzhaigou Visitor Information Centre (a requirement of the western set of ‘rules’ established by UNESCO for management of World Heritage Sites) is unable to serve its (western) purpose – less than 3% of the 1.3 million Chinese visitors to Jiuzhaigou Nature Reserve step inside this US$16 million edifice for which entry is free (personal correspondence, Jiuzhaigou Deputy Director, Mr Ke Ke, April 2004).

Another Chinese-oriented gaze may be derived from this attitudinal characteristic associated with Chinese leisure travel, which I have called the ‘Chinese ludic gaze’. It is not to be confused with Cohen’s post-modern tourist’s ludic behaviour (Cohen 2003) since the Chinese are not post modern travellers; but it shares the value placed on light-hearted entertainment such as playing guessing games in caves that decries deep, scientifically based interpretation. This Chinese gaze extends ‘beyond’ the view to the guide, with the wide-spread expectation that the guide will be able to entertain group tours in which singing, for example, is a very important skill. A “good” guide will be able to sing in a quality voice in all sorts of situations, in which the song may be latest ‘pop’ tune out of Hong Kong and totally unrelated to the physical location of the group or the theme of the tour (if there is one).

In its fundamentals, however, China’s tourism industry is based on a difference between work and leisure and indeed, to underscore this point and in order to develop its tourism industry, China in 1999 specifically inaugurated its three ‘golden holiday periods’. It legislated for three one-week holidays over the Chinese New Year period (late January/early February depending upon the time of the full moon); the May Day celebrations around 1 May; and National Day, 1 October; and declared that it was the
patriotic duty of all Chinese to travel at these times in order to provide a boost to the national economy. China has thus opened up space for leisure in the yearly calendar of work. Accordingly in the context of Urry’s first ‘minimal characteristic’ of the tourist gaze, a Chinese tourist gaze has commonalities with his concept.

Another of Urry’s common characteristics of the tourist gaze that emphasizes difference is that the gaze is directed to features of landscape and townscape which separate them off from everyday experience”, to sights that are out of the ordinary; that such sights are viewed with greater sensitivity than normal (Urry’s “lingering gaze”); and then captured on film or through postcards, books and so on, and subsequently the gaze can be “endlessly reproduced and recaptured” (2002, p.3). While I agree with Urry that such sights are viewed by Chinese visitors to sights/sites around China with greater sensitivity than ‘normal’ sights and are often captured on film and with postcards, as mentioned previously I do not believe that there is the same distance between the ordinary, everyday and the destination that Urry avers for minimal characteristics as the baseline for his tourist gaze. As noted above, through Chinese common knowledge there are linkages and a bringing together of the everyday and the sites and sights that are embedded in the Chinese conscious through the mechanisms utilized for learning to read and write; and thus in my view the Chinese tourist gaze has less of an emphasis on separation. In this context, it is rare for many Chinese to take photographs of landscape per se: invariably they position themselves in the photographs and thus relationally link themselves into the landscape. One could even argue as noted above that the collapse of space and time by sleeping through the journey, i.e. being unconscious of the passage of space and time, decreases the separation between home and away. Franklin (2003, p.271) is critical of Urry’s emphasis on ‘difference’ and, echoing Kaplan’s (1996)
comments on a culture of mobility, suggests that in general terms because of the prevalence of tourism as part of ‘normal’ repeated experiences for many people, “increasingly the difference between the everyday and spaces of tourism has become blurred if not collapsed”. He contends that spaces of ‘home’ have often been ‘tourist-ized’ as manifestation of other cultures become “freely available on our doorstep” through restaurants, commodities, clothing, music and dance – “the exotic other is no longer what we dream of seeing on adventurous holidays: they are our neighbours …” (2003, p.272). Franklin’s reasoning of course diverges from my arguments about a Chinese-oriented collapse of difference between home and away, but his central argument supports a deconstruction at least in part of Urry’s central theme about difference as between home and away.

