

# The Chinese View of Nature: Tourism in China's Scenic and Historic Interest Areas

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## **Key Words**

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## **Abstract**

Tourism has greatly increased world wide in recent decades, especially in China. Nature-dominated Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, representative of the Chinese philosophy of the ‘oneness of nature and human beings’, are the most popular tourism destinations in China. Tourism impacts in these areas have been receiving the attention of heritage landscape conservation. Management actions have largely been determined with an emphasis on natural values. This thesis maintains that values relating to nature are socially and culturally constructed, and that they dynamically change through history. By investigating the social and cultural structures underpinning values related to nature, a macro-history method has been applied to explore the traditional Chinese View of nature from traditional Chinese philosophies and landscape cultures. An instrumental case study method has been applied to explore the contemporary Chinese values of nature. The relationships between traditional values and contemporary values have been identified. It was found that the traditional Chinese values still have a profound influence today, although many aspects have been distorted. Historic high culture in natural areas has been replaced by mass tourism culture and Western values. The research also found that today’s values are more socially and politically contested. It has been revealed that there are deep social, cultural, economic and political roots underlying heritage conservation management actions. Changing and contested values have been interpreted from these perspectives. The values inherent in the Chinese View of nature, such as holistic philosophical perspectives, sophisticated Chinese landscape languages, and evolving living landscapes, have been identified. The contributions of these values to relevant theories of environmental philosophy, cultural landscape, national park tourism and heritage conservation have been identified by this research. The implications for multi-cultural dialogues in heritage landscape conservation have been addressed.

## **Statement of Original Authorship**

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted for a degree or diploma at any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Contents

<b>Key Words.....</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>Statement of Original Authorship .....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>Contents.....</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>List of Tables.....</b>	<b>IX</b>
<b>List of Figures.....</b>	<b>X</b>

## PART 1

### Chapter 1 Introduction

<b>1.1 Background: Tourism in the World and in China.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.2 Park Tourism in China: Scenic and Historic Interest Areas.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.3 Research Problems and Highlighted Issues.....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.3.1 Cultural Value: A Worldwide Issue in Park Tourism .....	6
1.3.2 World Heritage and Values .....	7
<b>1.4 Research Questions .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.5 Research Motives and Objectives .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.6 Research Limitations .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.7 Research Methodology .....</b>	<b>9</b>
1.7.1 Ontological and epistemological issues of this study .....	9
1.7.2 Ethnography as methodology .....	10
1.7.3 The Logic of Enquiry .....	12
1.7.4 Research Methods .....	16
<b>1.8 Thesis Structure .....</b>	<b>17</b>

## PART 2

### Chapter 2 Nature and Culture: Western and Chinese Approaches

<b>2.1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>2.2 Values of Nature: Contemporary Western Environmental Philosophy.....</b>	<b>20</b>
2.2.1 Central Questions of Environmental Ethics.....	21
2.2.2 Theories of the Values of Nature .....	21
2.2.3 Highlighted Issues Related to Parks and Protected Areas.....	28
<b>2.3 Tourism in National Parks and Protected Areas .....</b>	<b>31</b>
2.3.1 Definitions, Purposes and Categories .....	31
2.3.2 Meanings of Parks .....	33
2.3.3 Value Turns: the Management of Parks and Protected Areas .....	40
2.3.4 Key Concepts Underpinning Park Values in the World.....	42

<b>2.4 Cultural Landscape and Heritage Landscape Conservation.....</b>	<b>43</b>
2.4.1 Cultural Landscape in the West .....	43
2.4.2 Contemporary Landscape Research in China .....	47
2.4.3 Heritage Cultural Landscape Conservation in the World and in China .....	49
<b>2.5 Conclusion.....</b>	<b>53</b>

## PART 3

### Chapter 3 The Traditional Chinese View of Nature

<b>3.1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>3.2 Chinese Cultural Perspectives on Nature .....</b>	<b>57</b>
3.2.1 Why Examine Cultural Perspectives on Nature? .....	57
3.2.2 Definition of Culture .....	58
3.2.3 Chinese Culture .....	59
3.2.4 The Characteristics of Traditional Chinese Culture: Philosophical Origins .....	61
3.2.5 Traditional Chinese Philosophical View of Nature: Oneness with Nature .....	62
3.2.6 The Art of Living: Another Philosophy.....	67
<b>3.3 The Views of Nature Portrayed in Traditional Chinese Landscape Cultures .....</b>	<b>68</b>
3.3.1 Nature as a Symbol .....	68
3.3.2 Nature as an External World.....	71
3.3.3 Nature as an Inner World.....	76
<b>3.4 Traditional Chinese Travels in Nature .....</b>	<b>83</b>
3.4.1 Travelling for <i>Dao</i> (道).....	84
3.4.2 <i>Shanshui</i> Tour: Real Travel .....	90
<b>3.5 Conclusion.....</b>	<b>91</b>

### Chapter 4 Case Studies of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas

<b>4.1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>4.2 Introduction to Case Studies .....</b>	<b>94</b>
4.2.1 Case Study Design .....	94
4.2.2 Introduction of the Cases: Setting the Case Study in a Social Context.....	100
<b>4.3 Values Presented from Case Studies .....</b>	<b>111</b>
4.3.1 Visitors' Perspectives, Motivations and Preferences.....	111
4.3.2 Local Managers' Perspectives and Expectations.....	125
4.3.3 Local Villagers' Perspectives .....	130
<b>4.4 Conclusions.....</b>	<b>137</b>

### Chapter 5 Continuities and Discontinuities with Tradition: Themes Emerging from the Case Studies

<b>5.1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>5.2 Inherited from History: Themes Related to Tradition.....</b>	<b>141</b>

5.2.1 The Aesthetic Orientation: Pursuing Natural Beauty.....	141
5.2.2 Enjoyment of Humanity .....	144
5.2.3 Living within Nature.....	148
5.2.4 Human Constructions in Nature.....	151
5.2.5 Lack of Natural Science Awareness .....	156
<b>5.3 New Themes Detached from Tradition .....</b>	<b>158</b>
5.3.1 Escape from City Pressure .....	158
5.3.2 Nature as an Economic Resource: the Priced Landscape .....	161
5.3.3 The Political Identity of Landscapes.....	163
5.3.4 Cultural Consumption: Culture as Landscape Flavouring .....	166
5.3.5 Creating Wilderness: Removal of Inhabitants and Man-made Structures.....	169
5.3.6 Landscape as a Symbol of Wealth and Power.....	170
5.3.6 The ‘Visual handicap’.....	172
<b>5.4 Changes, Social Roots and Conflicts.....</b>	<b>172</b>
5.4.1 Changing patterns.....	173
5.4.2 Cultural and Social Roots.....	174
5.5.3 Conflicts and Contests .....	179
<b>5.5 Conclusion .....</b>	<b>181</b>

## PART 4

### Chapter 6 Theoretical Arguments: Locating Chinese Themes in International Contexts

<b>6.1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>6.2 Humanised Nature and Naturalised Human beings: Philosophical Views.....</b>	<b>184</b>
6.2.1 Chinese Ontological and Epistemological Obliteration of Nature and Human Beings.....	186
6.2.2 Subjective and Objective Nature: Chinese Landscape Achievements.....	187
<b>6.3 Meanings of Landscapes: Cultural Landscape Perspectives.....</b>	<b>190</b>
6.3.1 The Chinese Ways of Seeing.....	191
6.3.2 Symbolism and Metaphor .....	192
6.3.3 Authenticity of Nature.....	195
6.3.4 Political Nature of Cultural Landscape .....	198
<b>6.4 China’s New Wilderness: Landscape of Politics and Capital .....</b>	<b>201</b>
6.4.1 China’s New Wilderness: Not a Coincidence .....	201
6.4.2 A Product of Capital .....	202
6.4.3 A Product of Politics .....	203
6.4.4 A Product of Globalisation.....	204
<b>6.5 Environmental Ethics, Culture, and Science .....</b>	<b>207</b>
6.5.1 Perspectives of Environmental Ethics .....	207
6.5.2 Contested Values between Culture and Science .....	208
6.5.3 The Threats of “Oneness with Nature” .....	210
<b>6.6 Conclusion .....</b>	<b>213</b>

## **Chapter 7 Conclusions, Contributions and Implications**

<b>7.1 Concluding the Thesis.....</b>	<b>216</b>
7.1.1 Values of Nature .....	216
7.1.2 Chinese View of Nature .....	216
7.1.3 Relationships between Traditional and Contemporary Chinese View of Nature and Interpretations of Changes.....	217
7.1.4 Theoretical Generation: from Re-examining the Values of the Chinese View of Nature..	218
<b>7.2 Contributions to knowledge.....</b>	<b>219</b>
<b>7.3 Implications for Heritage Landscape Conservation Practice.....</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>7.4 Other Achievements and Future Research .....</b>	<b>221</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>224</b>

## **Appendices 236**

<b>Appendix A A Brief Chinese Chronology .....</b>	<b>236</b>
<b>Appendix B Cross-Cultural Confusion: Application of World Heritage           Concepts in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in China.....</b>	<b>238</b>
<b>Appendix C China's New Wilderness.....</b>	<b>245</b>
<b>Appendix D Survey Questionnaire for Travellers on the Train to Wudang.....</b>	<b>248</b>
<b>Appendix E Survey Questionnaire for Onsite Visitors to Wudang .....</b>	<b>250</b>
<b>Appendix F Survey Questionnaire for Onsite Local Villagers in Wudang .....</b>	<b>253</b>
<b>Appendix G Explanation of Design of Questionnaires, Data Collection and           Analysis.....</b>	<b>256</b>

# List of Tables

Table 1.1 Characteristics of four social enquiry strategies.....	13
Table 2.1 Categories of World Heritage Cultural Landscape.....	51
Table 4.1 Visitors' motivations.....	118
Table 4.2 Motivations of visitors to Wudang.....	120
Table 4.3 Preference of transportation of the visitors to Wudang.....	121
Table 4.4 General preference of activities of visitors in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas.....	123
Table 4.5 Preference of activities of the visitors to Wudang.....	123
Table 5.1 Comparison of traditional and contemporary Chinese values of nature.....	173

# List of Figures<sup>1</sup>

Figure 1.1	Historic constructions in Wudang.....	5
Figure 1.2	Villagers' houses being demolished in Wudang.....	5
Figure 1.3	Research type: the discovery of regularities.....	11
Figure 1.4	Realist social explanation: Regularity=Mechanism+Context.....	14
Figure 1.5	Model of social construction of values of nature .....	15
Figure 1.6	Thesis structure.....	18
Figure 2.1	Chinese concept of landscape .....	48
Figure 2.2	Western concept of cultural landscape.....	48
Figure 2.3	The distribution of World Heritage Cultural Landscapes.....	52
Figure 3.1	<i>Qu Shui Liu Sang</i> (曲水流觞, Art Salon in Lan Ting), Wen Zhengming (文征明), Ming Dynasty.....	74
Figure 3.2	<i>Spring Tour (detail)</i> , Zhan Ziqian (展子虔), Sui Dynasty.....	78
Figure 3.3	<i>Travelling in Xishan</i> , Fan Kuan (范宽), Northern Song Dynasty.....	79
Figure 3.4	<i>Scroll of Ink Orchid</i> , Zhao Mengjian (赵孟坚), Song Dynasty.....	79
Figure 3.5	<i>An imaginary tour</i> , anonymous, Song Dynasty.....	80
Figure 3.6	<i>Garden of the Unsuccessful Politician</i> , Wen Zhengming (文征明), Ming Dynasty.....	80
Figure 3.7	Classical landscape gardens in Suzhou, Zhou Zheng Garden (拙政园), Ming Dynasty.....	81
Figure 3.8	Classical landscape gardens in Suzhou, Cang Lang Ting (沧浪亭), Song Dynasty.....	82
Figure 3.9	<i>Appreciating Winter Sweet</i> , Huang Shen (黃慎), Qing Dynasty .....	83
Figure 4.1	Location of sites of the case studies .....	100
Figure 4.2	Wudang's ancient building in mountains.....	102
Figure 4.3	Jiuzhaigou colourful fairyland.....	106
Figure 4.4	Wulingyuan's sandstone pillars.....	108
Figure 4.5	Russian aircraft near Tianmen Cave.....	110
Figure 4.6	Traveller' first tourism destination choices.....	112
Figure 4.7	Visitors' general job backgrounds.....	113
Figure 4.8	Visitors' images of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas.....	113
Figure 4.9	Visitors' associations with Scenic and Historic Interest Areas.....	117

<sup>1</sup> Sources are noted in captions. Where no source is stated, the figure is the work of the author.

Figure 4.10	Visitors' educational backgrounds.....	117
Figure 4.11	Visitors' companions.....	119
Figure 4.12	Visitors' preferences for accommodation .....	124
Figure 4.13	Visitors' attitudes to the local villagers .....	125
Figure 4.14	Villagers' satisfaction ratings for life in Wudang.....	130
Figure 4.15	Villagers' income sources in Wudang.....	131
Figure 4.16	Villagers' educational backgrounds in Wudang .....	131
Figure 4.17	Traditional tea terrace in Wudang.....	132
Figure 4.18	Living with history in Wudang.....	133
Figure 4.19	Villagers' ideal life hopes in Wudang.....	135
Figure 5.1	Illustrated <i>Tang poems</i> in a primary school text book .....	145
Figure 5.2	Wudang's sealed roads in the mountains .....	152
Figure 5.3	Wudang's newly built hotel .....	152
Figure 5.4	Wudang's newly rebuilt palace.....	153
Figure 5.5	Wudang's restaurants and hotels in the clouds .....	155
Figure 5.6	Wudang Daoist Gongfu performance.....	167
Figure 5.7	Visitors busy dressing up in Tibetan clothes for photographs.....	168
Figure 5.8	Wudang's locked temple and decaying relics.....	169
Figure 6.1	<i>Searching Great Peaks for Draft Portrait</i> , Shi Tao (石涛), Qing Dynasty.....	188
Figure 6.2	<i>Swimming fish</i> , Zhu Da (朱耷), Qing Dynasty.....	189



PART 1

# Chapter 1

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## Introduction

## **1.1 Background: Tourism in the World and in China**

Mass tourism began an unprecedented rise in the 1970s to become the world's largest industry within 25 years (Gartner 1996) and world tourism demand continues to exceed expectations, showing resilience against extraneous factors (WTO 2006). The World Tourism Organization's (WTO) *Tourism 2020 Vision* forecasts that world tourism will have grown at average annual rate of 4.1 per cent between 1995 to 2020 (WTO 1995). Growth is expected to continue in 2007 at a pace of around 4 per cent worldwide. This expected growth for 2007, though slightly slower than in previous years, is in line with the WTO long-term forecast growth rate of 4.1 per cent a year through till 2020 (WTO 2006).

China's tourism industry has become a new growth point for the national economy and has many advantages for the service industry. With strong growth momentum, especially in the past decade, China has become one of the most influential countries in the global tourism industry. In 2004, China was ranked fourth in the world for overnight tourist arrivals and ranked fifth for receipts in foreign currencies, according to the WTO (2005).

Meanwhile, domestic tourism has also developed at a rapid rate in China. The China National Tourism Office (CNTO 2006) reports that numbers of travellers have increased sharply, reaching 1212 million in 2005, up 9.98 per cent over the previous year, and that total income from domestic tourism amounted to 528,600 Million RBM, up 12.21 per cent over the previous year. Based on its large population, China now has the largest number of domestic tourists in the world. Domestic tourism is becoming increasingly important and highly valued compared with previous years.

While tourism greatly enhances the local economy and is supported by the government as a national policy in China, it is also coming to a crossroads regarding its impacts on sustainable development and compatibility with the environment. Park tourism is one of the most popular forms of tourism in China, but because of its extended impact on both the physical and human environments, it has received considerable attention in China as well as elsewhere in the world (Zhao 2002).

## **1.2 Park Tourism in China: Scenic and Historic Interest Areas**

Tourism in national parks and protected areas is a major branch of world tourism. These areas are ecology-based national parks based on the World Conservation Union's (IUCN) categories adopted by the United Nations. In China, Scenic and

Historic Interest Areas form a designated national park system which was founded in 1981. These areas in China are distinguished from the IUCN definition in that they are characterised as having both outstanding natural and cultural qualities related to Chinese history. They are predominantly nature-dominated, while the natural beauty and cultural elements are considered to be at "perfect oneness". They appeal to the Chinese perceptions of nature, being beautiful, peaceful and full of human spirituality (Ding 1992). From today's Western perspective, they are typical heritage cultural landscapes.

Though China has a long history of travelling in nature, the development of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas as a publicly accessible designated system is relatively recent in the world context. By 2005 in China, there were 187 such units designated at the national level, plus local level designated units, which together covered one per cent of the mainland. They are also significant components of the world park system due to their great contributions to World Heritage. So far (September 2006), in the World Heritage List of the United Nations, 16 of China's 34 World Heritage sites are Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, or are located in these areas. It is a system well-known to the public and includes the most popular tourism destinations in China. In 1999, the number of visitors to Scenic and Historic Interest Areas reached 138 million and the tourism income of the leading units was 20 per cent higher than the previous year (Zhao 2002). In 2005, visits rose to 300 million (Construction Ministry 2006), which is about one quarter of the total number in China.

However, as has happened worldwide, the exponential growth of tourist numbers and their spread to previously remote and natural regions has highlighted the potentially paradoxical character of park tourism in China, which is that places which are valued for their natural and cultural qualities are now becoming 'over-developed'. While park tourism contributes greatly to society and the economy, tourism development in these areas also causes increasingly apparent social and environmental impacts and is becoming a threat to heritage authenticity. It has been reported that 22 per cent of protected areas have experienced severe impact on their preserved natural or cultural resources and 11 per cent of the resources of these areas have deteriorated due to tourism development (BRN 2002).

The situation has become serious. The case of the Wulingyuan Scenic and Historic Interest Area is a typical example which is hotly debated and calls for deep thought. It is one of the most popular Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in China, with annual

visits of more than 5 million (XHN 2003). It was listed as a World Natural Heritage area by UNESCO in 1992. In 1998, it was severely criticized by a UNESCO Mission in its *State of Conservation Report* of the Bureau of World Heritage Committee because of its being “overrun with tourist facilities, having a considerable impact on the aesthetic qualities of the site” (UNESCO 1998). The Mission was also sharply critical of increasing farming and urbanisation caused by rapidly developing tourism (XHN 2003). Although it was only a conservation report, in Chinese eyes Wulingyuan was at risk of deletion from the World Heritage List. In order to respond to the Mission’s criticism and to meet UNESCO’s requirements for World Natural Heritage, under the instructions and requirements of the central government, the local government decided to demolish 340,000 square metres of recently built facilities and artificial scenic constructions over five years, beginning in 2001. By the end of 2005, 124 tourism facilities and another 191,000 square metres of constructions had been demolished and 546 local families, or 1791 villagers, had been resettled in order to restore the perceived natural ecosystem (Wang 2005). The demolition cost 300 million RBM and the budget for the whole restoration and resettlement project reached 1 billion Yuan. At the same time, the annual income tax received by the local government was only 10 million RBM (XHN 2003).

This demolition and ecological restoration project was strongly resisted by the local government and communities, and there were bitter debates about natural heritage. Some questioned whether all these structures should be demolished to meet UNESCO’s World Natural Heritage requirements. The structures designated for demolition represent the history of the last ten years. They include some newly built artificial scenic spots and this especially meets the traditional Chinese View of nature. According to the original World Natural Heritage concept, in a World Natural Heritage site constructed elements and human encroachment are regarded as a threat to nature and should be kept as minimal as possible (Fowler 2003). However, from the Chinese View of nature, Wulingyuan is a Scenic and Historic Interest Area and not different from other scenic areas. They are all natural areas and nature has never excluded human activities in Chinese history. If our ancestors could build their constructions in these areas and these constructions are regarded as World Cultural Heritage areas today (Figure 1.1), then we may question why today’s constructions cause “impact on the site” and “threaten nature’s value” and should be stopped. As an historically agricultural country, peasants settled in natural areas for thousands of years, so why should their settlements become “threats” to nature today and be demolished? (Figure 1.2) Obviously, the Chinese have a different perspective from

international views of nature. Therefore, this contested area relates to values of nature which are based on Chinese culture. However, it seems the “demolition” proponents have won this battle. Now the demolition of human constructions prevails in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas if they are World Heritage properties, or if they will be nominated as World Heritages.