Urry’s eighth common characteristic is based on semiotics: “The gaze is constructed through signs and tourism involves the collection of signs. When tourists see two people kissing in Paris what they capture in the gaze is ‘timeless romantic Paris’. When they see a small village in England what they gaze upon is the ‘real olde England’.” (2002, p.3). Tourists the world over are to Urry “unsung armies of semioticians … fanning out in search of typical signs of every place and every thing” (2002, p.3). In general terms we could say that the same is true of many Chinese tourists: they too are semioticians. But again, where some western tourists may be attributing a generality to what is gazed upon (Paris equals love in the Spring-time), for the Chinese the sights and sites they visit will often have far more specific meanings and attributes. As noted, the Chinese gaze, like Foucault’s gaze of a doctor (1975), will be seeing ‘invisibles’ across a broad spectrum of sights and sites, and those invisibles will be founded upon the institutionalised imparting of knowledge that transcends the influences Urry ascribes to his army of tourists-as-
semioticians. I have provided many examples of this phenomenon in the preceding chapters, for example the way in which Chinese are able to ‘see’ that much of the calligraphy adorning the cliffs of Huangshan is inscribed in the ‘strong, steadfast’ Ouyang Xun style. In Chapter Five I outlined some of the many invisibilities an educated Chinese will be able to ‘see’ on a visit to Huangshan and the way in which the sights and sites of this famous place are based on Chinese common knowledge, all inextricably linked through the sociolinguistics of Chinese and correlative and relational thinking processes. My entire chapter on caves is of course replete with such examples.

This greater institutionalization of a Chinese tourist gaze introduces another departure from Urry’s common characteristics. His sixth baseline point is that: “Places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered. Such anticipation is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist practices, such as films, TV, literature, magazines, records and videos, which construct and reinforce that gaze.” (2002, p.3) I would agree with Urry that anticipation about a pleasurable experience is universal, and it is certainly a sentiment that motivates much Chinese domestic tourist travel. However, as mentioned on several occasions previously, the Chinese education system which forms the basis for Chinese common knowledge provides a much more structured, much more sustained and much more institutionalised foundation for a Chinese tourist gaze than can be obtained from Urry’s conglomerate of influences. The education system is a non-tourist practice of course, but it is much closer to Foucault’s clinical gaze (1975) in the institutionalization of universal (i.e. for all educated Chinese) knowledge and values, which is then carried over into a Chinese tourist gaze.
Another minimal or common characteristic as defined by Urry is that because a significant proportion of a modern society’s population “engages in such tourist practices new socialised forms of provision are developed in order to cope with the mass character of the gaze of tourists” (2002, p.3). The situation in China would appear to support this point if for no other reason than that the sheer volume of contemporary visitation is probably unmatched anywhere else in the world (CNTA 2005). Typically China’s ‘honey pots’ for domestic tourists must deal with millions of visitors each year and so facilities that match these numbers must be provided. In centuries past, when emperors travelled the motherland accompanied by the imperial court, provision had to be made for as many as ten thousand at a time and special ministers to oversee travel arrangements were appointed (until the overthrow of the last Emperor in 1911 the court had its special minister for travel). So this phenomenon is not new in China and preceded the development of modern mass tourism. My preceding chapters have provided numerous examples of the way in which contemporary tourism development in China approaches this situation.

The final common characteristic which Urry attributes to the gaze is that “an army of tourist professionals” has arisen whose purpose is to “reproduce ever new objects of the tourist gaze”, taking into account changing class, gender, generational differences in taste, and so on (2002, p.3). The same is true for China, but in this case the professionals in many cases strive to link new objects with elements of Chinese common knowledge, as in the case of Huangdi Yuan for example, or the development of Crown Cave near Guilin.
In concluding my case that there is a distinct Chinese gaze that differs in significant ways from Urry’s baseline characteristics, I refer to a recent experiment by cultural psychologists Chua, Boland and Nisbett (2005) which explored the contrasting worldviews of Chinese and Americans. Their work offers a substantiation for the proposition that cultural determinants are a key element of gazing and cognitive perceptions arising from the way in which a landscape is viewed. A large body of literature in cross cultural studies and psychology has identified that there are cultural differences in perceptual judgment and cognitive processing between East Asians and westerners (e.g. Munro 1985; Nakamura & Wiener 1985; Prentice & Miller 1999; Nisbett 2003). Asians have a holistic philosophy that tends to place individual objects in the context of their relation to the whole, whereas westerners focus on a central object and analyse and classify it by type. Chua et al (2005) examined the possibility that the cultural differences could be embedded in culturally different viewing patterns when subjects were presented with a naturalistic scene. They adopted a quantitative methodology that measured involuntary eye movements of Chinese and American subjects when viewing photographs, in which each picture showed a striking central image placed in a realistic background, such as a tiger in a jungle. They found that the American subjects spent longer looking at the central object, while the Chinese subjects’ eyes tended to dart around, taking in the context.

The researchers concluded that: “The findings demonstrate that eye movements can differ as a function of culture. Easterners and Westerners allocated attentional resources differently as they viewed the scenes”; that “differences in judgment and memory may have their origins in differences in what is actually attended as people view a scene”, and that contrasting world views, culturally determined, constituted the foundation for the
differences - “people from different cultures … see different aspects of the world, in different ways” (Chua et al 2005, pp.12633).

A separate study by Nisbett (2003) posed the question: ‘Why do East Asians find it so difficult to disentangle an object from its surroundings?’ From my Chinese perspective, perhaps the question equally could have been: ‘Why do Westerners see only the principle object and not the total environment?’ Nisbett (2003) found that when Japanese and American subjects viewed an animated underwater scene, the Americans zeroed in on big fish swimming among smaller fish while the Japanese took in the whole environment - and the different "seeings" were evidence of profound cognitive differences between Westerners and East Asians. Cultural psychology thus provides evidence of a different kind for my proposition that there is a Chinese gaze which is culturally determined and distinct from other western counterpart gazes.

This Chinese gaze, with its subsets of a relational gaze, a harmony gaze, and a ludic gaze, is qualitatively different from the tourist gaze as defined by Urry (2002). There is evidence of a loose hierarchy, with the over-arching Chinese gaze being supplemented by the relational gaze and the harmony gaze that both encompass core components of Chinese-ness, while the ludic gaze has a more specific aspect of Chinese-ness. Because the Chinese gaze is more structured than Urry’s gaze, a case could also be made that this hierarchical configuration is less identifiable in Urry’s western gaze. Further research would probably reveal a series of other Chinese-oriented gazes that could be differentiated from the more western gaze of Urry. This Chinese gaze holds localization closely in its embrace while aspects of globalization are held at a distance. This gaze is thus itself part of 別有天地 ‘Bie you tian di’, ‘An Altogether Different World.’
At the Summit

In the universal tradition of thesis writing, one’s *magnum opus* is drawn to a close with a conclusion and so in this aspect I turn away from the global and take from my Chineseness a common phrase adapted from a ninth century poem to complete this journey to the figurative summit of Tai Shan by anchoring myself in the local:

“The sunset is beautiful but it’s close to the end.”

*The Leyou Plateau*
Li Shangyin (812-858 A.D.)

向晚意不适，驱车登古原。
夕阳无限好，只是近黄昏。

In the deepening shadows of the evening hour
I drive my chariot up the ancient heights
The setting sun is beautiful
A shame it is so close to night.
(Own translation)
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*Yuwen Jianshe*, 5, 6-12.


Appendix One: List of Field Sites

1. Places Visited
   - Yellow Crane Pagoda, Wuhan
   - Nan Tan Temple on Wudangshan
   - West Lake, Hangzhou
   - Guilin
   - Taihu
   - Qiantang River in Hangzhou
   - Long Jun Xi gorge
   - Jade River valley, Huangshan
   - White Horse River, Hubei Province
   - Shilin Stone Forest, Yunnan
   - Qiyunshan
   - Shenonggjia Nature Reserve in Hubei Province
   - Baodaofeng
   - Yellow Oxen Bluff overlooking the Yangtze River Three Gorges Dam
   - ShiShi Shan, Star Lake
   - Jiuzhaigou Nature Reserve
   - Kanasi Natural Reserve and Altai Region, Xinjiang Province