Figure 1.1 Historic constructions in Wudang



Figure 1.2 Villagers' houses being demolished in Wudang

### 1.3 Research Problems and Highlighted Issues

Superficially, the demolition project that has been undertaken in Wulingyuan is an example of ecological restoration, which is usually undertaken when nature is threatened or damaged, natural resources deteriorate and pollution occurs. However, if we treat these environmental impacts as just an ecological disaster, this interpretation is too “shallow” (Naess 1973). There are deep philosophical beliefs underlying these surface phenomena. Essentially, the debates are not between preservers and developers, but they are between the different values of nature held by different cultures. This raises questions “concerned with describing the values carried by the non-human natural world and prescribing an appropriate ethical response to ensure preservation or restoration of those values” (Light and Rolston 2003). This thesis, however, argues that these issues are more complex and we need to think as we act, and we should therefore reflect about “why we do” before “what we do”.

According to the school of *Social Constructivism*, the natural environment is viewed as something “socially, culturally, and politically produced in a variety of human discourses and practices” (Light and Rolston 2003). Nature is inescapably viewed through a cultural lens. It is also argued that nature is plural and contextual: ‘nature’

grows out of the complexity of particular social situations and relates to complex social webs of needs and desires (Weston 1985). This idea is consistent with the cultural landscape theory that any landscape is composed not only of what lies before our eyes, but also what lies within our heads (Meinig 1979). All cultural practices or engaged behaviours are reflections of different values. In the Wulingyuan case, we can see the perceived values of China and the West, national and local values, government and villagers' values, all coming into conflict. Values link to culture and philosophical ethics and cannot be universal. They are different from country to country, and even region to region. There are a range of values and we need to be "more sensitive about who counts and why" (Light and Rolston 2003).

### **1.3.1 Cultural Value: A Worldwide Issue in Park Tourism**

"Parks are very much the products of the culture that creates them: they are social institutions in the truest sense of the word" (Eagles and McCool 2002). However, today's park tourism theories and social and cultural value studies are strongly based on a North American perspective that is shared by many English-speaking countries in the West (Eagles and McCool 2002).

In Western society, although the creation and enjoyment of public parks has existed for over 500 years, the establishment of contemporary national parks only began 150 years ago with the designation of Yellow Stone National Park, and visiting these areas as a tourist activity is a relatively recent cultural phenomenon (Eagles and McCool 2002). Two major concepts have developed since the mid-1970s, while the environmental movement has transformed from its earlier focus on practical resource conservation initiatives to a much more active political and social force in its own right (Light and Rolston 2003). One important concept is sustainability, which was formulated by the World Commission on Environment and Development (Palmer 2003, p. 18; Eagles and McCool 2002, p. 64). Another idea is that actions to manage protected areas must be accepted by the dominant social group using or interested in these areas. Both of these concepts have greatly influenced contemporary park tourism planning and management frameworks. These latter practical frameworks, including LAC, "the Limits of Acceptable Change" (Stanké et al. 1985); VIM, "Visitor Impact Management" (Graefe et al. 1990); and VERP, "Visitor Experience and Resource Protection" (NPS 1997), clearly indicate that the focus in park tourism studies has shifted from its initial ecological science orientation to a social value orientation. Issues of intensive understanding as well as highly integrated ecological and cultural values have been raised.

However, the Chinese have a totally different park background and cultural history from the West and there is a research gap at present. Park tourism has not been completely studied. It is time to take a sideways step to provide a different understanding of the value of park tourism: that is the purpose of this study, which will be based on Chinese cultural values and their development.

### **1.3.2 World Heritage and Values**

World Heritage plays an important role in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in China. Because it is economy-based, World Heritage is more a 'golden crown' (Han 2000) for tourism than valued for conservation purposes. To achieve this 'golden crown' it is necessary to meet international world heritage values, which are dominated by Western values. During this process, if there are conflicts between Chinese values and international values, Chinese values always give way and are sacrificed, such as at Wulingyuan. The concepts of World Heritage, while making the Chinese aware of their own heritage, have forced the Chinese heritage management system into chaos. Traditionally integrated cultural and natural values of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas have been interrupted by the World Heritage orientation towards nature and human beings being separated into different categories. Inappropriate management actions have been adopted, such as the removal of villagers and constructions, and eco-restoration to meet World Heritage criteria (as in Figure 1.2). This has also caused a lot of alteration to cultural landscapes.

These conflicts and debates show how values can be in conflict. Firstly, if cultural landscapes are socially constructed according to the distinguished characteristics of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, there must be embedded distinguished perspectives on the values of nature which form an essential relationship between nature and human beings. If so, Chinese values of nature, both traditional and contemporary, need to be examined according to these contested views of world heritage. Secondly, the values of heritage landscapes need to be examined according to current heavy use of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas centered around tourism and heritage conservation. It is also important to explore the complexity of their particular social, political and cultural situations. Only by taking account of these roots can values be fully examined and phenomena such as removals and eco-restoration be interpreted.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

The following research questions provide the focus and direction for the research.

1. What is the Chinese View of nature?
  - 1.1 What is the traditional Chinese View of nature?
  - 1.2 What is the contemporary Chinese View of nature?
2. What are the relationships, changes and conflicts between traditional views and contemporary views, and what are the mechanisms that underpin Chinese View of nature and its changes?
3. What are the theoretical contributions and implications of the Chinese View of nature?

## **1.5 Research Motives and Objectives**

This research aims to explore the structures of cultural values underlying conflicts over the impact of tourism and environmental problems in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in China. It also aims to explore the deeply rooted Chinese values of nature and the relationship between nature and humans, rather than phenomena and symptoms. Aimed at a deep understanding of Chinese values of nature, the research will re-examine traditional Chinese philosophical and cultural views of nature. It will also explore the contemporary Chinese View of nature as it relates to heritage landscape conservation in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, and how values change in different historical social, cultural, political and economical contexts. From this understanding, the study aims to interpret and explain the symptoms and conflicts arising from park tourism and heritage conservation in China. It also aims to identify the contributions of the Chinese View of nature, based on a re-examination of Chinese tradition, and examine the implications for more appropriate heritage landscape management actions in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in the future. In addition it will provide a foundational research platform for dialogue based on diverse cultural values of nature between China and the West in the area of World Heritage management.

The objectives of this research are:

1. to re-examine the traditional Chinese View of nature;
2. to explore and develop an understanding of the contemporary Chinese View of nature;
3. to explore and develop an understanding of the changes between traditional and contemporary Chinese View of nature and to identify conflicts arising from these changes;

4. to explore the mechanics of values of nature and interpret the changes and conflicts in dynamic Chinese/international social contexts;
5. to identify the contributions of the Chinese View of nature to international theories; and
6. to identify implications and recommendations for world heritage landscape conservation in China and internationally.

### **1.6 Research Limitations**

There are two main limitations of this research.

This study does not intend to give a definitive answer to questions on philosophical environmental ethics and justice based on cultural values. It will not focus on who will ensure such justice. Instead, this research will focus on the contexts of values, including where we have come from, where we are, and where the alternative futures are.

Rather than issues related to international tourism, this study will focus on Chinese values of heritage landscape associated with sharp increases in domestic tourism, which concern mainly heritage tourism and landscape conservation in China.

### **1.7 Research Methodology**

Blaikie (2002) refers to research methods “as the techniques or procedures used to collect and analyse data” (p. 8), while

*“Methodology, on the other hand, refers to discussions of how research is done, or should be done, and to the critical analysis of methods of research. Methodology also deals with logics of enquiry..., of how theories are generated and tested - what kinds of logic should be used, what a theory looks like, what criteria a theory has to satisfy, how it relates to a particular research problem, and how it can be tested (Blaikie 2000, p8).*

#### **1.7.1 Ontological and epistemological issues of this study**

This study focuses on values of nature in cultural and social contexts. The research is based on the belief that there are relationships between all complex cultural elements and that there are multiple social realities which can be explored. The interpretation of these realities can be different according to different cultural settings and should be located in their broader social context, which involves cultural relativism and social constructivism. This study is also consistent with dialectic materialism, which is the belief that there is a material reality, but that it is constantly

changing and that new properties continually evolve (Potter 1996). The research is based on the idea that there is a material nature that exists beyond human beings, as well as the concept of nature which is socially structured. Moreover, the research is based on the idea that the value of nature changes dynamically in different contexts. Thus, this Chinese study should be located and studied in a larger national or international historical context, for there is always interaction between insider and outsider, part and whole, past and now, which is also the perspective maintained by hermeneutics (Potter 1996). Achieving a meaningful interpretation is an active process of constant movement between parts and whole. This ontological and epistemological position allows this study to build a possible research platform to link traditional past, now and future; and also to link China and the world.

This position is also consistent with the retroductive research social enquiry strategy used in this research, which is based on structuralism and constructivism, and which allows the study to explore and explain potential cultural regularities and patterns in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas from an understanding of the mechanisms acting in particular Chinese contexts.

As qualitative research, it is consistent with the ideas of phenomenology, interpretive studies, hermeneutics, naturalism and humanistic studies which are described by Potter (1996) as the five major complementary ideas that are axiomatic to qualitative research and which are held by almost all qualitative researchers.

### **1.7.2 Ethnography as methodology**

According to Tesch (1990) there are four research types based on their different research interests. These research interests are:

- the characteristics of language;
- the discovery of regularities;
- the comprehension of meaning of text/action; and
- reflection.

This research is a typical qualitative research approach which is located in the social and cultural area and is guided by ethnographic methodology. The proposed study aims to explore the deep philosophical cultural value patterns beneath the values which are in conflict in Scenic and Historic Areas in China. Guided by Tesch's (1990, p.73) types of research methodologies, holistic (macro-) ethnography is especially related to discovering regularities or patterns of culture and value (Figure 1.3).

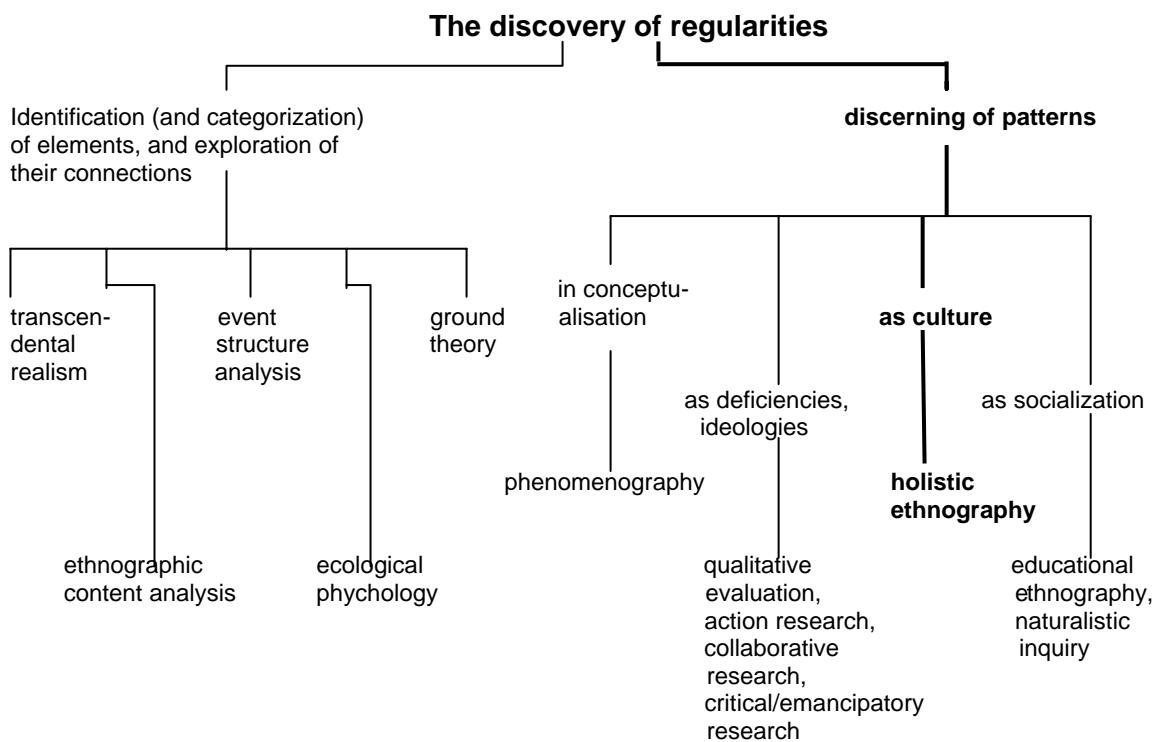


Figure 1.3 Research type: the discovery of regularities (Tesch 1990, p. 73)  
Emphasized by author.

There are many branches of ethnography (Tesch 1990). The most relevant branch of this study is macro-ethnography. Macro-ethnography, often called holistic ethnography, is the study of broadly-defined cultural groupings. It seeks to describe and analyse all or part of a culture or community by describing the beliefs and practices of the group studies and showing how the various parts contribute to the culture as a unified, consistent whole (Jacob 1987).

Macro-ethnography provides an inspiring perspective of methodological orientation for this research. Its methodological orientation for this study can be outlined as follows:

1. It is culturally specific patterns of behaviour and attitudes that give people the feeling of being part of a group and, under certain circumstance, guidelines for action. Hence, there are deep cultural roots underlying actions.
2. Ethnography begins with an open mind, not an empty head, and has something to look for. This research process begins with a value problem and value theories, and there is a theoretical hypothesis to guide the study. It looks for culturally based values of nature.
3. It allows multiple interpretations of reality and alternative interpretations of

data throughout the study and leaves this research open-ended.

4. The ethnographer is both story teller and scientist; the closer the reader of an ethnography comes to understanding the native's point of view, the better the story and the better the science, which implies that this study should explain the context of Chinese values as clearly as possible, especially for foreign readers.
5. Even when the ethnographer has specific hypotheses to test in the field, information gathering proceeds inductively. Methods employed by ethnography are broad. Ethnography is a general methodological guide.
6. Long-term fieldwork is essential for investigating a foreign culture. For this study, in my own culture, the review and re-examination of history is essential, as well as field work.
7. Cross-checking, comparison, information triangulation and conclusions through the use of multiple procedures or sources. Contemporary Western theories are useful for informing the re-examination and critiquing of Chinese culture.
8. Try to be both 'outsider' (etic) and 'insider' (emic), staying on the margins of the group both socially and intellectually. Seek to be 'anthropologically strange' and maintain sensitive awareness of familiar home culture, avoiding taking important home cultural practices and meanings for granted. This is initially important for this study as a native ethnography. The researcher will try to be "foreign" when re-examining the values of traditional Chinese View of nature.
9. To be 'reflexive', which involves self-awareness and critical self-reflection by the researcher on potential biases and predispositions, as these may affect the research process and conclusion.

### **1.7.3 The Logic of Enquiry**

Blaikie (2000) defines the term 'research strategy' as 'the logic of enquiry', referring to the steps involved in answering research questions and research methods as 'the execution of the project'. Methodology, Blaikie argues, "includes a critical evaluation of alternative research strategies and methods" (Blaikie 2000). Different research strategies can be combined to apply in a research project in different stages.

There are four research strategies in social inquiry (Blaikie 2000). They are inductive, deductive, abductive and retroductive. Each of them provides a different way of answering research questions and presents alternative starting and concluding

points and different sets of steps, and is essentially based on different ontology and epistemology (Table 1.1). Inductive and deductive research strategies are widely used, but abductive and retroductive strategies need more explanation (below):

Table 1.1: Characteristics of four social enquiry strategies. Based on Blaikie (2000)

strategy	ontology	Epistemology	characteristics
inductive	Realism	Positivism: The activity of observing, the possibility of establishing the truth of theory are accepted uncritically. “objective” procedure	Produce generalisations from data
deductive	realism	Critical rationalism Observation is limited, the truth of theory is challenged. Use of rigorous and critical evaluation is proposed.	Test theories by testing hypotheses derived from them.
retroductive	Positivism Critical rationalism	Structuralism Constructivism Explanation of social regularities, rate, associations, outcomes or patterns come from an understanding of mechanisms acting in social contexts.	Establish the existence of a hypothetical model and give explanation
abductive	Relativism	Constructivism Social reality is socially constructed and is seen to reside in lay language.	Venerates social scientific accounts over everyday accounts

**Retroductive research strategy** is the logic of enquiry associated with the philosophical approach of Scientific Realism or, more particularly, the transcendental Realism of Bhaskar and the constructivist Realism of Harre (in Blaikie 2000). Its ontology assumes that there is a real essence of underlying structure or mechanism that produces the observed events. The aim of the Realist is to explain observable phenomena with reference to underlying structures and mechanisms. Its epistemology is based on the building of models that constitute hypothetical entities to try to reveal the underlying and unknown mechanisms or structures. This model building is a creative and active process involving disciplined scientific imagination and the use of analogies and metaphors. The whole process of model-building can then be repeated, in order to explain the structures and mechanisms already discovered (Blaikie 2000). The researcher's task is to establish the existence of the mechanism or structures, not to test the relationships between events as in deductive strategy.

Blaikie notes that abductive strategy is peculiar to the social sciences. It has been labelled in many ways, including “phenomenology”, “symbolic interactionism”, or even “ethnomethodology”, and it is now commonly called “constructivism” (Blaikie 2000). He uses “interpretivism” to represent the traditions that share similar ontological assumptions, including hermeneutics, phenomenology, symbolic

interactionism, existential sociology and social constructivism. Its ontological assumption is that social reality is the social construction of social actors, and there is no independent existence apart from the social actors who produce and reproduce it. It is the meanings and interpretations that facilitate and structure social relationships. In other words, social reality is socially constructed. The researcher's task is to discover and describe the reality from the view of the 'insider', and the epistemology, the way to get this knowledge of reality, is to enter and become immersed in the everyday social world in order to grasp the meanings.

### **Retractive Strategy Enquiry**

This study begins with the assumption that it is not easy to observe the relationship between culture and the values of nature related to park tourism, and that the values of nature are products of culture embedded in social contexts through history. Chinese culture, in its historical context, is the underlying mechanism acting on the observed regularities of the value of nature. Thus, the logic of enquiry of this research is mainly structured by retractive strategy. Thus this research is focused on exploration and interpretation.

Blaikie (2000) outlines the nature of retractive research strategy as follows:

1. *attempt to discover appropriate structures and mechanisms to explain observable phenomena and the regularities between them;*
2. *construct a hypothetical model to explore those structures and mechanisms typically unavailable to observation based upon observed regularities;*
3. *test the existence of this hypothetical model*
4. *produce an explanation for the regularity by identifying the generative mechanisms (theoretical studies); and*
5. *explain social regularities, rates, association, outcomes or patterns which come from an understanding of social mechanisms (Figure 1.4).*

This figure is not available online.  
Please consult the hardcopy thesis  
available from the QUT Library

Figure 1.4 Realist social explanation: Regularity=Mechanism+Context  
(Source: Pawson and Tilley, in Blaikie 2000, p. 112)

Retroductive strategy structures are involved in this research at four levels.

1. The research embeds a hypothesis model (Figure 1.5) that values of nature are filtered by cultural lenses and are socially constructed. Problems that arise in contemporary park tourism in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in China can be explained by the mechanisms of Chinese values of nature based on Chinese culture in social and historical contexts.
2. The research involves “exploration” to extend what is known by common observation and address the regularities to check critically the authenticity which is thought to be known. That leads the research to re-explore or re-examine traditional Chinese View of nature and explore contemporary Chinese View of nature beneath the observed phenomena in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas.
3. Testing the existence of this hypothesis model by identifying the relationships between dynamic social contexts and the changing values of nature in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in China.
4. Producing a generative explanation and interpreting the achieved value regularities and themes as theoretical developments.

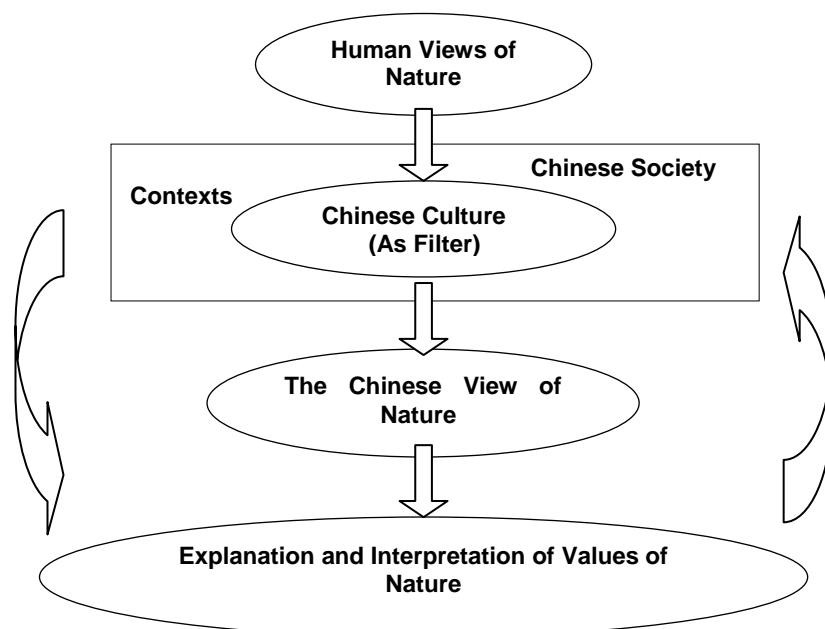


Figure 1.5 Model of social construction of values of nature

### **Other Strategies**

The process of this model will be running through the whole research project as a structure and will be repeated in different parts. This does not mean the retroductive strategy will be the only strategy applied in this research. Different strategies will be adopted for different purposes at different stages.

This research is mainly guided by retroductive strategy. However, inductive and abductive strategies are also used in different parts and sections for different purposes. An inductive strategy of enquiry is adopted to re-examine the traditional Chinese View of nature from traditional Chinese philosophy, traditional art, literature, gardens and travel history. Abductive and inductive strategy are used in case studies and field work to explore and generate new emerging themes or regularities of contemporary values from field work.

### **1.7.4 Research Methods**

The term 'method' is used here to refer to ways in which evidence is obtained and manipulated or, more conventionally, to techniques of data collection and analysis (Blaikie 2000).

#### **Data type, forms and collection methods**

Macro-history<sup>2</sup> and literature review are used as methods to re-examine traditional Chinese View of nature from significant cultural perspectives of philosophy, landscape literature, landscape gardens, landscape paintings and "nature" travel history. The purpose of the use of the macro-history method is to obtain an overview of traditional Chinese View of nature without disturbing too many details.

The instrumental case study method is used to explore contemporary Chinese values of nature. Three Scenic and Historic Interest Areas which are also World Heritage properties (Wudang Scenic and Historic Interest Area, Jiuzhaigou Scenic and Historic Interest Area, and Wulingyuan Scenic and Historic Interest Area) are involved. Among them, Wudang is the in-depth case study. Data are mainly from the

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<sup>2</sup> Huang Renyu (1918~2000), researcher from Harvard. In his book titled "Macro-history of China", he created "macro-history", a method to study Chinese history, because he thinks "China has such a long history and there are numerous things that have happened during this time. If we don't use extra-normal rules to measure it, we can't master it." He emphasises the importance of integration and synthesis. He tries to construct an overview of Chinese history from the most important events rather than details.

last three years of Wudang's heritage master planning. Guided by ethnographic methods, three typical ethnographic data collection methods have been applied in this research: interviews, focus group and document review. The research also tries to validate findings through conventional archival research and the use of onsite questionnaire surveys. Data triangulation is important for this research.

### **Data reduction, analysis and interpretation methods**

The following methods have been applied to analyse the collected data in the study.

1. Ethnographers look for patterns of thought and behaviours. Looking for patterns is a form of analysis. A computer-assisted data analysis program, SPSS, has been applied in this study to analyse qualitative and quantitative data from on-site surveys, focus groups, or interviews, to categorise the value themes and identify cultural patterns.
2. Description and active interpretation via content analysis methods have been adopted for interpretation, which is a key method of ethnography. The skill of critical thinking has been important in this research, especially for re-examining and re-interpreting Chinese values of nature, their conflicts and their contributions.
3. Triangulation, as a basic ethnographical analysis method, has been applied to justify the validity of the research. Research will try triangulating the various forms of gathered data to see if a point or an explanation holds across several sources. The research attempts to extend the sources for interpretation, from China to the West, from traditional to contemporary.
4. As exploratory research, this study draws on a wide range of both qualitative and quantitative methods of ethnographical "learning" and "testing" (Agar and McDonald 1995). This study uses questionnaire surveys to find general conclusions and newly emerged themes for interviews.

### **1.8 Thesis Structure**

The thesis will be structured in four parts. Part 1 is the introduction. It clarifies the research background, problems, research questions, objectives, limits and overall methodology. Part 2 locates this research in international theoretical contexts through a literature review. Part 3 moves to the main body of this research investigating the research questions. Part 4 synthesises the contributions of the thesis to knowledge and understanding, and identifies implications for practice. The thesis structure is shown in Figure 1.6.

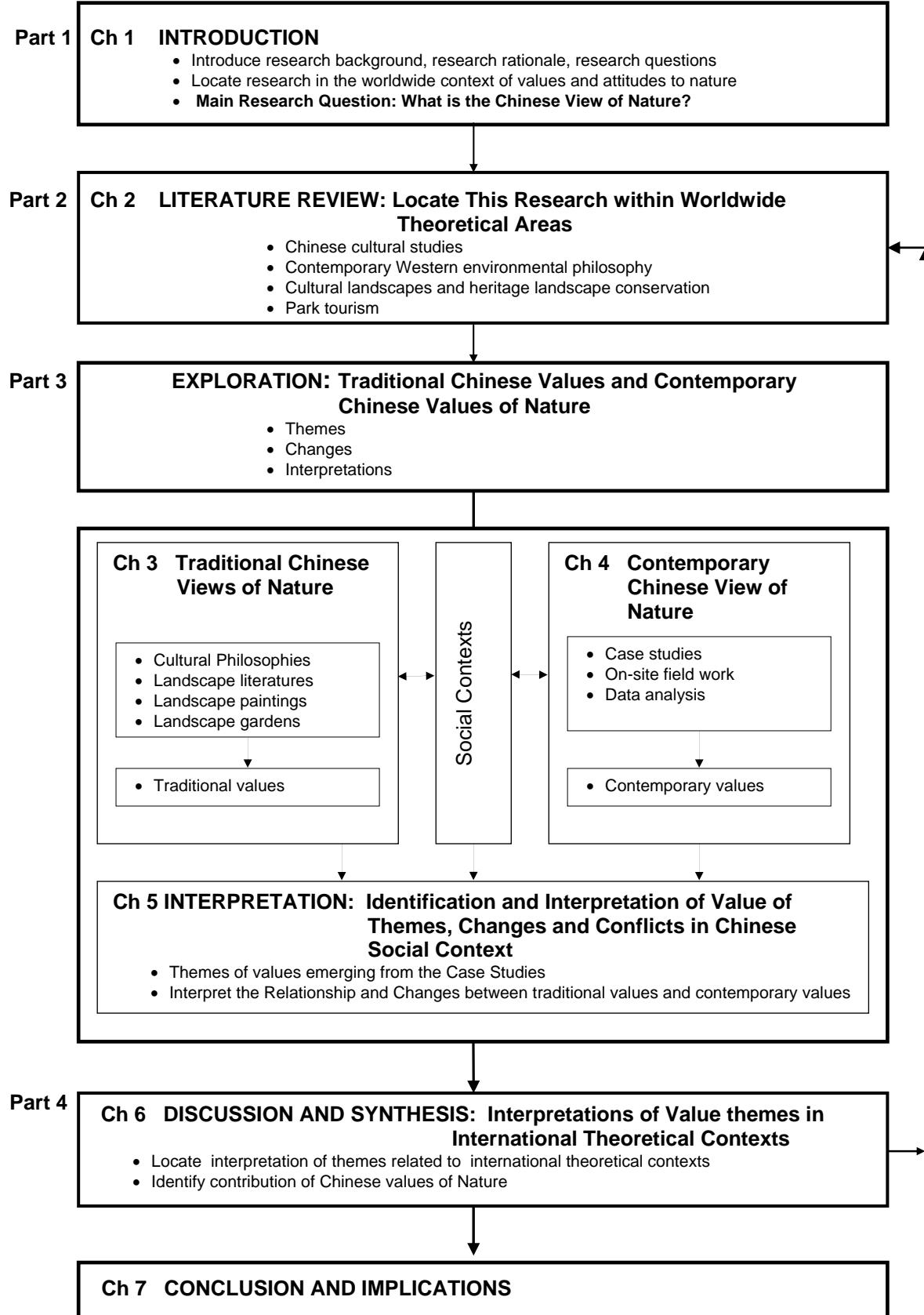


Figure 1.6 Thesis structure

PART 2

# Chapter 2

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## **Nature and Culture: Western and Chinese Approaches**

## **2.1 Introduction**

The problems arising from the Chinese case in the last chapter relate to a worldwide question: "What are values of nature?" To answer this question, one firstly needs to understand how humans value nature in a social and historic context. The research will locate these questions in three contemporary relevant theoretical areas: environmental philosophy, park tourism theories, and cultural landscape theories (including heritage landscape conservation). This chapter reviews these three areas. It aims to review philosophical values of nature, involvement of multiple values in tourism, and values in conservation of nature, and to lay an international theoretical foundation to open the possibility for this research to create a dialogue with the West.

## **2.2 Values of Nature: Contemporary Western Environmental Philosophy**

The re-thinking of the relationship of human beings with the natural environment over the last thirty years started with the widespread perception in the 1960s that the late Twentieth Century faced a serious environmental crisis, as highlighted by Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (Greenwood 1977, in Light and Rolston 2003). This became a focus of environmental philosophy in English-speaking countries in the 1970s (Light and Rolston 2003), when there were urgent concerns over the threats to nature posed largely by humans. The new ecological awareness and conscience called for better use and refinement of familiar philosophical and scientific ideas, while others called for revolution in philosophical thinking towards a re-orientation of perspective (Partridge 1984).

Most mainstream environmental philosophers continue to view environmental philosophy as mainly concerned with ethics (Plumwood 1995). Environmental ethics describes the values carried by the non-human natural world and prescribes an appropriate ethical response to ensure preservation or restoration of those values (Light and Rolston 2003).

Values of nature have deep philosophical roots. When environmental ethics emerged as a new sub-discipline of philosophy in the early 1970s, it did so by posing a challenge to traditional Western anthropocentrism. Firstly, it questioned the assumed moral superiority of human beings over other species on Earth. Secondly, it investigated the possibility of rational arguments for assigning intrinsic value to the natural environment and its nonhuman contents (Brennan and Lo 2002).

### **2.2.1 Central Questions of Environmental Ethics**

Palmer (2003) makes the generalisation that the following five questions lie at the heart of contemporary environmental ethics debates.

The first concern is about whether nature has instrumental value or intrinsic value (non-instrumental value). “Instrumental value is value assigned to something because of its usefulness, as a means to an end” (p. 16), whereas the latter is the value of things as ends in themselves, regardless of whether they are also useful as means to other ends. This has been of considerable importance in environmental philosophy.

The second obviously follows the first one. If there is intrinsic value, then what is the origin of such value? Who creates such values? Value *subjectivists* hold the idea that intrinsic value is human-created and attached to people's lives, or to particular states of affairs (e.g. pleasure) or qualities (e.g. harmony). Value *objectivists* argue that intrinsic value is something already there and waiting to be recognized.

The third area is the location of intrinsic value. That is, what actually is of intrinsic value? Is intrinsic value located subjectively or objectively? Value *subjectivists* and value *objectivists* have different answers.

The fourth area is, who makes ethical decisions where perceived values come into conflict? Who counts?

The fifth distinct area is placed between ethical monism and ethical pluralism. The central question is whether it is possible, within an ethical constituency so large that it could include the entire planet, to arrive at a single governing ethical principle or set of consistent principles to apply to all ethical problems. Ethical monism initially dominated, and still champions, the possibility of such consistency, but now it is questioned by ethical pluralism.

### **2.2.2 Theories of the Values of Nature**

This section explores key theories of environmental ethics relating to the values of nature.

### **Anthropocentrism**

Anthropocentrism has deep philosophic foundations in the West, from Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, and also within the Judeo-Christian-Islamic religious tradition (Zimmerman 2002; Brennan and Lo 2002; Partridge 1984). Anthropocentrism is the view that human needs and interests are of supreme and exclusive value and importance in nature. This view dominates traditional Western ethical perspectives. They assign a significantly greater amount of intrinsic value to human beings than to any nonhuman things, such that the protection or promotion of human interests is paramount. The nonhuman Natural world is considered in terms of its instrumental values to human beings. According to Routley and Routley (1980), the anthropocentrism imbedded in the ‘dominant Western view’, is in effect ‘human chauvinism’. They conclude that the main approaches in traditional Western moral philosophy were unable to allow the recognition that natural things have intrinsic value, and that the tradition needed a significant overhaul. Rightly or wrongly, anthropocentrism was equated with forms of valuation which could easily lead to the destruction of nature (Light and Rolston 2003). Thus, “fighting anthropocentrism seemed the natural starting point for any environmental ethics” (Light and Rolston 2003).

Indeed, anthropocentrism has had worldwide impact and has been the basis of much international environmental policy-making. The concept of *sustainable development* initiated by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) is a typical example (Palmer 2003). It is anthropocentric: its final purpose is for the continuation of the human species.

There are two forms of anthropocentrism. *Strong anthropocentrism* is based on the social construction that all value is explained by reference to the satisfaction of felt preferences of human individuals (Norton 1984, p. 165). Norton argues that strong anthropocentrism provides no means to criticise the tendency of individuals to use nature as a storehouse of raw materials to be extracted and used for products serving human preferences.

However, *weak anthropocentrism*, recognises that felt preferences can be either rational or not. Norton (1984) argues that weak anthropocentrism provides a basis for criticism of value systems which are purely exploitative of nature. Weak anthropocentrism does not reject anthropocentrism. It remains impossible for humans to avoid being anthropocentric, given that human values will always be from

a human (or anthropocentric) point of view (Hargrove 1992) and nature is inescapably viewed through a cultural lens (Palmer 2003). Weak anthropocentrism remains a basis for criticism of value systems which are purely exploitative of nature and argues by stating that anthropocentric approaches do not necessarily suggest reckless exploitation of the environment (Palmer 2003). Instrumental values of nature can also be interpreted in a broad way, which can be seen as offering human beings a range of physical, aesthetic and spiritual instrumental values. Weak anthropocentrism maintains that nature is a socially and culturally constructed procedure (Palmer 2003; Hargrove 1992).

### **Individualist Consequentialism**

Consequentialist theories consider intrinsic ‘value’/‘disvalue’ or ‘goodness’/‘badness’ to be more fundamental moral notions than ‘rightness’/‘wrongness’, and maintain that whether an action is right or wrong is determined by whether its consequences are good or bad (Palmer 2003; Brennan and Lo 2002). This covers a spectrum of positions broadly in the utilitarian tradition of Bentham and Mill. Individualist consequentialism concerns itself with the state of affairs rather than the organism itself, which generates value. Value is measured in terms of pleasure (or satisfaction of interest, desire, and/or preference), while right actions are those that produce the greatest balance of pleasure over pain. Only those sentient beings that have an interest in increasing or avoiding pleasure or pain would be morally considered (Singer 1993). So non-sentient objects, like trees, rivers and landscapes, do not have interests. But some of them have instrumental value to the satisfaction of sentient beings, such as human beings. The embedded danger of this theory is that one organism can be killed and replaced, if it is painless, to give someone pleasure, since “it is total experience which is valuable” (Palmer 2003). According to this, humans hunting animals is valid and acceptable.

### **Individualist Deontological Theories**

The individual pleasure focus maintained by Individualist Consequentialism is sharply criticized by those who believe nature has intrinsic value (Regan 1983; Taylor 1981). Deontological theorists maintain that it is the organism itself which is valuable, not what it is doing. Whether an action is right or wrong is, for the most part, independent of whether its consequences are good or bad. “Animal rights’ advocate Tom Regan (1983) argues that animals have ‘inherent value’ which is independent from humans and have the moral right to respectful treatment. Schweitzer and Taylor (in Palmer 2003) put forward a view of “biocentric equality”

(biocentrism), where all living beings are of equal moral status and exist independently of conscious values. Deontological Consequentialism is significantly criticised from the perspective that all living things have equal value (Palmer 2003), where diversity is of no value and ecosystems are seen as having no context. Holistic ethicist Callicott argues that such individualist environmental ethics fail to accept as good the vital evolutionary processes of predation and death (Callicott 1980). The preservation of the integrity of an ecosystem may require the culling of feral animals or some indigenous populations that threaten to destroy fragile habitats (Brennan and Lo 2002).

### **Holism**

Both consequentialist and deontological theories focus on individuals rather than on the whole conservation of ecological wholes (Callicott 1980). Callicott advocated a version of land-ethical holism which was raised from Leopold's (1949) *Land Ethics*. It focused on ecological wholes rather than individuals, where the value of individual members is merely instrumental and dependent on their contribution to the 'integrity, stability, and beauty' of the larger community. Callicott (1992) argued that some individuals may have to be sacrificed for the whole whenever that is needed for the protection of the holistic good of the community. This principle is also applied to human beings, as they are part of this ecological community. Callicott suggested that the more misanthropy there is, the more ecological it is, which means humans are not only not vital to the system, but actually destroy it (Palmer 2003). This concept was strongly criticised by Regan (1983) as 'environmental fascism'. The prioritising of the wild biotic community over the individual is widely viewed as ethically unacceptable.

### **Reconciling Positions**

To reconcile the difficulties generated by individualism and holism, Callicott proposed his 'nested communities' theory (Palmer 2003). He argues there are three 'nested' circles, with ethical obligations diminishing towards the outside. Human beings occupy the core; the middle 'ring' is 'mixed' (of human and domestic animals); and the wild or biotic community occupies the outside ring. This theory is criticised by Varner as anthropocentric (1991).

Holmes Rolston also highlights the intrinsic value of the individual, assigning value to different characteristics, such as sentience or conscious reflection. Rolston (in Palmer 2003) argues that the more sophisticated a living organism, the more

valuable it is. Alongside this approach, he developed an understanding of the intrinsic value of whole ecosystems. He insisted it would be bizarre to value the organisms, the products of the system, without valuing the process which produces them. He argues this system is independent from humans and is being threatened by human development (*ibid.*). In his *Feeding People versus Saving Nature*, Rolston (1996) claims that humans are like a ‘cancer’ and sometimes feeding people is like feeding a cancer, which is meant to justify the view that saving nature sometimes should have priority over feeding people. This view is sharply criticised as environmental elitism (Attfield 1998; Brennan 1998), especially in developing countries (Guha 1999).

### **Virtues Theory**

Virtues Theory, an alternative to consequentialism and deontology, places the theoretical focus on what the moral reasons are for acting one way or another, rather than good/bad or right/wrong (Brennan and Lo 2002). It takes the position of Aristotle and the Chinese Confucian tradition of “living virtuously”. The central focus is the flourishing of humans and it is anthropocentric. It is argued that the virtues required by a flourishing human life, such as genuine love and respect, will finally lead to care for the nonhuman natural world as an end in itself (O’Neill 1992, in Brennan and Lo 2002).

### **Monism and Pluralism**

From the above different positions, a diversity of moral concerns led to a wide discussion in the 1990s about moral monism and moral pluralism (Palmer 2003). Brennan (1992) argues that there is no one set of principles concerning just one form of value that provides ultimate guidance for our actions. He advocates using different frameworks in our thinking instead of limiting perspective by using only one framework, for there is no single theoretical lens which provides a privileged set of concepts, principles and structures. According to Light (2003), pluralism is interested in environmental ethics as practice and as tools developed in the process of addressing specific policy controversies. From this view, moral pluralism is linked to environmental pragmatism. Pluralism is challenged by monism through the question, “How can one make moral decisions when frameworks come into conflict?” But pluralism is argued to be “context-sensitive, open-ended, and prepared to engage with the profound complexities of making ethical decisions” (Palmer 2003).

### **Deep Ecology**

Deep ecology is a phrase coined by Arne Naess (1973). Naess laid great stress on the distinction between the short term and the long term. He argued that there were two strands in the ecological movement: the shallow, concerned with pollution and resource depletion; and the deep, concerned with treating causes, not symptoms, which he characterised metaphysically, ethically and politically. Deep ecology respects the intrinsic value of nature and endorses “biospheric egalitarianism”. Stimulated by discoveries in ecological science, deep ecology also endorses holism and argues that nothing can be separated from the whole: all individuals are “knots in a web”.

Palmer (2003) pointed out that the metaphysical underpinning of deep ecology was of particular significance in deep ecology thinking and made deep ecology seem more than just an ethical point of view, which is “holism and the extension and realization of the self” (p. 30). Deep ecology came to focus on the possibility of the “identification” of the human ego with nature. If everything is fundamentally one, based on holism, then there is no distinct boundary between humanity and nature and the human can enlarge the boundaries of the self by identifying with nature. Thus, to respect nature is to respect oneself. “Self-realization” is the reconnection of the shrivelled human individual with the wider natural environment (Brennan and Lo 2002). However, this concept was criticised as “intuition lack of firm ontology divide” (Fox 2003). Later critics have argued that deep ecology is no more than an extended social-democratic version of utilitarianism which counts human interests alongside the “interests” of all natural things (Witoszek 1997; Brennan and Lo 2002).