2. List of Caves Visited
   - Baojing (Gems and Crystal) Palace, Yingde, Guangdong
   - Lingxiao (Reach the clouds/Soar to the skies) Cave, Yunfu, Guangdong
   - Yuhe Dong (Jade River Caves), Guangdong Province
   - Qixing Yan (Seven Star Crags Cave Complex), Zhaoqing, Guangdong Province
   - YaoLin Xianjing (Beautiful Jade Wonderland), Tonglu, Zhejiang Province
   - Huanglong Dong (Yellow Dragon Cave), Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province
   - Qixia Dong (Rosy clouds dwelling Cave), Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province
   - Lingshan Dong (Lingshan Cave), Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province
   - Ruijing Dong (Auspicious Crystal cave), Changhua, Zhejiang Province
   - Shuang Long Dong (Double Dragons Cave), Jinhua, Zhejiang Province
   - Dexia Changhe (Underground River Cave), Lanxi, Zhejiang Province
   - Liandan Dong (Alchemy Cave), Putuo Shan, Zhejiang Province
   - Chao Yin Dong (Pounding Waves Cave), Putuo Shan, Zhejiang Province
   - Binhu Dong (Icy Plunge Pool Cave), Jinhua, Zhejiang Province
   - Ludi Yan (Reed Flute Cave), Guilin, Guangxi Province
   - Guan Yan (Crown Cave), Guilin, Guangxi Province
   - Bailong Dong (White Dragon Cave), Guilin, Guangxi Province
   - Alu Gu Dong (Alu Ancient Caves), Yunnan Province
   - Qiyunshan Daoist Cave Temples, Anhui Province
   - Huanggong Buddist Temple Cave, Huanggong, Hubei Province
   - Hongpin Cave, Hubei Province
   - Nan Tan Cave, Wudang Shan, Hubei Province
Appendix Two: Prologue of Canterbury Tales

Geoffrey Chaucer, d. 1400:
Canterbury Tales: Prologue

[Parallel Texts]

The Canterbury Tales: Prologue

Here bygynneth the Book of the tales of Caunterbury

1: Whan that aprill with his shoures soote
2: The droghte of march hath perced to the roote,
3: And bathed every veyne in swich licour
4: Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
5: Whan zephirus eek with his sweete breeth
6: Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
7: Tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
8: Hath in the ram his halve cours yronne,
9: And smale foweles maken melodye,
10: That slepen al the nyght with open ye (so priketh hem nature in hir corages);
11: Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrymage,
12: And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes,
13: To ferne halwes, kowthe in sondry londes;
14: And specially from every shires ende
15: Of engelond to caunterbury they wende,
16: The hooly blisful martir for to seke,
17: Who helped them when they lay so ill and weal.
18: Bifil that in that seson on a day,
19: In southwerk at the tabard as I lay
20: Ready to wenden on my pilgrymage
21: To caunterbury with ful devout corage,
22: At nyght was come into that hostelrye
23: Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye,
24: Of sondry folk, by aventure yfalle in felaweshipe, and pilgrimes were they all,
25: That toward caunterbury wolden ryde.
26: The chambres and the stables weren wyde, and well we weren esed atte beste.
27: That toward caunterbury wolden ryde.
28: The chambres and the stables weren wyde, and well we weren esed atte beste.
29: And wel we weren esed atte beste.
30: And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,
31: So hadde I spoken with hem everichon
32: That I was of hir felaweshipe anon,
33: And made forward erly for to ryse,
34: To take oure wey ther as I yow devyse.

Here begins the Book of the Tales of Canterbury

When April with his showers sweet with fruit
The drought of March has pierced unto the root
And bathed each vein with liquor that has power
To generate therein and sire the flower;
When Zephyr also has, with his sweet breath, quickened again, in every holt and heath,
The tender shoots and buds, and the young sun
Into the Ram one half his course has run,
And many little birds make melody
That sleep through all the night with open eye
(So Nature pricks them on to ramp and rage)-Then do folk long to go on pilgrimage,
And palmers to go seeking out strange strands,
To distant shrines well known in sundry lands.
And specially from every shire's end
Of England they to Canterbury wend,
The holy blessed martyr there to seek
Who helped them when they lay so ill and weal.

Befell that, in that season, on a day
In Southwark, at the Tabard, as I lay
Ready to start upon my pilgrimage
To Canterbury, full of devout homage,
There came at nightfall to that hostelry
Some nine and twenty in a company
Of sundry persons who had chanced to fall
In fellowship, and pilgrims were they all
That toward Canterbury town would ride.
The rooms and stables spacious were and wide,
And well we there were eased, and of the best.
And briefly, when the sun had gone to rest,
So had I spoken with them, every one,
That I was of their fellowship anon,
And made agreement that we'd early rise
To take the road, as you I will apprise.
35: But nathelees, whil I have tyme and space,
36: Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
37: Me thynketh it acordaunt to resoun
38: To telle yow al the condiicioun
39: Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
40: And whiche they weren, and of what
degree,
41: And eek in what array that they were inne;
42: And at a knyght than wol I first bigynne.

Source: Middle English: Virginia Etext Project
Modern English: gopher://gopher.vt.edu:10010/02/63/38