Although deep ecology is criticised at all levels (Palmer 2003), it has proved an inspiration to a wide range of political and practical responses and strategies. Many radical environmental groups, such as Earth First! in the US, and also radical theorists such as Rolston, have been influenced by deep ecology. Naess further developed deep ecology later (Naess 1986), building a “platform” conceived as establishing middle ground between underlying philosophical orientations—Christian, Buddhist, Taoist, process philosophy and the practical principles determining action in specific situations (Brennan and Lo 2002). Thus, deep ecology became explicitly pluralist and strongly related to practice.

### **Ecofeminism**

Ecofeminists reject abstract, rational and universalising theories. They argue that deep ecology of the expanded self is in effect a disguised form of human, indeed masculine centrism, leading to a single, dominant, detached way of viewing the world at all times and places (Plumwood 1993; Palmer 2003). It is argued that male-centred and human-centred thinking have some common characteristics, such as “dualism” and the “logic of domination”. Ecofeminists suggest that environmental ethics should be based on the relationships between humans and nature in particular contexts and locations, and all ethical views are products of a particular world view (Palmer 2003, p31). They focus on the sensitive relationship between nature and humans and believe the human self should not be extended into nature as in deep ecology. “Defining relationships” is central to ecofeminism.

The inter-related, contextual concerns, and non-universal nature of ecofeminism, has similarities to weak anthropocentrism which desires to establish a close and harmonious relationship between humans and nature (Norton 1984). Its diversity of concerns also inspires theories involved in practice.

### **Pragmatism**

The above theories represent the diversity of views and potential difficulties in the practice of environmental ethics based on different philosophies of ontology and epistemology. Environmental pragmatism meets this challenge and attempts to bring some of these diverse ideas together in practice.

The starting point of environmental pragmatism is that the theoretical environmental debates have had little impact on environmental policy-making (Palmer 2003). “Pragmatists cannot tolerate theoretical delays to the contribution that philosophy may make to environmental questions” (Palmer 2003). Classical American pragmatist philosophy is central to environmental pragmatism, which advocates democratic, public conversations about social values, and denies moral absolutes and anti-foundationalism (Palmer 2003). Pragmatism maintains that values are inter-related and dynamically inter-dependent with other values and with beliefs, choices, and exemplars (Weston 1985). Weston (1985) further argues that there are many values, but pragmatism does not need to ground these values, rather that it is sufficient to place them in their supporting contexts and to adjudicate their conflicts with others. This theory has become a methodological orientation in practice, where

value conflicts occur (Palmer 2003). Pragmatism is not interested in looking for the existence of intrinsic value, for it is not the reason for humans to value nature (*ibid.*). Weston (1985) argues that pragmatists value nature through experience, culture and context, rather than as an abstract intrinsic value that is independent from humans. Values are also for human desires: such as utility and aesthetics. Thus, pragmatism, as Weston concludes, is open, culturally diverse, and demands a struggle for our own values without being close to the values and the hopes of others. Indeed, it combines the features of moral pluralism, ecofeminism and weak anthropocentrism.

### **2.2.3 Highlighted Issues Related to Parks and Protected Areas**

There are two highlighted issues in applied environmental ethics related to parks and protected areas.

#### **Wilderness**

Despite the variety of positions in environmental ethics developed over the last thirty years, they have largely focused on “wilderness” and natural areas, and the reasons for their preservation (Brennan and Lo 2002). The USA was the first country to place the concept of wilderness into legislation. It was defined in the Wilderness Act of 1964 as “an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is ‘a visitor who does not remain’ and ‘has outstanding opportunities of solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation’” (USFS 2001). However, the received idea of wilderness is limited to English-speaking countries, has an “Australian-American bias” (Eagles and McCool 2002; Nelson 2003) and only refers to “certain cultures — Protestant Christian, colonial, and postcolonial cultures in particular” (Nelson 2003, p. 414). During the 1980s and 1990s, this idea was challenged for a variety of reasons (Callicott and Nelson 1998). One of the criticisms was from Ramachandra Guha (1989), an Indian writer. He condemned the concept of wilderness as being harmful for developing countries because the creation of a wilderness from which people are excluded ignores the needs of local people. He sharply criticised this kind of preservation as a new, American, imperialist project (Guha 1989). Because these areas become tourist sites for rich visitors, they transfer resources from the poor to the rich (Palmer 2003).

The concept of wilderness is also criticised from the perspective of cultural history and evolution. Some environmental ethicists like Callicott have realised the falsity of

excluding human culture from wilderness areas through a non-anthropocentric view of the intrinsic value of nature as wilderness (Callicott 1995; Stankey, Cole 1985; Callicott 2000; Callicott and Nelson 1998; Nash 1973). Callicott (2000) argues that the perceived wilderness idea in the West was and remained a tool of androcentrism, racism, colonialism and genocide. By suggesting that humans are separate from nature, this ideal ignores evolutionary theory. The idea of “preserving” wildernesses suggests a denial of evolution. A “freeze-framing” of ecology is also ethnocentric, and depends on the fallacy that when Europeans arrived in the New World it was in a “wilderness condition” (Callicott and Nelson 1998). Callicott even quoted Confucius’s words to call for rethinking the name of “wilderness”, which was strange for non-English speaking countries (Callicott 2000).

The original wilderness idea proposed keeping nature static and separate from humans, which was not what motivated the park movement (Nash 1973). Rather, it resulted in park management dominated by ‘a scientific, expert-driven model’ which excluded the local community and multiple cultural values (Eagles and McCool 2002). Many countries adopted a North American model of protected area designation, which resulted in the removal of indigenous populations from within the protected area boundaries. “Both approaches led to a situation of increasing alienation of those whom protected areas were designed to serve and increased resistance to protected area decisions” (p. 65). Callicott and Nelson suggest integrating humans into the natural world and the development of harmonious co-existence, rather than working with the idea of wild nature being entirely separate from human culture. As mentioned previously, some ethicists like Holmes Rolston (1996) insist that nature has intrinsic value and the ecological evolutionary system is independent from humanity and should not be driven by humans. Once natural value is destroyed, it cannot be compensated for in any way. As Palmer (2003) points out, the key question of the debate is how far humans are viewed as a part of or separate from nature, and whether wild nature is thought to have special kinds of intrinsic values.

### **Ecological Restoration**

The debate over the intrinsic value of wilderness is represented in another central environmental idea that nature, especially damaged nature, should be or can be restored and whether this ‘restored’ nature still carries the same value as ‘wild’ nature. Along with Rolston, Robert Elliot (1997) offers the same argument that naturalness itself is a property and the possession of it gives all natural things—

events and states of affairs—*intrinsic value*. The reduction of intrinsic value due to depletion of naturalness on the Earth has reached such a level that any further reduction of it cannot be compensated for by any amount of intrinsic value generated in other ways, no matter how great. Thus, restitution or restoration is not a principle that should be accepted. A restored nature is fake nature and has less value compared with the original one. Eric Katz (1992) further argues that even a perfectly restored nature is just an artefact; it is anthropocentric, just designed and created for the satisfaction of human ends. Katz maintains that such restoration is an act of human domination of nature and that in fact nature cannot be restored by humans.

However, some ethicists disagree with these ideas. The debate has centred on the envisaged relationship that humans have with nature. Light (2000) argues that restoration can be viewed as an attempt to heal relationships between humans and nature, even freeing nature from constraints that prevent it from pursuing its autonomy. Restoration can help humans to understand nature better and help avoid further harm. Lo (1999) argues that this restoration is anthropogenic, rather than anthropocentric, and is aimed at helping nature to get free again, and a freed nature would have the same value as wild nature.

In short, it can be concluded that all the debates are focused on central questions relating to whether the values of nature are intrinsic or non-intrinsic, anthropocentric or non-anthropocentric. The reviewed theories tend to re-evaluate the importance of nature and of how we respond to this value. From Western traditional Individualist Consequentialism, to environmental pragmatism, the development of ideas and the diversity of environmental views are represented.

Interestingly, these debates started out from the fight against anthropocentrism, but the latest theories involved in practice—pragmatism—are still strongly linked to anthropocentrism. Other theories, such as ecofeminism and weak anthropocentrism, which focus on context and human cultural values, also have a wide influence, while yet other theories maintain that nature's intrinsic values are strongly supported by ecological preservationists.

From the beginning of environmental ethics, all theories have been strongly related to the social environmental movement, including parks and protected areas. Now the *Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute* is the only Federal research group

in the United States dedicated to the development and dissemination of knowledge needed to improve management of wilderness, parks and similarly protected areas. There are those working there who intend to link theories and practice, such as Robert E. Manning who focuses on visitors' experiences and resource management and who was recently quite active in the environmental philosophy area. Callicott (2002) has been deeply involved in the wilderness argument in the *Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute*.

### **2.3 Tourism in National Parks and Protected Areas**

Scenic and Historic Areas, as designated public park systems in China, have only a 25-year history and are relatively recent in the world park and protected areas system. Although park tourism is large in China, there is still a lack of systematic theories. A review of the relevant theories on world park tourism will help to identify the key values involving in park tourism. Understanding the concept of Western parks as a product of the Industrial Revolution and its Western philosophical and religious origins will give this research a critical overview of park tourism theories and identify their applicability to Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in China.

Park tourism is a worldwide phenomenon associated with mass tourism. What has happened in China is not isolated, but rather the opposite. It involves a range of values, including those from the West. This section of the review covers the worldwide park tourism context, and aims to identify the global values of park tourism and understand Western values, which will help this research in the further interpretation of value conflicts and in seeking an alternative future for the Chinese case.

#### **2.3.1 Definitions, Purposes and Categories**

Although the China's Scenic and Historic Interest Area is a kind of designated national park system, its definition and purpose is more close to IUCN's category V of "protected landscape/seascape" rather than category II of "National Parks".

##### **The IUCN Definitions, purposes and categories**

The definitions, purposes and categories developed by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) were adopted by the United Nations for the protection of the world's National Parks and Protected Areas, as well as for World Cultural and Natural

Heritage areas. It is supposed to be ‘universal’ and ‘international’ (IUCN 2003). The Concept of ‘protected areas’ is defined by the IUCN (2003) as follows:

*[A Protected Area is] An area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means.*

The main purposes of the management of protected areas are listed by IUCN as:

1. *Scientific research*
2. *Wilderness protection*
3. *Preservation of species and genetic diversity*
4. *Maintenance of environmental services*
5. *Protection of specific natural and cultural features*
6. *Tourism and recreation*
7. *Education*
8. *Sustainable use of resources from natural ecosystems*
9. *Maintenance of cultural and traditional attributes*

Having regard to the different mix and priorities accorded to these main management objectives, the IUCN established the following distinct categories of protected areas in the *Guidelines for Protected Area Management Categories* (IUCN 1994):

- I *Strict protection (i.e. Strict Nature Reserve / Wilderness Area);*
- II *Ecosystem conservation and recreation (i.e. National Park);*
- III *Conservation of natural features (i.e. Natural Monument);*
- IV *Conservation through active management (i.e. Habitat/Species Management Area);*
- V *Landscape/seascape conservation and recreation (i.e. Protected Landscape/Seascape)<sup>3</sup>;*
- VI *Sustainable use of natural ecosystems (i.e. Managed Resource Protected Area).*

National parks fall under category II as ‘protected area[s] managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation’ and defined in the Guidelines as follows:

*Natural area of land and/or sea, designated to (a) protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations, (b) exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area and (c) provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreation and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible (IUCN 1994).*

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<sup>3</sup> Some of the ideas behind the development of World Heritage Cultural Landscapes are similar to those of Category V. This is especially so in: (a) the emphasis placed on human/nature interaction, most notably in the continuing form of organically evolved cultural landscape (type (ii)), which acknowledges the value of landscape-related cultural traditions that continue to this day; and (b) in the importance placed upon associative values (type (iii)) (von Drost et al., 1995).

Interestingly, in category V, protected “landscape/seascape” is a protected area managed mainly for landscape /seascape conservation and recreation. It is defined as:

*Area of land, with coast and sea as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and cultural value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of such an area (IUCN 1994).*

IUCN also realised there were complicated features in different countries and suggested different countries could set up their own national systems using widely varying terminology. They could manage these areas according to IUCN categories as well as their own specific titles (IUCN 2003). Different countries, such as in China, Canada and the United Kingdom, have developed their own park systems according to their specific conditions.

#### **Definition of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in China**

Responding to the world parks and protected areas system, a park system in China, Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, was founded in 1981. Scenic and Historic Interest Areas belong to system of protected areas in China and form about one tenth of the protected area system. Such areas are defined by China's Construction Ministry (CCM 1985) as:

*A Scenic and Historic Interest Area is an area of land where relatively concentrated exceptional natural and cultural resources are found and which has values based on appreciation, culture and science; which is of a suitable size and in a suitable condition for recreation; and which is designated by the local government or above for the purposes of recreational, scientific and cultural activity.*

Under this definition, where there is no equivalent IUCN category, culture and tourism or recreation are especially emphasised, as well as natural features. The IUCN category V, ‘protected landscape’, seems more suitable for China’s Scenic and Historic Interest Areas due to the strong interaction there between nature and human beings, rather than category II, ‘national park’. Scenic and Historic Interest Areas are very much oriented towards aesthetic tourism in China.

#### **2.3.2 Meanings of Parks**

National parks and protected areas are specially designated nature-based areas representing typical values and meanings embedded in social and cultural contexts. The meanings of parks change all the time. The contemporary meaning of nature is

value-related to industrialisation as national parks originated at the height of the Industrial Revolution. Nature was highly valued for its peculiar power to stimulate reflection on the meaning of life and society due to its “awesomeness” and “grandeur” (Sax 1980). However these meanings are essentially different from the traditional Chinese View of nature. Firstly, the original meaning of nature was based on Chinese philosophy that at the very beginning was embedded in nature. Secondly, nature is mostly regarded as a best friend and moral teacher for humans, regardless of its great beauty and ability to invoke religious awe.

When mass park tourism increased 50 years ago in the West, more and more values evolved. People visit parks with different goals in mind. These goals are highly personal, but in mass tourism they also represent social goals. Eagles and McCool (2002) outline the central ideas underlying parks as follows, representing different value attitudes to nature based on Western traditions:

1. *The theme of wilderness;*
2. *Community social function;*
3. *Hunting preserve;*
4. *Business and profit;*
5. *Physical and emotional health ;*
6. *Ecological preservation;*
7. *Recreation;*
8. *Meaning of life;*
9. *Protecting native people and their lands;*
10. *Historical and cultural preservation.*

From these values, we can see that mass tourism access did change the meaning of parks. Nature becomes more “commercial”, “common”, “pleasant”, and more “scientific”. Different values or perceptions are involved in park tourism all the time. A full understanding of these values in a social and cultural context is needed for appropriate management, especially when these values come into conflict with each other. What has been changed in Scenic and Historical Interest Areas needs to be explored.

### **Importance of Tourism in Parks**

In Western counties, while visiting a national park or protected area is an activity in which broad segments of society engage, as a touristic activity it is a relatively new cultural phenomenon (Eagles and McCool 2002). It is not only because the idea of nature and culture-based parks is less than 150 years old, but also because the financial and technological means to visit parks for broad segments of society have only developed since the end of World War II. This changed the Western tradition

that only the financial elite travelled to these areas for high-culture or religious purposes (*ibid.*).

Tourism is vital for parks and protected areas. The history of national parks and protected areas is strongly linked to public tourism. In 1866, the British Colony of New South Wales reserved 2000 hectares of land in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney for protection and tourism. According to this legislation, tourism was a key function of this reservation (Eagles and McCool 2002). The first claimed national park, Yellowstone National Park, designated in 1872, also included recreation in its purposes, and the key concepts of a public park open to all for benefit and enjoyment became the cornerstone of national park establishment worldwide (*ibid.*) The second national park in the world was Royal National Park, Sydney, designated in 1879 (*ibid.*).

A general concept underlying ecological conservation is that there is higher ecological integrity in the absence of human interference and there is a common understanding that human impact on parks and protected areas is inherently negative. This concept has been strongly criticised by national park supporters. Eagles and McCool (2002) argue that it is shallow, and that it is human action that leads to the creation of a park, and ongoing human activity that establishes a management regime to protect the ecological and cultural values of a park. This idea goes strongly against the intrinsic nature value advocates who insist that nature should be left beyond human management. Eagles and McCool also argue that park visitation is critical to the creation of a societal culture in which parks and tourism are a fundamental indicator of whether a society has sufficient levels of conservation appreciation to lead to action.

Eagle and McCool (2002) point out that it is not appropriate to exclude visitors from national parks for reasons of pure nature and that, on the contrary, people must visit parks, must appreciate the experiences gained and must have a memory of that appreciation which leads to long-term attitude reinforcement. They believe this is the only way to cause governments to move positively because parks and protected areas are products of culture and politics, not science. The National Parks Service (NPS) of the USA (1997) clearly claims the provision of high quality tourism or recreational experiences as one of the two goals of National Parks.

Tourism is also encouraged by the IUCN (2003) as it potentially provides significant benefits to protected areas and associated communities. The IUCN recognizes that tourism can provide economic benefits, opportunities for communities, opportunities for land acquisition for protected areas, greater appreciation of cultural and natural heritage, greater knowledge of the interplay between humans and their environment, and increased interest in and commitment to the conservation of natural and cultural values. In this context, visitation, recreation and tourism are a critical component of fostering support for parks and the conservation of biological and cultural heritages.

### **Cultural Impacts of Tourism**

There are also many disadvantages of park tourism, however. As the IUCN points out, if development is not planned and managed appropriately, tourism can contribute to the deterioration of cultural landscapes, threaten biodiversity, contribute to pollution and degradation of ecosystems, displace agricultural land and open spaces, diminish water and energy resources, disrupt social systems and increase poverty (IUCN 2003). David Cole has done substantial research on the ecological impacts of visitors (Cole and Landres 1996; Cole, Petersen 1987; Cole and Schreiner 1981; Cole 2001), which strongly influenced park management frameworks in the United States. The literature on research into the impacts of cultural tourism is rich. Cohen has worked on the nature of mass tourism and the cultural impacts of mass tourism on the authenticity of tourism destinations, which are regarded as key values of heritage places.

The relationships between tourists and the authenticities that they are pursuing has been penetratingly analysed by Cohen (2004a) and others. Cohen (2004c) has developed “a phenomenological typology of tourist experiences by analysing the different meanings which interest in an appreciation of the culture, social life and the natural environment of others has for the individual traveller” (p. 69). He asserts that there are differences in the pursuit of authenticity between modern and post-modern tourists, and that even in modern tourism different tourists have different views of authenticity. He distinguishes five main modes of modern touristic experience: “recreational mode”, “diversionary mode”, “experiential mode”, “experimental mode” and “existential mode” (p. 69).

In his explanation, the “recreational mode” was conceived as characteristic of travels essentially adhering to modern, secular society or culture, in search of physical and mental restoration from the stresses of modern life and not much concerned with

genuine authenticity. This kind of travel may well thrive on “pseudo-events”, or superficial, frivolous activities, so in itself it is not a “serious business”, but rather “idle pleasure”. It is pursued on the strength of its recuperative power as a mechanism which recharges the batteries of weary modern people, refreshing and restoring them so they are able to return to the wear and tear of “serious” living. Such tourism serves as a “pressure-valve” for modern people.

“The diversionary mode” was conceived as characteristic of the modern person who, though alienated from the “centre” of their socio-culture, does not seek a new, alternative centre. They travel for mere entertainment or “diversion” from the boredom and routine of a meaningless life, and do not actively seek “authenticity.”

“The experiential mode” was conceived as characteristic of those alienated modern tourists who look for authenticity and meanings which have been missed in their own world in the lives of others. Tourism is regarded as a way of searching for meaning to transform their society, instead of radical revolution. The experiential tourists are aware of the authenticity in the lives of others and infer from it that there still exists a transcendent Centre, a meaning-conferring Reality in contrast with spurious, meaningless modern society. The experiential tourists merely experience it vicariously; at most they strive to “museumise” the authentic pro-modern and non-modern into modernity. The experience-oriented tourists, even if they observe the authentic life of others, remain aware of their “otherness”, which persists even after their visit. The authenticity in the lives of others is not “converted” to these tourists’ lives, nor do the tourists accept the others’ authentic way of life. These tourists remain strangers and learn to aesthetically appreciate (p. 75). The aesthetics provided by direct contact with the authenticity of others may reassure and uplift the tourist, but does not provide new meaning and guidance to their lives.

“The experimental mode” is characterized by “drifter” tourists who are alienated from modernity and engage in a quest for an alternative lifestyle or “elective centre” outside modern society which suits their needs and desires. They engage in that authentic life but refuse fully to commit themselves to it. They sample and compare different alternatives, hoping eventually to discover one which is suitable for them. It is a “search for themselves” instead of outside realities. They seek to experience authenticity in the life of non-moderns, while themselves remaining (alienated) moderns. It will not spiritually change their lives.

Finally, “the existential mode,” characteristic of travellers who “arrive” at their goals and find their “elective centre”, undergoing an experience of “switching worlds” which they will fully commit to. This experience of “existential authenticity” is devoid of a definite external referent; it is not necessarily dependent on the distinguishing “placeness” of a particular destination, but it can be realised anywhere if the right mood of liminality and absence of ordinary constraints is created. Consequently, this tends to become an increasingly less distinctive ‘extra-ordinary’ pursuit, and more and more comes to resemble a familiar leisure activity.

Cohen further asserts that in modern tourism, local culture generally serves as the principal example of commodification. In particular, “colourful” local costumes and customs, rituals and feasts, and folk and ethnic arts become touristic services or commodities, as they come to be performed or produced for touristic consumption (Cohen 2004c, p101). Commodification allegedly changes the meaning of cultural products and of human relations, eventually making them meaningless and surrogate as covert “staged authenticity” emerges (MacCannell 1973). As cultural products lose their meanings for the locals and as the need to present the tourists with ever more spectacular, exotic and titillating attractions grows (Boorstin 1964, in Cohen 2004c), contrived cultural products are increasingly “staged” for tourists and decorated to look authentic. Commodification, engendered by tourism, allegedly destroys not only the meaning of cultural products for the locals but, paradoxically, also for the tourists. It thus emerges that the more tourism flourishes, the more it allegedly becomes a colossal deception (Cohen 2004c, p102). The commodified cultural products lose their intrinsic meaning and significance in the process for the local people, who in turn lose their enthusiasm for producing them. They can become a performance just for money as the meaning is gone (Greenwood 1977, in Cohen 2004c).

In general, modern tourists are still pursuing authenticity, compared with post-modern tourists who are pursuing non-authenticity (Cohen 2004). However, there was a change in the 1990s from the dominance of the quest for “authenticity” as the principal culturally sanctioned motivation for modern tourists, towards a “nivellation” of all attractions (natural or contrived, realistic or fantastic, historical or futuristic, original or recreated), characteristic of the post-modern ethos (Feifer 1985, Urry 1990, in Cohen 2004c, p. 135). Post-modern tourists crave simple enjoyment and fun (a ludic desire for fun) which is unconcerned with authenticity of the sites, sights, events or objects which satisfy this desire, This becomes a culturally sufficient

justification (Cohen 2004c). This desire is congruent with the post-modern nivellation of all “finite provinces of meaning” and makes it possible for authenticity to be derived from staged and contrived attractions as well as from unadulterated ones (Cohen 2004c, p5). This view is consistent with post-modern trends: the gradual switch in consumption practices from concern with material goods to an emphasis on “experiences” in Western societies as “originals” allegedly vanish and simulacra take their place (Schuetz 1973, in Cohen 2004, p. 4). So, beneath the apparently superficial desire for recreation, there lurks a deeper cultural theme.

In post-modern tourism, there is a major theme informing the sociological discourse on the impact of tourism: “staged authenticity”, a term coined by MacCannell (1973) to describe the artful presentation of contrived sites and sights as if they were authentic, when in fact they have already been transformed, partly by tourism itself. This concept moves the idea of “authenticity” from an “etic” view to a more “emic” one, namely “constructed” authenticity which stresses the tourist’s own perception of “authenticity”: the features of a site, sight, or even an object which, in their eyes, qualifies it as being “authentic”. In this way the status of the concept changed from being a tool of analysis to its empirical object (Wang 2000). Eventually, the discourse moved to a completely subjectified view of the concept, which Wang calls “existential” authenticity: the fullness and exaltation of “real living” experienced by tourists in undeterred, linial situations. It becomes irrelevant whether the external circumstances are perceived as “authentic” or not (Cohen 2004c, p3). In ‘objective’ authenticity the link is stable: the concept (sign) “authenticity” can be in principle unequivocally applied to the sites, sights, events and objects (referents) which tourists encounter on their trip. By implication, it can be “objectively” determined whether or not they are foiled by “staged authenticity”. In “constructed” authenticity the link is loosened up: rather than assuming that “authenticity” is independently verifiable, it becomes a matter of the subjective judgments of the tourists themselves. Hence, owing to the diversity of their criteria of judgment, the referents of “authenticity” vary from one person to another (Cohen 2004c, p4). From this point of view, authenticity is not an objectively given trait of a site, sight, event or object, but is socially constructed.

Thus, mass tourism can be viewed as having great advantages and disadvantages for the destinations. The cultural meanings of parks, such as Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, are embedded and constructed in dynamic social contexts.

### **2.3.3 Value Turns: the Management of Parks and Protected Areas**

However, values of parks have always changed throughout history. Values of parks have changed from only ecological or human concerns to the integrity of both values. This change is clearly presented in the history of the focus of management and management frameworks, as below.

The concept of *carrying capacity* was the central concern of all park management before the 1970s (Stankey and Manning 1986) because of ecological concerns over environmental crises. As Stankey and Manning (1986) point out, very few concepts within the field of outdoor recreation management attracted as much attention and persisted as long as that of carrying capacity. This initial concept can be traced back at least to their application to wildlife and livestock management in the 1930s. As used in these fields, the term referred to the number of animals of any one species that could be supported in a given habitat. It was quite natural to consider using this concept to control increasing outdoor recreation in a given natural setting. It was first suggested in the mid-1930s as a park management concept for the national park system. Associated with the sharp increase in mass tourism in the 1960s, carrying capacity studies and their application to park planning and management peaked during the 1960s and 1970s in the US (NPS 1997). There are many studies focused on the notion of recreational carrying capacity (Wager 1964; Stankey and Lime 1973; Cole and Schreiner 1981). However, it soon became apparent that the sustainable relationship could not be achieved by scientifically accepted methods and that the park management process involved social values. There would always be a conflict between tourism use and nature resource preservation while the relationship was determined by social and cultural values. It became a common understanding that the natural resource-oriented point of view must be augmented by a consideration of human values (NPS 1997).

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) was the first planning and management framework to link preservation of the resource setting with human recreational experiences and values. It was from ROS that diversity of visitor experiences came to be valued in park management. It concerned human needs (tourist experiences) and social values of tourism as much as resource protection, which met the main purpose of contemporary park management (NPS 1997; Driver 1990).

In the late 1970s, it was realized in the USA that outdoor recreational experiences were especially linked to special geological sites and settings (Driver and Brown 1987). The fundamental structure of the ROS framework is simple. It involves classifying recreational goals into broad classes of recreational opportunities based on natural settings. The result is a clear definition of recreational opportunities as both products of management and services desired by tourists. The basic recreational opportunities are defined as primary, semi-primary, semi-modern and modern. Primary opportunities are based on the concept of wilderness. ROS also recognised that wilderness and related recreational settings were defined by three broad categories of factors: environmental, social and managerial (Manning and Lime 2002). This method of classification has a profound influence and generally guides management zoning classification in natural resource areas around the world, especially in North America, New Zealand and Australia.

The application of the previous concept of carrying capacity to parks resulted in frustration (Cole and Stankey 1998; Manning and Lime 2002). The principal difficulty lies in determining how much impact or change should be allowed within each of the components that make up the carrying capacity concept: biophysical resources and the quality of the recreation experience (Manning and Lime 2000, p14). The focus shifted to “limits of acceptable change”, raising the issue of “desired future condition” which included embracing both natural and social values of nature and value negotiation.

The Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC), based on the ROS's purpose of providing diversity of experiences, provided an alternative framework for carrying capacity (Stankey et al. 1985). LAC is based on the assumption that where there is human activity, there is ecological deterioration. But this does not mean humans should stop all activities in natural areas. Rather, it maintains that it is possible to maintain a balance between human behaviour and natural resource changes as long as the impact from these human behaviours is limited. The acceptance of the degree of natural resource change will be determined by social desires, but it does not mean, for example, that a forest could be recklessly changed for community use. Instead, key significance indicators of settings and experiences should be identified and observed in the park process. The intention of the LAC process is to develop a compromise between absolute protection of resources and unrestricted access to resources for recreational use.

David Cole, as one of the original authors of the LAC concept, enhanced the original basic logic of the LAC process which is described as follows (in NPS 1997):

- *identify two goals in conflict;*
- *establish that both goals must be compromised;*
- *decide which goal will ultimately constrain the other;*
- *write LAC standards for this ultimate constraint;*
- *Compromise these goals until the standards are reached; and*
- *Compromise the other goals as much as necessary.*

Cole and Stankey (1998) concluded that the most significant aspect of the LAC approach was the method used to define compromises between value goals. Thus, LAC was developed as a generic method to apply in areas where compromise was needed to meet more than two conflicting goals (Cole 1995).

ROS and LAC are two foundational planning and management frameworks for contemporary park tourism. Their applications were not limited to park areas and they have had broad influence on world regional tourism planning. “Limits of Acceptable Change” is now one of most important value standards for these plans (Gartner 1996; Lawson 1998).

The Visitor Experience and Resource Protection Framework (VERP) is the latest management framework, adopted in 1997 by United States Department of Interior (USDI) National Park Service (NPS). In 1992 the NPS began developing the VERP framework to address visitor use management and carrying capacity in units of the national park system. The VERP framework is one adaptation of the LAC process. The most significant value aspect of VERP is that it moves from “issue driven” planning of LAC (LAC process takes it as its first step) to “goal-driven” management based on the philosophy that problems are nothing more than the obstacles that lie between existing conditions and conditions desired for the future (Hof and Lime 1998). It means it is important to establish future goals - beginning with affirmation and articulation of the purpose and significance of the park. Thus, park management theories began to represent the typical characteristics of the Information Era: multiple social and cultural values being involved in management, as well as natural values. The eternal objective is the integrity of natural and cultural values in these nature-dominated areas.

### **2.3.4 Key Concepts Underpinning Park Values in the World**

Two major concepts have developed since the mid-1970s. One is sustainability, while the other is the idea that actions to manage protected areas must be

acceptable to the relevant social groups using or interested in the area (Light and Rolston 2003; Eagles and McCool 2002). This has led to moral or value plurality. Based on these concepts, the value of parks shifted from the separation of natural resource preservation and visitors' activities, toward a balance of multiple values (cultural, social and scientific). Over time this led to a focus on the examination of value shifts. This is the platform for this research and how it is positioned worldwide. Interestingly, both of these concepts lean towards human values and represent a clear, weak anthropocentric value position. This also fits the environmental tendency to bring culture back into nature, as can be perceived from the heated debates over wilderness. Furthermore, Eagles and McCool (2002) argue that parks are very much products of the culture that created them and that they are social institutions in the truest sense of the word. This means that parks cannot be valued without taking account of their social and cultural contexts. But cultures change and evolve over time, values shift, priorities change. The underlying assumptions about parks and protected areas meeting future needs must be examined in the light of the fundamental value shifts now occurring, but they must be acceptable by the dominant social groups. In short, a tendency towards the negotiation of different values between culture, society and nature is emerging.

## **2.4 Cultural Landscape and Heritage Landscape Conservation**

Cultural landscape theories are essential for this research, especially because there is a gap in contemporary landscape research in China. Landscapes, as the most sensitive interface between nature and human beings, embody the most important human values of nature. Cultural landscape theories of critical "new" cultural geography will provide new perspectives on the meaning of landscape and indicate how they lead to the conservation of these values. However this Western term is the most problematic term in China, from theoretical understanding to world heritage practice (Han 2004).

### **2.4.1 Cultural Landscape in the West**

The conceptual origins of the term 'cultural landscape', lie in the writings of German historians and French geographers of the mid/later 19th century (Fowler 2003). In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the German morphologist Schluter focused more closely on cultural elements than on natural settings. He took the landscape itself as the primary source of data for mapping settlement morphology, explaining landscape patterns according to the way of life of the inhabitants. Meanwhile, the

French morphologists were concentrating on the cultural explanation of rural landscapes in term of styles of living (O'Hare 1997).

Influenced by German and other explorations of sociology and anthropology, the term 'cultural landscape' and the particular ideas it embraced were promoted by Carl Sauer and the Berkeley School of human geographers in the USA in the 1920s and 1930s (Fowler 2003; Wang 2003; Tang 2005). Sauer's Classic definition is:

*The cultural landscape is fashioned from a natural landscape by a cultural group. Culture is the agent, the natural area the medium, the cultural landscape the result. Under the influence of a given culture, itself changing through time, the landscape undergoes development, passing through phases, and probably reaching ultimately the end of its cycle of development. With the introduction of a different – that is – alien culture, the rejuvenation of the cultural landscape sets in, or a new landscape is superimposed on remnants of an old one (Sauer 1925).*

From this definition, it is clear that the visible form of landscape morphology, the material landscape, is the result of human culture, which is against the views of traditional environmental determinism (Wang 2003). It was the first time that culture was recognized as the most important factor acting on landscapes and natural settings. The Berkeley School, the Sauerians, greatly influenced the cultural perspective on landscape. However, what the Sauerians were concerned with was the outcome of culture as it worked on the land, rather than the inner workings (Wang 2003), or the cultural record on the land, rather than the culture itself (Jackson 1989, in O'Hare 1997). The later Sauerian Wilbur Zelinsky asserts that culture is "both of and beyond the participating members" and "its totality is much greater than those 'parts' due to superorganicism" (Wang 2003). This culture of superorganicism later served as a key target for those who wanted a theory to serve understanding of how cultural geographies were really made in the everyday struggle of life (Duncan 1980). This caused the birth of 'new cultural geography'.

In 1980, James Duncan, as the pioneer of new cultural geography, published a striking attack on superorganicism in cultural geography. Duncan (Duncan 1980) pointed out that superorganicism wrongly reified culture as a thing, rather than as a process and such reification made it impossible to understand the sociological and psychological components of culture. In short, Duncan (p196) argued that superorganicism erases the role of individuals in society, reducing them to mere automatons acting out the dictates of a mysterious, independent, larger-than-life force called culture. He argued that culture could be saved if it were not treated as an explanatory variable in itself, but used to signify contexts for action or sets of

arrangements between people at various levels of aggregation. More socially, “that which has been termed ‘culture’ can be reduced to the interaction between people” (Duncan 1980(p197). He was changing the focus of landscape nature from culture towards politics.

Denis Cosgrove and Peter Jackson’s (1987) *New Directions in Cultural Geography* represented a succinct new approach. They criticised the tendency to adopt a unitary view of culture, rather than a constantly negotiated and constituted plurality of cultures. They argued for a “revitalised cultural geography” to recognise that “particular cultural forms can be related to specific material circumstances in particular localities”. This related to the re-theorisation of “culture” and “landscape”, which it was felt should take into consideration the contests between social groups (p. 99). Cosgrove and Jackson stated that “cultures are politically contested” (p. 99), arguing for a more complex concept of landscape and recognising it as a cultural construction, or a “particular way of composing, structuring and giving meaning to an external world whose history has to be understood in relation to the material appropriation of land” (p. 96). This included “a particular historical and cultural relationship between people and land, a way of imagining and representing the world”, “a sophisticated cultural construct”, an aesthetic “way of seeing that finds expression in various artefacts from paintings and poems to gardens and cities” (Cosgrove 1985, in O'Hare 1997). Two related consequences arose from this insistence on landscape as a construction: they championed the notion of “symbolic landscapes” which “produce and sustain social meaning” and iterated the importance of studying “represented” landscapes (such as those in literature and art) in addition to studying “real” landscapes. In the pursuit of such analyses of landscapes, they highlighted the usefulness of two metaphors: landscape as text and landscape as theatre (Cosgrove and Jackson 1987).

From this cultural perspective on landscape, Cosgrove and Jackson (1987) argued that, methodologically, understanding landscape should be interpretative rather than using strictly morphological methods. In line with the landscape-as-text metaphor, the most commonly favoured methods were drawn from linguistics and semiotics. In this view, the landscape was a text to be read as a social document. As with textual metaphors, images hide multiple layers of meanings and are not “transparent windows” (p. 98) to the “real world”. They are recognized as uneven, with “texts” as well as “silences” and “blanks” as social constructions. Also there is a call for the understanding of relationships between dominant (elite) and subordinate (popular)

cultures (Kong 1997) and to examine the tensions between 'political' and 'vernacular' landscapes.

From a sociological perspective, Sharon Zukin sees landscapes as a "symbolic representation" of "an ensemble of material and social practices" (Zukin 1991, in Goldman, Papson 2003). Zukin argues that landscapes are not merely limited to nature's scenes, but also the ways in which society and culture transform nature into social formations — these formations may be urban or technological, bureaucratic or architectural. Landscapes, she argues, are constituted by "ways of seeing", and only when we knew how to 'read' them, can we perceive in landscape representations the relations of power that underlie and constitute them. Thus, in a narrow sense, landscape represents the architecture of social class, gender and race relations imposed by powerful institutions. In a broader sense, it connotes the entire panorama that we see: both the landscape of the powerful — cathedrals, factories and skyscrapers — and the subordinate, resistant, or expressive vernacular of the powerless — village chapels, shantytowns and tenements. A landscape mediates, both symbolically and materially, between the socio-spatial differentiation of capital implied by market and the socio-spatial homogeneity of labour suggested by place (Zukin 1993, in Goldman, Papson 2003). Thus, in mass tourism, the landscapes are second-order landscapes shaped by capital. Capital gives shape to material landscapes, framing symbolic visions of the materiality that surrounds our relations of consumption and creates an imaginary landscape of ideology. The primary conflict located in the concept of the landscape between market forces and the lived reality of places disappears in the advertised landscapes of capital (Goldman, Papson 2003). While place designates the cultural geography of adaptation to locality (Auge 1995, in Goldman, Papson 2003), non-place designates the landscape of supermodernity, where place succumbs to the abstracting, universalising power of capital and technology and is converted into spaces that we pass through without any sense of relation, history or identity.

The relationships of aestheticisation and politics in landscape preservation were examined by Duncan and Duncan (2001). They argued that, "by being thoroughly aestheticised, class relations are mystified and reduced to questions of lifestyle, consumption patterns, taste, and visual pleasure. Landscapes become possessions that play an active role in the performance of elite social identities", further, "social distinction is achieved and maintained by preserving and enhancing the beauty of places", and "this aestheticising of place is managed through highly restrictive

zoning policies for residential land and by ‘protecting’ hundreds of acres of undeveloped land as nature preserves” (p387). A class-based aesthetic ‘wild’ nature is constructed in these preservations, and then “the seemingly innocent pleasure in the aesthetic appreciation of landscapes and the desire to protect nature can act as a subtle but highly effective mechanism of social exclusion and the reaffirmation of elite class identities” (p387).

Thus, from the scope of ‘new cultural geography’, the construction of landscape should be “a constant re-working by humans of eternal moral questions: of self, nature and society, of the appropriate forms which human lives and institutions should take, of the ways in which the experiential unity and wholeness of our world have been given meaning” (Cosgrove 1990, in O’Hare 1997). From the history of geography, the concept of landscape moved towards ‘cultural’ from ‘neutral’ which led to the term ‘cultural landscape’.

#### **2.4.2 Contemporary Landscape Research in China**

Although China has a long history of the culture of nature and of landscape, contemporary landscape research regarding recently designated park systems, such as the Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, has not made big progress. Park and landscape professionals are working hard to deal with all emerging issues, especially regarding Scenic and Historic Interest Areas which are representative of Chinese landscapes. Interestingly, while the contemporary Western cultural landscape of cultural geography has been heavily influenced by humanity (Kong 1997) and shows an obvious tendency towards culture, China tends to be more focused on scientific values. Western and Chinese interests seem to be coming closer, but from two opposite positions. In China, *Landscape Science* (Ding 1992) is one of the most important contemporary theories and has been widely acknowledged in the planning and conservation of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas.

The ideas maintained by Ding are very similar to those of weak anthropocentrism. Based on traditional Chinese culture, Ding defined landscape, instead of ‘cultural landscape’, as “a culture of the interface between nature and humans”, and as “the part of nature that has been sensed and consciously constructed by human beings through history” (Ding 1992, p4). Landscape is located in the interactive area

between nature and humans, but it is traditionally based on natural settings and is the most sensitive and creative part of them. It is not as ‘ordinary’ as the Western “cultural landscape”. Indeed, the cultural nature of this concept is very close to James Corner’s definition that “[landscape] is construed in an eidetic and subjective way so that it cannot be equated with nature or environment” (Corner 1999,p6); and also is most close to Augustin Berque’s concept of landscape (in Corner 1999,p6):

*Landscape is not the environment. The environment is the factual aspect of a milieu: that is, of the relationship that links a society with space and with nature. Landscape is the **sensible aspect** (original emphasis) of that relationship. It thus relies on a collective form of subjectivity... to suppose that every society possesses an awareness of landscape is simply to ascribe to other cultures our own sensibility.*

The meaning of “landscape” in the Chinese context sits at the core of culture and thus is more ‘cultural’ than the concept behind the useful Western tautological term (O'Hare 1997) of “cultural landscape”, which is based on the Western history of landscape. Traditionally in China, landscape has been acknowledged as ‘cultural’ and it has never been challenged. The difference between Chinese ‘landscape’ and the Western ‘cultural landscape’ is illustrated in Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2.

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Landscape

Figure 2.1: Chinese concept of landscape (Ding 1992)

Cultural Landscape

Figure 2.2: Western concept of landscape (O'Hare 1997)

However, Ding (1994) transcended the traditional limitations of high culture-centred aesthetics and expanded them to vernacular cultural values. He promoted the inclusion of ethnographical study in heritage landscape planning so, in his planning, local villagers' tangible and intangible values, vernacular buildings and customs came into the landscape resource inventory along with historical information. However, this inventory and preservation was still done from a cultural and aesthetic perspective rather than because of the intrinsic values of the villagers' settlement itself. Ding obviously already realised the values of nature contested between social groups. He was concerned about poverty and natural resources use in these areas.

Ding attacks traditional aesthetic use and strict preservation of nature in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas as national icons. He argues (Ding 1994) that there are both human and natural ecological and scientific values embedded in landscape and both of them need to be respected, while all values should be integrated into landscape management. He further argues that it is too naïve to talk about conservation without being aware of local social problems. He describes local conservation as “begging with a golden bowl” and this makes heritage landscape conservation unsustainable. He feels locals should be allowed to use these natural resources or landscape resources to support their lives because of the lack of financial support from the central government. This was regarded as a ‘radical’ and ‘political’ school of thought in China, but his theory was highly welcomed by local governments. Ding was too far ahead of his time, because the contest between landscapes and social groups was just emerging, so he was very isolated. Even in today’s political landscape, nature does not cause too much concern in China where, in these areas, theoretical research is far behind social realities. At this point, Western cultural landscape theories would greatly support Ding’s ideas.

However, others seem more focused on safeguarding the ecological environment in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas. While some of them are devoted to establishing “the ecological security pattern of safeguarding landscape” (Yu 1999), others call for “Chinese land ethics” (Lin and Wang 2005). However, one thing is very clear: in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, natural values and cultural values have never been separated. On the contrary, they should always be examined at the same time and must be integrated into all planning. Compared with the West, China is very quiet in the theoretical landscape area now, while practice is extremely busy.

#### **2.4.3 Heritage Cultural Landscape Conservation in the World and in China**

Although there have been theoretical explorations of cultural landscape in the contemporary West, the concept of cultural landscape came into accepted professional use in world heritage conservation circles as recently as the 1990s. Its use is now more widespread, by politicians for example, but it still remains a generally uncommon term for an opaque concept (Aitchison 1995, Fowler 2003 in Fowler 2003). A review here of heritage landscape practice in World Heritage areas aims to identify the potential theoretical and practice gaps between China and the West and lay the foundation for later chapters to examine these conflicts.

Peter Fowler's (2003) *World Heritage Cultural Landscapes 1992-2002* clearly presents a history of heritage practice in cultural landscape. As Fowler (2003) points out, the idea of World Heritage was first expressed in the 1972 UNESCO *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*. The purpose of the convention was to ensure the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of cultural and natural heritages of 'outstanding universal value' (Fowler 2003). The Convention initially divided potential World Heritage sites into two sorts: natural and cultural – opposites, almost antagonists, for at the time nature conservationist thinking was along the lines that the less human interference there had been with an area, the 'better' it was. Similarly, 'cultural' most readily embraced individual monuments, structures, buildings and ruins as isolated phenomena largely in the minds of architects, architectural historians and those of an aesthetic tendency, with little thought of context and the landscape itself.

However, this perception has become "anachronistic" (Fowler 2003). Problems arose when it was found the original process could not cope with whole areas of major culture, like the Lakes District in the UK. Consequently, the site category called 'cultural landscape' was created very consciously by the World Heritage committee in order to be an addition to the mechanisms at the Committee's disposal to enable the nomination of sites that previously could not be handled by existing criteria. In 1992 the cultural criteria were therefore 'slightly' but 'significantly' revised to include 'cultural landscapes' in an amendment to the Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention (1999, paras. 35-42). Also, the two advisory bodies of the World Heritage Centre, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) (the leading body in the case of cultural landscapes) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) worked closely to examine the cultural and natural values of nominations based on the "Berlin Agreement" (between ICOMOS and IUCN) for evaluating cultural landscapes.

The concept of 'Cultural Landscape' is that World Heritage site Cultural Landscapes are cultural properties and represent the "combined works of nature and of man" as designated in Article 1 of the Convention. They are "illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal". Three

categories of World Heritage cultural landscapes were adopted in 1992 and defined in the Operational Guidelines, as shown Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Categories of World Heritage Cultural Landscape (Fowler 2003)

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By the end of 2002, there were 30 official Cultural Landscapes (CLs). However, when mapping their distribution, problems arose. Fowler mapped the distribution and found the properties were clustered heavily in Europe (Figure 2.3). Furthermore, he analysed the existing list and found there were 70 additional potential CLs on the World Heritage List which could be re-nominated from other categories. Among them, “77 of the 100 were NOT put forward as CLs in the post 1992 period, so, far from the cultural landscape type being something liberating, these figures suggest that it has actually been avoided”. Furthermore, “particularly striking is the case of China with 9 nominations of what could have been CLs in the period, but none were nominated as such, presumably deliberately. It would also be interesting to discover whether this is related to administrative questions”, and “Similarly 14 possible CLs were inscribed in 1992-2002 from the Asia/Pacific region without being nominated as such; only 4 out of 18 are officially recognised as CLs” (Fowler 2003, p42).

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The existing distribution of CLs

The potential distribution of CLs

ENA: Europe and North America; LAC: Latin America and the Caribbean; AP: Asia and the Pacific; AS: the Arab States; AF: Africa).

Figure 2.3 The distribution of World Heritage Cultural Landscapes (Fowler 2003)

This is a very interesting finding, especially as the nine potential sites are all Scenic and Historic Interest Areas (they could have been ten as Wudang was not included in Fowler's analysis). The reality is that in China there are 33 World Heritage properties, but only one World Heritage Cultural Landscape which is also located in a Scenic and Historic Interesting Area. Indeed, it has nothing to do with any administration, but is the typical result of cross-cultural misunderstanding or cross-cultural misconceptions of 'cultural landscape' (Han 2004). The above history of World Heritage conservation has illustrated that the invention of the term 'cultural landscape' is totally a Western product, both in theory and practice. From the distribution of CLs, it is also demonstrated that World Heritage Cultural Landscapes are heavily Europe-based. 'Cultural landscape', as a term to define the relationship between nature and human beings, is neither acceptable nor understood by Chinese, or even Asians in general (Han 2004). Feng Han (2004) argues that historically "Chinese take it for granted that landscapes are cultural as they are humanly conceived images of nature" and "it is unnecessary to put 'cultural' in front of 'landscape' even as 'a useful tautology'" (O'Hare 1997,p47). So the first reaction of the Chinese when they heard this term was, "What do you mean 'cultural landscape'? All landscape is cultural!" Then the problems emerged. In an ICOMOS Cultural Landscape Committee meeting in Xi'an in 2004, when representatives of each country were required to establish the cultural landscape inventory system in their countries, the use of the concept of cultural landscape caused problems. Asian representatives felt especially confused. Taylor called for further recognition of the

significance of cultural landscapes, especially “in Asia where links between culture and nature, are culturally endemic. People are part of nature” (Ken 2006).

Obviously, the cultural concept of nature has attracted global attention. World Heritage cultural landscapes have now begun to be collectively defined. The ICOMOS International Committee on Cultural Landscapes has produced a ‘*proposal for a Universal Cultural Landscape Registry and/or Inventory Card*’ which aims to gather different ideas of cultural landscape based different values.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

Contemporary Western environmental philosophy provides a new perspective for re-examining relationships between human beings and nature through identifying and recognising the intrinsic or instrumental values of nature. However, value subjectivists and value objectivists have different views of the intrinsic value of nature. Value subjectivists hold that the intrinsic value of nature is a human creation. Weak anthropocentrism argues that nature is a socially and culturally constructed procedure and cannot escape the cultural lens. Morals and relationships between nature and human beings are socially constructed. The instrumental value of nature can be seen as offering human beings a range of physical, aesthetic and spiritual values. Environmental pragmatism combines the features of moral pluralism, ecofeminism and weak anthropocentrism, emphasising context-sensitive, open-ended, moral plurality and cultural diversity, and has had great impact on environmental policy-making.

There are important points for this research. First, if intrinsic value is linked to the subjective or objective, then, based on different philosophical perspectives, the Chinese might have totally different values of nature from the West. This implies conflicts between Chinese values and international values in practice. Second, it is notable that Confucianism’s moral concerns for human beings and endeavours to transcend the egos of human beings are seen as moral reasons to respect nature. In the meantime, deep ecology’s ‘identification’ of the human ego with nature, which is very similar to how Confucianism transcends human egos into nature, is criticised by ecofeminism as lacking an ontological divide. Deep ecology counts human interest in all natural things and suggests there is a ‘defining relationship’ between nature and human beings. Third, environmental philosophy maintains that physical, aesthetic and spiritual values are all instrumental values of anthropocentrism. It is

argued that anthropocentrism leads to the deconstruction of nature. From this perspective, traditional Chinese values of nature that are essentially embedded in humanism and aesthetics will have potential disadvantages. The implications of environmental philosophy for this research are that traditional Chinese values could be in philosophical danger when traditional Chinese values are used to value nature. This implication opened a potential theoretical direction for re-examining and re-interpreting traditional Chinese values of nature and for exploring potential conflicts with the intrinsic values of nature.

The value of nature is socially constructed, as demonstrated in park tourism and conservation through history. The meaning of nature has been enhanced, explored, attached and shaped by park visitations. However, there are advantages and disadvantages of mass tourism. At this stage, scientific values of nature are under threat from human activities, and the culture of nature and ‘authenticities’ of these places are being shaped by mass tourism. Cultures and values corresponding to social and cultural contexts change and evolve over time. Park conservation represents a shift from scientific values of nature to integration with social values, a tendency towards multiple value involvement and value negotiation between different social groups, which is consistent with environmental pragmatism.

Western cultural geography theories are inspiring. There are different understandings of cultural meanings of landscape between China and the West which cause basic conflicts between them in theory and practice. Thus the term ‘cultural landscape’ is sensitive. However, it does not prevent Western landscape views of ‘new cultural geography’ from providing this research with an important instrument to examine the landscape phenomena emerging in today’s Scenic and Historic Interest Areas from the point of view of contemporary China’s social, political and cultural contexts. The political and economic nature of landscape is revealed by Western cultural landscape theories. It indicates that the change of landscape is related to the change of social space in a free capitalist market. It is manipulated by capital and makes the meaning of landscape more symbolic. As a constant cultural construction in society, landscape interpretation should return to its dynamic social context and cultural changes. Landscapes are both symbolic and material, and also have metaphorical texts. For this research, Western cultural landscape theory contributes in two areas. First, it broadens the concept of landscape towards ‘ordinary’ settlement, as well as all interfaces between humans and nature and, beyond the aesthetic, the past. Second, it moves the study of

landscape into social, cultural, political and economic complexity, especially over the social contests between social groups manipulated by Capitalism. These ideas fill the gaps in theoretical social research on contemporary landscape in China and help this research to examine and interpret the meanings and values of changing contemporary landscapes in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in China. They especially concern the political and economic nature of landscape.

World Heritage and World Heritage Cultural Landscape concepts are products of Western culture, rooted in Western values of nature. There are conflicts and cross-cultural misunderstandings or misconceptions between China and the West over World Heritage Cultural Landscape conservation (Han 2004). Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in China have been seen as “ major holders of cultural landscapes among its existing World Heritage sites” (Fowler 2003, p60). An understanding of Chinese values of nature and the Chinese concept of landscape is important for World Heritage Cultural Landscapes and will have a great influence on and contribution to shaping the culture of landscape.

Internationally, use or conservation of nature is strongly determined by diverse cultural perceptions. Meanwhile, landscape is being shaped by these values, both materially and symbolically. Based on these theoretical foundations and inspirations, this research will re-examine and explore Chinese values of nature from traditional and contemporary values.

PART 3

# Chapter 3

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**The Traditional Chinese View of Nature**

### **3.1 Introduction**

As reviewed in the last chapter, international debates about attitudes to nature have gradually shifted to philosophical and cultural value-based perspectives. Environmental philosophical theories of anthropocentrism, both weak and strong, eco-feminism, moral pluralism and pragmatism, and theories of cultural landscapes, all accept the premise that values cannot be isolated from their cultural backgrounds. The characteristics, preferences, and motivations of humans towards nature depend on their different views of it. Concepts of nature and its value are deeply rooted in culture: nature, as perceived by human beings, differs from nature itself, after being filtered by culture.

This chapter aims to re-examine traditional Chinese values of nature which are based on traditional cultures. This includes traditional philosophies, landscape achievements and travel in nature. A macro-history method has been applied to present the most important characteristics of traditional Chinese values of nature without interference from heavy detail due to China's long history. This chapter aims to answer the research question: "What is the traditional Chinese View of nature?"

### **3.2 Chinese Cultural Perspectives on Nature**

Chinese perspectives on nature, filtered by the Chinese culture, have been constantly constructed through thousands of years.

#### **3.2.1 Why Examine Cultural Perspectives on Nature?**

自然与自然观当然不是同一个东西。自然在本质上只有一个，所有人都在同一个自然之内但自然观则因个人、民族、文化而有殊异。对自然观的考察...可以测定某个民族或文化之品性。

*"Nature and A View of nature, of course they are not the same thing. (On one hand) there is only one nature and we are all part of it. (On the other hand) Views of nature differ among different individuals, nations and cultures... Exploring concepts of nature can be used to detect the cultural characteristics of certain nations.... A view of nature is how nature is presented in one's subjective consciousness"*

-----刘小枫 (Liu 1991)

一般认为，自然观最能表征中国文化的方面之一。

*Generally speaking, the View of nature most symbolises Chinese culture.*

-----刘小枫 (Liu 1991)

Concepts of nature and its value are reflections of culture. The characteristics, preferences, and motivations of humans towards nature depend on their different

views of it. The above quotations clearly support the idea that what we are examining, views of nature, are products of culture. How views of nature are explored depends on the cultural characteristics of a particular nation (Liu 1991).

There is always a cultural screen between nature and human beings (Zhou 1999, p23) and no human cognition can escape from a cultural lens. Different cultures have different understandings and explanations of the relationship between nature and humans. Therefore, we should explore the relationships between nature and humans from the point of view of culture (Zhou 1999). This idea is maintained by this research into the traditional Chinese View of nature which is the one that most symbolises Chinese culture (Shen 2002, p1).

Cultural perspectives on nature are especially important in China because traditional Chinese philosophies are “actually standard cultural philosophies, and Chinese philosophers are not the same as Western philosophers. Instead, they are real cultural philosophers” (Yang and Han 2002). This indicates that the focuses of traditional Chinese philosophies are about cultural constructions of human beings, such as ethics and morality, political constitutions, customs, gardens, paintings and so on, rather than metaphysical ontology. Therefore, if nature was originally valued from a philosophical perspective in China, it means it was and is also valued from a cultural perspective. Ethics and moral cultivation were involved so deeply in politics that traditional Chinese politicians were all scholars, so traditional Chinese politics equates to cultural politics (Yang and Han 2002).

### **3.2.2 Definition of Culture**

In 1952, the American anthropologists Alfred Kroeker and Clyde Kluckhohn published a list of 160 different definitions of culture in *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*. Their definition of culture has been acknowledged worldwide:

*“Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for, behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action.”*

----- (Kroeker and Kluckhohn 1952, p181)

This definition has been adopted for this research. It shows that culture is both tangible and intangible, internal and external, socially and contextually structured, changeable and dynamic. It will also be helpful to understand the characteristics of culture compared with civilisation. Culture is “value enrichment and improvement of conscious life and forms of life. It contains religion, morals, art, etc.” and “Civilisation is the result of the improvement of our living environment. Its main content is science and technology. Civilisation is a system of science, while culture is a system of values” (Xu 1996, p41). While civilisation includes all human achievements and creations, and can be judged by universal standards, culture is about the characteristics, styles and forms of civilisation and is more focused on subjects, values and personalities, and is ethnological (Yang and Han 2002). Although culture is generated by civilisation, it has its own development route and it is a relatively independent system. It is not necessary for there to be a corresponding relationship between civilisation and culture, which means a society could be highly civilised with low cultural development, or highly cultured but with poor civilisation (Xu 1996; Gao 1989; Yang and Han 2002).

### **3.2.3 Chinese Culture**

Two things need to be clarified about traditional Chinese culture. First is the timeline. Chinese history is commonly divided into three periods (Gao 1989):

1. Traditional history: from the first Dynasty to the Opium War (1840);
2. Modern history: after the Opium War to the Wusi Movement (五四运动, 1919);
3. Contemporary history: after the Wusi Movement.

A brief Chinese Chronology is attached as Appendix A.

This thesis maintains traditional Chinese culture was ended by the Opium War (鸦片战争) in 1840 of Qing Dynasty (清代). Before the invasion by the British during the Opium War, China was an independent nation—rich, united and closed off from the rest of the world. It had continuously been developing and maintaining systematic Chinese culture for five thousand years. During that long time, the Chinese were proud of their mature high culture and wealth, to the extent that they thought they were the centre of the world. They accepted foreign countries paying tributes and saw it as doing favours for those countries. They occasionally explored the outside world because of curiosity, while actively and openly absorbing knowledge from foreign cultures, but always with Chinese interests in

mind. It was the Opium War that forced open the doors to China and which made China a colony of the West. Chinese culture was no longer able to be independent. The second thing we need to note is that when we mention traditional Chinese culture, it refers to the culture of the Han Nationality (汉族), even to the extent that sometimes traditional Chinese culture is simply called Han Culture (汉文化). Historically, the central land of China was dominated by the Han. The Han were the overwhelming majority of the population and other peoples were called minorities. Han Culture was the orthodox and dominant culture throughout China's five-thousand-year history. Although there have been several dynasties ruled by minorities, such as the Qing Dynasty, Han Culture never lost its dominant position and other cultures were always assimilated by it. Therefore, in this research, traditional culture refers to Han Culture before 1840.

Furthermore, traditional Chinese culture was dominated by high Han culture, represented by the unique social class called *Shi* (士), the scholar. In ancient China traditional Chinese culture was centred around *Shi* culture (Wang 1990). This social class, formed by scholars, was especially important in the politics of ancient China's feudalistic society, which was different from other countries. In ancient China, the emperors were afraid of the increasing power of the land-holding aristocrats who controlled territory. From the Jin Dynasty, the emperors removed the rights of these aristocrats and subsequently there was no more aristocratic class whose official positions could be inherited. Official positions could only be achieved through selection according to personal qualities and knowledge. This offered opportunities to every scholar. They studied hard and cultivated themselves to prepare to contribute to their country. It was this class that communicated between the upper classes and the lower classes. They moved between being officials and being scholars, and became the main independent body which had great influence on the ruling class in ancient society. When they were needed by society and for political purposes, they were appointed as officials. When they failed as officials, they withdrew from society and became hermits, living in natural surroundings. The whole class represents Chinese culture: the oneness of Confucianism and Daoism, which will be discussed later. Generally speaking, all officials in ancient China were highly educated scholars, even many of those who defended the country. This system generated a splendid traditional Chinese culture. Ancient Chinese philosophies and *Shanshui* (山水) landscapes

were all created by this class. Thus, the traditional Chinese culture in this research especially refers to the culture of the scholars.

Due to this special social and political system, traditional Chinese culture is characterized by a combination of philosophy, politics and culture.

### 3.2.4 The Characteristics of Traditional Chinese Culture: Philosophical Origins

事实如果不跟愿望发生关系便无足轻重，除非与目的和整体发生关系，否则，仅有事实是不完备的。仅有科学而无哲学，只有事实而无前景和价值观，是不能使我们免于浩劫和绝望的。

*Facts mean nothing if they are not related to desires. It is not complete if we only have facts, unless they are related to purpose and entirety. It can't prevent us from disaster and despair if we only have science without philosophy, only facts without perspective and value.*

----- 威尔·杜兰特 (Durant 2001)

"Western culture is remarkably characterised by Natural Science that has its origins in Natural Philosophy; while Chinese culture is characterized by the study of humans, for which the core is morality and ethics" (Zhou 1999, p39).

"Human beings have two kinds of rationales: one is used for the exploration of the world outside human beings, the other is used for understanding human beings' inner nature" (Zhou 1999, p67).

Natural philosophy transcends nature by pursuing the ontology of the macro-cosmos through science; while Moral and Ethical Philosophy transcends egos by pursuing the ontology of human attitudes through moral cultivation. The motives of ancient Greek philosophers came from their curiosity about and delight in nature, while for the Chinese, the motive was from vexing issues related to social and political crises (Zhou 1999; Xu 1996). The ancient Chinese philosophers considered that all social and political chaos, and disasters, were due to human beings and the relationships between people. The most important thing was how to live in society in a mutually beneficial way. In the West, the ancient Greek philosophers regarded nature as a research object, so at the very beginning nature was detached from, and even opposite to, the essential human experience. Moore concluded,

*In view of the manner and spirit of Western thought ever since Aristotle, Westerners have seemed to need departmentalisation-analysis-of the totality of truth, experience, life, and philosophy itself into what the West has come to think of as the basic separate or at least separable aspects of the knowledge which the philosopher is seeking....*

*Chinese philosophers, more than those in any other philosophical tradition, past and present, look at life and philosophy in its totality, not in its parts.....It is not a questionable procedure.*

-----Moore (1967, p. 3)

It has been clearly pointed out that in the East, the Chinese chose an absolutely different way of seeing these things from people in the West.

"Valuing of human beings was the essential point in Chinese culture" (Xu 1996, p4). It was characterised by a belief that the value of human life was rooted in life itself and its value could be realised and controlled by human beings themselves. The traditional Chinese philosophies are about life and realising the value of life through practice. They are also considered to be a Practical Philosophy and, as such, the opposite of metaphysics. So Chinese philosophy is something like a life guide and everyone uses it, consciously or subconsciously. Xu (1996) explains:

.....以孔子思想为中心的中国文化，它主要不是表现在观念上，而是  
浸透于广大社会生活之中.....一般人在观念上没有，但在社会生活中  
却依然有某种程度的存在。这好比一股泉水，虽不为人所见，但它却  
在地下伏流。

*Chinese culture, centred on Confucianism, is not mainly expressed from ideas, but widely imbues everyday social life...The common people (seem) not to have it in their ideas, but it exists in their social lives to some extent. It is just like a current of an underground spring that it is invisible, but is running beneath the ground. We take it for granted without realising its existence.*

-----徐复观 (Xu 1996, p. 105)

Chinese philosophies are not about the outside physical world, but about human beings and life, and everyone who lives in this world will use these philosophies. That is why Moore said, "In China it is not necessary to be religious but it is necessary to be philosophical, or at least possessed of a knowledge of philosophy" (Moore 1967).

### **3.2.5 Traditional Chinese Philosophical View of Nature: Oneness with Nature**

The relationship between nature and humans was the central theme of Traditional Chinese philosophy (Wang 1990; Zhang 1986; Xu 1996). "Oneness with nature" is the essential spirit of Chinese philosophy. This spirit requires human beings to keep harmony and unity with nature, which is opposite of the subject-object dichotomy that Western philosophy often assumes as the relationship between humans and the material world (Zhou 1999).

This traditional Chinese View of nature, also a Cosmic View, was first established in the Warring States Period (战国时期, 475~221BCE) when, despite disunity and civil strife, China witnessed an unprecedented era of cultural prosperity—the "Golden Age" (黄金时代). Many different philosophy schools were developed at that time and became known as the 'Hundred Schools of Thought' (百家). From the Hundred Schools of Thought came many of the great classical writings on which Chinese practices were to be based for the next two and a half millennia. Among these schools, Confucianism (儒家) and Daoism (道家) are two most important for the Chinese.

### **Confucian View of Nature**

The view of nature within Confucianism is notable for its humanism and it has been the mainstream of traditional Chinese culture. Confucius (551~479BCE) was the great collector of ancient Chinese cultural ideals and the founder of Confucianism. His view of value relates to human beings. People achieve it through cultivating their spirit, their intellect and their moral attitudes. It is a practical philosophy and not metaphysical at all. Because of this, some Western philosophers hold the opinion that there is no actual philosophy in China (Gu 2001; Zhou 1999; Lin 1935; Feng 1985).

Many cultures have their origins in sorcery and primitive religions (Xu 1996; Zhou 1999). "When the concept of 'being human' became separate from sorcery and primitive religion, the consciousness of humanism began to emerge" (Xu 1996, p154). In China, by the time of the Eastern Chou Dynasty (东周, 770~256 BCE), belief in the direct control of supernatural beings had declined and the movement of humanism began with Confucius.

Confucius is considered to be one of the ten greatest thinkers in the world and also a great educator (Long 1999). It was Confucius, of course, who brought about Chinese humanism (Chan 1967) and "Among the greatest spiritual leaders in the world, Confucius is the only one who never had illusions, never proclaimed that he was the envoy of God, and never said he was inspired by the voice of heaven" (Long 1999, p254). He was such a complete practical humanist that he showed no interest in pursuing the ontology of the cosmos outside human nature and society. Though he did not deny the existence of the external world, "*Tian*" (天, Heaven), Confucius focused on human morals. He simply excluded all supernatural beings

that were beyond human understanding and never talked of prodigies, feats of strength, disorders or spirits. He said, "Until you know about the living, how are you to know about the dead?" (*The Analects*, Book Eleven).

Confucius had eternal concerns about humanity. He loved the ability to reason, which is unique to human beings, and he integrated this reasoning into daily life. The greatest contribution to Chinese culture by Confucius lies in the fact that he created an internal world of human dignity and personality, opening the way for human beings to transcend themselves. In this process of personality building, human beings can transcend themselves from being common creatures and extend their vitality to an unlimited extent. Finally this spirit becomes an endless source and power for a valuable life.

Disturbed by constant warfare among the states, Confucius taught that most of the ills of society happen because people forget their stations in life and rulers lose their virtue. Therefore, his primary concern lay with social relations, proper conduct and social harmony. *Ren* (仁) is the central idea in the Confucian system, around which the whole Confucian movement developed (Chan 1967). From the time of Confucius to the present day, the chief spiritual and moral inspiration for the Chinese has been the Confucian saying: "It is human beings that can make the Way great, and not the Way that can make human beings great". The statement nearest to a definition of *ren* is that it "consists in mastering oneself and returning to *li* (礼, propriety)". "To be a man of humanity is to love all human beings." Knowledge is "to know human beings". One should not do anything contrary to the principle of propriety. This emphasis on humanism in Confucius is supreme. He changed the idea that the "traditional concept of the superior man meant superiority in blood to mean superiority in character, in moral [attitudes]. His humanism is complete" (Chan 1967).

He pursued "ren" as the noumenon of human beings. This was of supreme importance in Confucianism. Confucius said that "to be *Zhong* (中, central) [in our moral being] and to be *yong* (庸, harmonious) [with all]" is the supreme attainment in Chinese moral life, which is also known as "the Doctrine of the Golden Mean" of Confucianism (Lin 1935; Gao 1989; Chan 1967; Feng 1985). To be in harmony with all also includes to be in harmony with nature. For Confucianism, everything was for morality and ethics. Inevitably, they perceived nature in a humanist way. Nature has all the characteristics of human beings and so the guiding principle of human

conduct is “the full exercise of one’s mind”. “To exercise our minds fully is to know our nature, and to know our nature is to know Heaven. To preserve our minds and to nourish our nature is the way to serve Heaven and there is not any conflict. Thus the prerequisites of a harmonious moral order are all complete in us. Instead of looking to nature in order to know ourselves, we look within ourselves in order to know nature” (Chan 1967).

This perception was conveyed in Confucius’ *Analects* (论语). “The wise man delights in water, the good man delights in mountains” (仁者乐山, 智者乐水) (*The Analects*, Book Six, 21). Here water and mountains were admired mostly because they had lofty and high-minded attributes, not from an aesthetic perspective. This concern about nature from a moral and ethical perspective had a profound influence in China, especially for scholars. This is the first time that nature had an attached symbolic meaning for humanity in China’s history and laid the foundations for a cultural symbolic meaning of landscape.

In summary, the View of nature within Confucianism is characterised by extreme humanisation and rational harmony. The external relationship of nature and human beings is the reflection of inner morality and ethics on the subject. Confucianism’s Doctrine of the Golden Mean includes harmony with nature.

### **Daoist View of Nature**

It is well known in China that Confucianism, supplemented by Daoism, is one of the most distinguished characteristics of Chinese culture. While Confucianism took responsibility for politics and ethics for the country, because of its socially evolving, positive and morally cultivated attitudes, Daoism prevailed due to its negative outlook on life and its romanticism. “Out of the alchemy of these two strange elements emerges the immortal thing we call Chinese character (Lin 1998,p4)”.

Daoism, as expounded by Laozi (老子), has its metaphysical genesis in the pursuit of the cosmos and the noumenon is *Dao* (道), which is the original power of everything. The core of this is thought to be *Wuwei* (无为, no-action) and being Self-so. The following is a description of *Dao* by Laozi (*Dao De Jing*, chapter 25):

有物混成，先天地生。寂兮寥兮，独立不改，周行而不殆，可以为天下母。吾不知其名，字之曰“道”…

…  
人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。

*There was something formless yet complete,  
That existed before heaven and earth;  
Without sound, without substance,  
Dependent on nothing, unchanging,  
All pervading, unfailing.  
One may think of it as the mother of all things under heaven.  
Its true name we do not know;  
‘way’ is the by-name that we give it.*

....

*The ways of men are conditioned by those of earth. The ways of earth, by those of heaven. The ways of heaven by those of Dao, and the ways of Dao by the Self-so.*

----- 《道德经》第二十五章  
Dao De Jing, Chapter 25

Laozi always perceived events from counteractions. He had great insight into the potential dangers inherent in human intelligence and civilisation. Human ideas or standards might lead to an overly assertive mode of behaviour, or too strong a commitment to the achievement of worldly goals. For Daoism, such unnatural assertiveness was believed to be the root cause of violence and aggression. While Confucianists found moral reasons to counsel against violence and to urge rulers to govern by virtue rather than by force, many Daoists went even further and denounced violence as reflecting ultimate ignorance of the Way of nature.

Laozi regarded civilisation as the beginning of man's degeneration and considered sages of the Confucian type as the worst corrupters of the people. He said, "Sages not dead, robbers no end". Laozi was a philosopher of "Wuwei" in government and naturalism in ethics. This did not mean doing absolutely nothing, but doing nothing unnatural, nothing that was out of keeping with the *Dao*. Related to the doctrine of non-action was the idea of no desires, which meant that no one should have excessive desires because such desires are bound to cause injury both to oneself and to others. So, "Confucianism, through its doctrine of propriety and social responsibility, stands for humanism and restraint, while Daoism with its emphasis on going back to nature, disbelieves in human restraint and culture" (Lin 2002,p114).

Lin Yutang (林语堂) (p54) asserted:

*Daoism, in theory and practice, means a certain roguish nonchalance, a confounded and devastating scepticism, a mocking laughter at the futility of all human interference and marriage, and a certain disbelief in idealism, not so much because of lack of energy as because of a lack of faith.*

"From this thoroughgoing scepticism it was but a step to a romantic escape from the world and a return to nature" (Lin 2002 ,p. 116). Thus:

*Daoism has always been associated with the recluse, retirement to the mountain, the worship of rural life, the cultivation of the spirit and the prolongation of man's life, and the banishment of all worldly cares and worries. From this we derive the most characteristic charm of Chinese culture, the rural ideal of life, art and literature* (Lin 2002, p. 116).

Daoism believes the greatest beauty is in nature because nature just follows the exact *Way of Dao*: Be-Self. So the highest pursuit of Daoism is to devote life to seeking oneness with the spirit of nature, finally to transcend the limited practical and functional life, and accomplish spiritual oneness with nature. It is the Way of life.

Daoism influenced Chinese culture in two ways. The first is very practical. Lin Yutang said, "All Chinese are Confucianists when successful and Daoists when they are failures". Daoism's romantic spirit relieves the pain of practical society. "It provides a safe retreat for the Chinese human heart and balm for the Chinese soul" (p. 55). The second created a view of nature as uniquely romantic and aesthetic, which was also associated with human personalities. "When a Chinese scholar is in office he moralises, and when he is out of office he versifies, and usually it is good Daoistic poetry" (p. 55). This is the standard for a perfect Chinese scholar.

### **3.2.6 The Art of Living: Another Philosophy**

From the above philosophies, the Chinese developed a unique attitude to life: be happy and enjoy life. This point is mentioned here firstly because Lin Yutang regarded this as the greatest characteristic of the Chinese and, secondly, because only from this attitude can we understand how the Chinese enjoyed their life in nature. This will be described later in this paper.

Lin asserted that "the philosophy of the Chinese art of living can certainly be call the 'gay science,' if anything can be called by that phrase used by Nietzsche" (Lin 2002, p13). Lin further asserted:

*I am perhaps entitled to call this the philosophy of the Chinese people rather than of any one school. It is a philosophy that is greater than Confucius and greater than Laozi, for it transcends these and other ancient philosophers. It draws from these fountain springs of thought and harmonises them into a whole, and from the abstract outlines of their wisdom, it has created an art of living in the flesh, visible, palpable and understandable by the common man. Surveying Chinese literature, art and philosophy as a whole, it has become quite clear to me that the philosophy of a wise disenchantment and a hearty enjoyment of life is their common message and teaching--- the most constant, most characteristic and most persistent refrain of Chinese thought* (Lin 2002, p13).

This attitude is also reflected in the Chinese View of nature: nature as a place of enjoyment and a source of happiness.

In summary, nature is greatly valued by both Confucianism and Daoism, but they have different value orientations because of their different philosophical ontologies. While Confucianism views nature from a moral perspective, Daoism attests that within nature lays the essential meaning of life. However, the origins of the Chinese View of nature are humanistic, aesthetic and romantic. Nature is also a place to enjoy life. Based on Chinese philosophy, to be in harmony with everything, including nature, is the basic principle of life.

### **3.3 The Views of Nature Portrayed in Traditional Chinese Landscape Cultures**

In the last section, the traditional Chinese View of nature based on its philosophical origins was outlined. In this part we will learn how the View of nature changed and developed throughout history from landscape literature, landscape painting and landscape gardens, which are held to be unique Chinese landscape cultures in Chinese cultural history. Chinese landscape cultures typically represent the Chinese View of nature. The high combination of landscape poems, landscape paintings and landscape gardens is most characteristic of Chinese landscape culture. Among them, landscape literature is the earliest achievement.

在早于西方一千多年的中国文学中，便已有了自然观的完美表露。

*“The View of nature had its perfect expression in Chinese literature more than one thousand years earlier than the West”* (Kubin 1990, p2).

中国的诗歌，它是自然观最重要的“传播者”。

*“The Chinese poems are the most important propagator of the View of nature”* (Kubin, p1).

中国人认为只有在自然中，才有安居之地； 只有在自然中，才存在着真正的美……中国文学中很少不谈到自然的，中国文人极少不歌唱自然的)。

*“The Chinese think that it is only in nature that they can be really settled, and it is only in nature that there exists real beauty...It is rare to find literature which does not mention nature and it is rare for the Chinese scholar not to chant nature”* (Koichi 1989, p. 1).

#### **3.3.1 Nature as a Symbol**

All cultures have their origins in sorcery and primitive religions (Xu 1996; Zhou 1999), and the culture of nature is no exception. The concept of nature did relate to sorcery and primitive religion in China before the Eastern Chou Dynasty. Nature was a symbol of power and nature was symbolised by mountains and bodies of water. The power of mountains related to the earlier *Kunlun Apotheosis* (昆仑神话) in the west

of China and the power of water related to the later *Penglai Apotheosis* (蓬莱神话) in the east of China. Mountains connected to *Tian* (天, Heaven) and Water connected to *Di* (地, Earth). Mountains firstly came into humans minds because heaven was always more powerful than earth, because heaven was where the Gods lived.

*Yuan* (苑) and *You* (囿) were the earliest gardens in the Zhou Dynasty (周朝), according to the most detailed and reliable literature (Wang 1990, p3). Their original functions were related to religion and sacrifice. *Yuan* and *You* was an enclosed natural area. It was remarkable for its huge area, abundant animals and plants, huge viewing platforms and small bodies of water. Those huge platforms symbolised the power of Emperors to connect to the Gods (Wang 1990).

The nature of this time did not have humanistic values and it was characterised by a lack of emotional or humanistic attachments (Kubin 1990). In China, after the Eastern Chou Dynasty, belief in the direct control of supernatural beings declined and the movement of humanism began with Confucius (Zhou 1999).

Nature began to have humanistic philosophical meanings attached to it in the later Spring and Autumn Period and Warring States Periods as described in 3.2.4. The symbolic meaning of mountains and water was enriched and the position of mountains and water was solidly grounded. However, Kubin (1990) argues that before the Wei and Jin Dynasties nature was still viewed as a more philosophical symbol of the objective world, opposite to the human inner world, like in Western countries. Nature was the physical setting where people lived and was not consciously separated from daily life. Nature had its phenomena, but those phenomena had no aesthetic meanings, which meant that nature was not an independently described object in literature or paintings. These characteristics were represented in two products of that period: *The Book of Songs* (诗经) and *Chuci* (楚辞).

*The Book of Songs* is the first collection of perfect Chinese poems and one of the classics of Confucianism. It was compiled by Confucius in the middle of the *Spring and Autumn Period* (春秋时期, 770~476BCE). From the poems, we can see that nature was perceived as a visible and touchable world at that time. Humans lived day and night within nature during that initial agricultural period. In *The Book of Songs*, most descriptions of nature are associated with daily natural things, but they

are limited to descriptions of the natural things and do not have further embedded meanings. They are used as quotes to begin the main narratives.

*Chuci* is another great piece of literature from that period. It was written by Qu Yuan, (屈原) who was a significant politician and poet in the *Warring States Period* (476-221 BCE). Unlike *The Book of Songs*' realistic descriptions in the Northern Style, *Chuci* is honoured as a romantic representative of the Southern Style. There are amazingly rich descriptions of nature in *Chuci* and dreamlike descriptions of his spiritual travels between heaven and earth. The nature presented in *Chuci* was a subjectively perceived and fantastic world where immortals lived. It was also a nature which human minds could reach out to and travel around. Kubin (1990) argues that this fantasy and imagination has religious origins and was caused by the conflict between the ideal world and reality. "This conflict results in personal fantastic imaginary travels in heaven, seeking spiritual sustenance in another world" (p65). Gong (2001) has a different opinion. He argues, "This fantastic spiritual travel within heaven and earth is due to a fear of short life. The purpose of this travel is seeking the *Way of life*, seeking the eternal value of life" (p65). So this spiritual freedom of communicating with nature somewhat fits the ideas of Daoism: there was a great *Way* in nature.

Kubin (1990) further comments: "The elegant royal culture detached the aristocratic life from farming, and made nature become a pure symbolic system" (p40), which means that nature became more and more subjective. Like *The Book of Songs*, *Chuci* had many descriptions of nature, but they were just the things which existed around human life, so "although there were natural things, there were no meanings of nature" (p6). The description of nature was only the start of the narrative and its purpose was to begin the next narratives. The aesthetic insight into nature was still in its embryonic stage.

In both *The Book of Songs* and *Chuci*, and also in other literature, nature was described as symbolising morals that remind us of Confucius's attitude to nature. It should also be noticed that in *Yuanyou* (远游, go on a long tour, one section of *Chuci*) the whole scope of nature was first described from a bird's perspective. It was the beginning of Chinese travel notes and is recognised as a sign that how the concept of nature was perceived gradually changed from being an individual natural element to an entirety, which is significant progress in nature cognition. This view of

the entirety of nature is very different from the abstract Daoist view and it made nature more vivid and touchable. This is also shown in another important type of literature, *fu* (赋). *Fu* was mostly used to describe the entire scenery of Imperial gardens by enumerating individual natural phenomena, such as mountains, animals, plants, water, trees and so on; but there was a “lack of senses, of thinking and emotional feelings of nature” (Koichi 1989, p. 19).

Gradually the importance of water was recognised and small bodies of water began to surround the viewing platforms. However, when the *Penglai* Apothiosis began to be ascendant position, water became very important, especially after Emperor Qin Shihuang's (秦始皇, 259-210BCE, Qin Dynasty) three voyages to the eastern oceans searching for immortal islands (during 231-227BCE). Endless great bodies of water could be more symbolic of his united kingdom than mountains (Wang 1990). Han Wu Di, an Emperor of the Han Dynasty after the Qin Dynasty, also showed interest in great bodies of water. He followed Qin Shi Huang, searching for immortals in the eastern oceans. They truly believed that there were three fairy islands called *Fang zhang* (方丈), *You Zhou* (瀛洲) and *Peng Lai* (蓬莱) in these magic waters. It became a new myth which enhanced the status of water. In the Qin and Han Dynasties a model for gardens was established: “one lake, three mountains” (一池三山). This model has had a profound influence on Chinese gardens and throughout subsequent Chinese history it can be observed that every garden followed this model. Water, mountains and human constructions became the three most important elements of Chinese gardens (Wang 1990), and also constituted their view of nature.

In literature before the Wei and Jin Dynasties, nature was represented as changing from an early agricultural society towards bureaucracy and imperialism. A description of nature was always used as the background for expressing subjective feelings or thoughts. There was a lack of love for, or interest in, nature itself. However, it carried within it the seeds of the aesthetics of nature.

### 3.3.2 Nature as an External World

From Han Dynasty to Wei and Jin Dynasty, It was gradually found that nature was a wonderful place for entertainment, for leisurely wandering to drown worries, and eventually the independent aesthetic values of nature began to be revealed.

### **Nature as a Place of Entertainment**

In the Han Dynasty (汉朝), after the emergence of humanism in the Spring and Autumn Period, gardens were designed for emperors instead of for Gods. More architectural forms emerged and “the functions of Yuan and You had already been associated with all kinds of entertainment, such as eating, drinking and music” (Wang 1990, p3). Leading up to the end of the Han Dynasty, the original religious functions of gardens were gradually forgotten (p17) and they evolved into unrestrained places of entertainment. The previously mentioned *Fu* included descriptions of these natural settings and luxurious celebrations. Scholars enchanted the Emperors by enchanting their gardens, because the natural properties of the gardens were symbols of the Emperors’ power. As we will see later, the change to nature being perceived as a place of entertainment had a profound influence. The character of gardening at that time was to imitate nature, and it began to be centred around a large body of water with mountains in it. Huge constructions, such as viewing platforms, began to be built close to human beings. The representative garden was the Imperial garden, Shang Ling Yuan (上林苑).

### **Nature as A Place for Leisurely Wandering and to Drown Worries**

Nature as a place for leisurely wandering and to drown worries was mentioned quite early and often in *The Book of Songs* (诗经). The most famous quote of *The Book of Songs* is “ride out (to nature) and drown my worries” (驾言出游，以泻我忧). Also many celebrations, gatherings and appointments took place in natural settings. However, during the Wei and Jin Dynasties, nature became a special place, in stark contrast to the cruel and dark social reality that prevailed.

The period from the Wei and Jin Dynasties to the Southern and Northern Dynasties (220~550CE), and followed by the Han Dynasty was divided, turbulent and bloody, but also a great period for Chinese art, spanning more than three hundred years. There is a common understanding in China that the view of nature of the Chinese was founded in the period from the Wei and Jin Dynasties to the Southern and Northern Dynasties (魏晋南北朝) (220~550CE) (Wang 1990).

The literature of Wei (魏) (220~265CE), the imperial culture represented by the Emperor Cao Cao (曹操), his two sons and some scholars, was characterised by descriptions of their luxury entertainments and travels in nature. Life was short and bitter. “How to get out of this tragic situation? The answer was drinking, singing and

dancing, and enjoying life" (Gong 2001, p206). At that time "Through its stability, nature becomes the opposite pole of unstable and sad society" (Kubin 1990, p92). nature was just a place to go. The Wei Dynasty continued the predilection of the Han dynasty to entertain in imperial gardens. "But nature here was still bounded in gardens or just limited to back country" (Koichi 1989, p. 64). In this natural setting, they had banquets, games, gatherings, poetry and debating competitions, and had just one purpose: to drown their worries.

An official career was dangerous and retirement to nature became very popular as a way of out of tragic reality and to survive the political arena. Orthodox Confucianism was thoroughly discredited by the end of the late Han Dynasty. It was common for scholars to retire from governmental office and live in nature. The most famous representatives of this attitude were the "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove" (竹林七贤) who gathered in quiet natural settings and engaged in *Pure Talk* (清谈)<sup>4</sup>. In literature, it was represented by the prevalence of mysterious poems. In gardens, it was characterised by the prevalence of scholars' gardens, which were required to be 'natural' looking (Wang 1990, p91).

During the Jin Dynasty (265~420CE), the rich and powerful aristocratic families had their own social positions. Two of the greatest persons worth mentioning, Wang Xizhi (王羲之, 303-361CE) and Xie Lingyuan (谢灵运, 385~433CE) will be discussed later. Both of them were from the most aristocratic families. Wang is called the "sage of calligraphy" in China and was also a great poet represented by the *Lanting Poems* (兰亭诗, one of the *Mysterious Poems* from the *Lanting* (Orchid Pavilion) where scholars gathered); and Xie was the creator of the *Shan Shui Poems* (山水诗, Landscape Poems).

Nature in the famous *Lanting Poems* was much broader than in the *fu* of the Han Dynasty. The nobles and scholars gathered and drank while composing poems along streams in natural settings with beautiful mountains and lakes, as did the Seven Sages (Figure 3.1). The contribution of the *Lanting Poems* was that they showed the closeness to nature by entertaining there, as well as subconscious appreciation and aesthetic openness to the beauty of nature. Koichi (1989, p. 123) asserts:

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<sup>4</sup> highly sophisticated debates on philosophical metaphysics of the *School of Mysteries* (玄学) of Daoism.

兰亭的诗人们是为了散怀而选择山水的。他们的散怀，则表现为游乐，适于游乐的山水，不用说是美丽的佳山水。不言而喻，当他们在美丽的山水中不停地游玩时，他们的心灵便会在不知不觉间受到山水美的触发。这种受到触发的心灵，开始转向想要吟咏山水的方向，这样，就出现了吟咏自然的写景诗。

*The poets selected mountains and water for drowning their worries. Drowning their worries was presented as touring and entertaining in nature. The mountains and water, suitable for touring and entertainment, are of course beautiful enough. It goes without saying that when they are travelling and entertaining in such beautiful nature, their minds are unconsciously stimulated by the beauty of nature. These stimulated minds tend to sing the praises of beautiful scenery. Thus, landscape poems emerge.”*

Chinese landscape poems were used especially to praise beautiful natural scenery. It was a precursor of the coming period of *Shanshui Poems* which viewed nature as an independent aesthetic object and symbolised the great change in views of nature in literature. It gradually departed from the abstract philosophy of Mysterious Daoism and focused on vital nature. It is also described as “Laozhuang (Laozi and Zhuangzi) fading, Shanshui invigorated” (老庄告退，山水方滋), which means the disappearance of religion as humanistic meaning emerges. It is similar to Nietzsche's statement that “God is Dead”.



Figure 3.1 *Qu Shui Liu Sang* (曲水流觞, Art Salon in Lan Ting),  
Wen Zhengmin (文征明), Ming Dynasty

### **Nature as an Independent Aesthetic Objective**

The Northern and Southern Dynasties period (南北朝, 420~581CE) was important for Chinese art. It was this period that laid the foundation for Chinese natural aesthetics. Landscape poems began to be developed in a period of great prosperity and theories of painting in this period became “the basic principles of Chinese painting” (Zhang 1986, p14).

Xie Lingyun was the respected creator of the *Shanshui Poems*. He was also a great traveller. Though his travels in nature still maintained some practical purpose for drowning his worries (his official career was not smooth), he did discover the independent beauty of nature, which he loved. “*Shanshui*, is just the place for my

personality”, he claimed. In this View, nature was the master of itself and had its own value and meaning instead of being a reflection of human minds or emotions. So landscape became an isolated and independent aesthetic object without being connected into a unified scene. This view was established in the West in 16<sup>th</sup> century literature and 17<sup>th</sup> century paintings (Kubin 1990, p1). *Landscape poems* began to be independent from other cultures in China and were featured as *Shanshui Poems*. A long journey of landscape cultural exploration had started. Also from then on, landscape became the renaming of nature, which was characterised by *Shanshui* (mountain and water). They especially referred to those ‘great’ or ‘scenic’ mountains and bodies of water imbued with significant moral and aesthetic values. Since then, such poems that describe nature have been called “*Shanshui Poems*”. All of this has had a significant influence on Chinese art history.

The beauty of nature in Xie’s poems, from today’s point of view, could be described as very phenomenological. It seems he embedded himself in those natural things and absolutely forgot himself. What he described is the real objective beauty of nature, not affected by his own emotions. He realised the importance of consciousness in the appreciation of nature and insisted that only those who had the consciousness and attitude of being appreciative could discover the value and beauty of nature. He tried to value and to understand nature from an aesthetic perspective. Thus, Daoism’s abstract philosophical ideas were abandoned and replaced by this refreshing and lively attitude. Soon it became a major movement and *Shanshui poems*, *Shanshui essays* and *Shanshui paintings* rapidly developed.

“The interest of loving *Shanshui* became the basic quality of scholarship” (Koichi 1989, p. 276). Scholars travelled in nature, everywhere seeking beautiful landscape scenery. They explored all means to represent the beauty of nature. “There was not one poet who never composed *Shanshui Poems*...There was not one poem without descriptions of *Shanshui*” (p. 178). Landscape poems soon reached a very high level, but landscape paintings were somewhat slower to develop compared with other sorts of paintings. Landscape paintings were initially separated from mature portrait paintings and were relatively new. So, firstly the focus was on the ability to represent nature’s appearance, but there was also a focus on the importance of the spirit of nature. Theoretical explorations were undertaken during this time and were highly regarded. It was a very exciting period and we can imagine how much they were absorbed in their new journey for the discovery of beauty in nature.

Aesthetic interest also shifted to broader natural things besides mountains and water. All nearby natural things, such as birds, plants and animals, began to be noticed and also were beautifully described. Villas located in natural areas became very popular, another important characteristic of that time. The aesthetic objective began to come back into the daily living environment again from the exploration of the entirety of nature. This is a very important symbol for the next stage in the development of thinking about nature

### **3.3.3 Nature as an Inner World**

While the scholars were traveling in the nature, the subjectivity of nature was gradually constructed. Nature was becoming more and more subjective.

#### **Nature towards Humans**

The Tang Dynasty (唐朝, 618-907 CE) was the second reunited period in China (the first was the Qin Dynasty (秦朝)) and it brought great prosperity in politics, economics and military affairs, referred to as *Da Tang* (大唐, the Great Tang). It was also a splendid period for Chinese culture. The highest point in Traditional Chinese poems, which are well known as the *Tang Poems* (唐诗), was reached during this time. Writing poems was a must-do for every well-educated person and it was also a period of maturity for the View of nature.

With the reuniting of the country, the expansion of human occupation of the land, and the prevalence of travel, more wild nature was discovered. However, because the View of nature had shown a tendency towards aestheticism since the Northern and Southern Dynasties, it seemed people preferred rebuilt natural settings instead of wilderness. “Real happiness belongs to culturalised nature. nature can only present its reality (beauty) through culture [because for the Chinese] wild nature and cultural nature can't be appreciated at the same time because they are two beautiful things, but they restrict each other” (Kubin 1990, p178). Obviously “the later one was more preferred at that time” (p188). In many poems, wild nature was described as a place full of danger and it was not preferred at all (in Li Bai's (李白) and Du Fu's (杜甫) poems).

In literature, perfection had been attained in describing all natural things and this gave freedom to the poets to focus on their emotions. Emotions were expressed so freely and skilfully in landscape poems that they were in perfect harmony with

scenery. Objective nature already had become as one with the subject. “Nature had left its way of Daoism. It was not nature itself. It was nature rebuilt by human beings...nature becomes one part of the human world instead of being an independent one” (p. 189). Li Bai’s best-known poem ‘Drinking along under the moon’ (月下独酌) is an excellent example of the oneness of the nature of human beings:

花间一壺酒，獨酌無相亲。  
舉杯邀明月，對影成三人。  
月既不解飲，影徒隨我身。  
暫伴月將影，行樂須及春。  
我歌月徘徊，我舞影零亂。  
醒時同交歡，醉後各分散。  
永結無情游，相期邈雲漢。

*A pot of wine amidst the flowers,  
Alone I drink sans company.  
The moon I invite as drinking friend,  
And with my shadow we are three.  
The moon, I see, she does not drink,  
My shadow only follows me:  
I'll keep them company a while  
For spring's the time for gayety.*

*I sing: the moon she swings her head;  
I dance: my shadow swells and sways.  
We sport together while awake,  
While drunk, we all go our own ways.  
An eternal, speechless trio then,  
Till in the clouds we meet again<sup>5</sup>.*

Human beings were not outside observers any more, but occupiers of the spirit and soul of nature. “The desire was how to let nature lose its danger and make it civilized” (Kubin 1990, p210). This was a remarkable sign of nature moving towards man (being spiritual) and the maturity of the Chinese View of nature. It was also a time of nature returning to the human spirit.

Since the Tang Dynasty, large land estates had been developed in southern China, creating a kind of gentry class. As a reflection of the view of nature, villas in these estates became more and more popular. Natural elements were elegantly organised in different natural settings, such as the villas of the famous poets Wang Wei (王维), Bai Juyi (白居易) and others. Recreational urban *Shanshui* parks for public use

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<sup>5</sup> Translated by LIN, Yutang. In Lin, Y. (2002). *My Country and My People*. Beijing, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

emerged (Qujiangchi, 曲江池) and private gardens were very prevalent in the city. The people could see how enjoyable nature can be. Landscape paintings from the Tang Dynasty to the Sui Dynasty (隋朝) focused on developing skills for representation and theoretical development from realism. Skills for re-organising natural elements into special settings were being widely explored, but were still innocent compared with the sophistication of the Song Dynasty (Figure 3.2). Theories about *Shanshui* paintings were highly developed during the Five Dynasty period (五代, 907~960 CE).

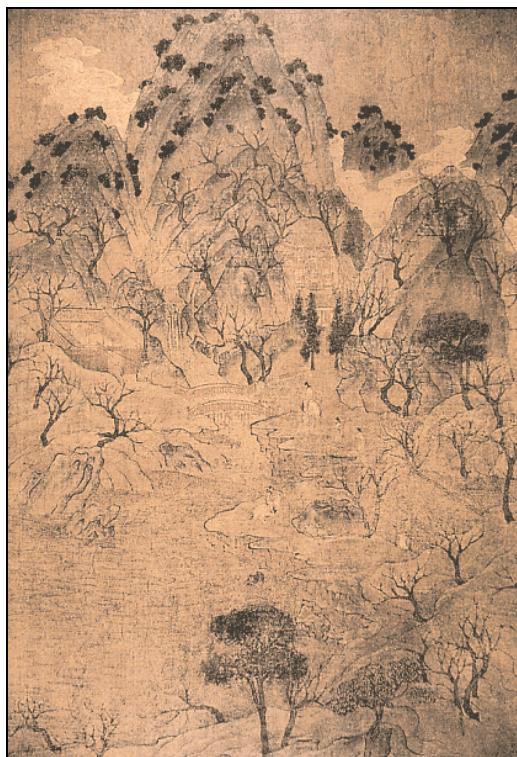


Figure 3.2 *Spring Tour* (detail), Zhan Ziqian (展子虔), Sui Dynasty.

### Nature in Humans

The Song Dynasty (宋朝, 960~1279 CE) was a period of great maturity for all Chinese art, especially for painting and calligraphy (Wang 1990). The main themes of Song paintings (宋画) were landscape scrolls and living nature, showing pictures of bamboo, birds, horses and other animals. By the *Song Dynasty*, important theories of landscape painting had been developed and there were numerous ways of representing the texture of stones, water, flowers, animals, and other natural elements. Nature could be painted with high proficiency from any point of view and from any time, in its entirety or in detail. Paintings and poems displayed a “oneness” now. Paintings could express all the thoughts of poems and, if that were not sufficient, a painting could be supplemented by poems (Figure 3.3, Figure 3.4).



Figure 3.3 *Travelling in Xishan*, Fan Kuan (范宽), Northern Song Dynasty



Figure 3.4 *Scroll of Ink Orchid*, Zhao Mengjian (赵孟坚), Song Dynasty

Loving nature gradually lost its original broad and powerful energy. Nature lost its mysterious mask while an in-depth understanding of nature was achieved. Nature was deeply understood by the Chinese, from its entirety to its details. Even if they did not go to real natural sites, they could paint the details of nature freely from imagination (Figure 3.5). This gave them more subjective space and freedom and material nature was beginning to be deconstructed. Gradually the representations of nature began to express its more spiritual side, rather than the material side. Appearances were not so important any more and spiritual reality became the main

focus. “Real nature was dispelled” (Gong 2001) and “illusive nature becomes the most thoughtful part of Chinese literature” (p228).



Figure 3.5 *An imaginary tour*, anonymous, Song Dynasty.

Also, paintings became more and more abstract and more symbolic. Gardens, as subjectively staged nature, were rapidly developed and private gardens which were far away from real nature were preferred in the city. Scholars indulged in gardens because the political conflicts between the scholars and the rulers became more intense. Gardens became a real place for scholars to escape from the realities of society (Figure 3.6). The mature landscape culture and scholars' concentration on gardens elevated landscape gardens from the Song Dynasty and they reached their artistic peak in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Gardens, as settings for the daily lives of scholars, became places where scholars subjectively constructed their ideal



Figure 3.6 *Garden of the Unsuccessful Politician*,  
Wen Zheng Ming (文征明), Ming Dynasty

worldly life for spiritual pursuits in a harmonious society. At this time they intended to make every detail of their life elegant and full of high natural aesthetic qualities, so even if their political career was unsuccessful, they could still have eternal harmony

in their lives. Gardens were the last places for the scholars to retreat from society. They would not escape into real nature because they loved their worldly human lives.

It was the time for landscape paintings, literature and landscape gardens to be integrated into one. Based on the previous achievements of landscape paintings, landscape literature and their theories, Chinese landscape gardens of the Ming and Qing Dynasties set a very high starting point. Unlike the imaginary work in paintings and literature, scholars were making something with the material landscape that was between 'real' and 'unreal'. Their meanings were strongly based on the symbolism and metaphorical texts of traditional Chinese paintings and literature. There was much more meaning embedded in their elegant appearance (Figure 3.7, 3.8).



Figure 3.7 Classical landscape gardens in Suzhou, Zhou Zheng Garden  
(拙政园), Ming Dynasty



Figure 3.8 Classical landscape gardens in Suzhou, Cang Lang Ting (沧浪亭),  
Song Dynasty

#### **“Heaven and Earth in a Pot”: the Completion of a View of Nature**

“Heaven and Earth in a Pot”(壶中天地) was a special cultural phenomenon in China that emerged after the Tang Dynasty. It was also an alternative name for a scholar’s Private Garden. Its real meaning is “unlimited meaning in limited space”. It also refers to the prevalence of potted landscapes. Most importantly, it symbolized that scholars had retreated from the mainstream of society.

Scholars enjoyed their spiritual nature in their limited space, so they focused on the small details of nature in their gardens. “Loving nature” changed from appreciating great mountains and bodies of water to indulging in watching fish, planting flowers and appreciation of stones, etc. (Figure 3.9). While nature had been freely constructed in gardens in abundant material forms, these forms were being de-structured and meanings of landscape became more abstract, more subjective and more symbolic.



Figure 3.9 *Appreciating Winter Sweet*, Huang Shen (黃慎), Qing Dynasty

“Heaven and Earth in Pot” was a succinct expression of a highly mature culture and also the sign of its eventual and inevitable decline (Wang 1990).

### 3.4 Traditional Chinese Travels in Nature

In China, humanism was evoked by Chinese humanistic philosophies and resulted in nature being detached from primitive religious sorcery. Cultural paths were created all over natural areas and resulted in a splendid cultural landscape in nature. The Chinese View of nature is characterised by the high level of unity of nature and life. It is also represented by travelling in nature.

In Chinese, the two words *lu* and *you* (旅游, travel and wandering) have religious origins. “*lu*” means walking while holding flags and with companions. “*you*” means moving freely in space imitating gods and spirits. Thus, *lu you* has the traditional meaning of moving, play and amusement (Gong 2001). Compared with human beings, the characteristics of Gods and Spirits, such as freedom, liberty, transcendence and release, were all liberated by free movement (p153). This freedom of spirit is also the essential value of modern tourism. In Chinese, *lu* has multiple meanings. It can be translated into ‘rove’, ‘swim’, ‘wander’, ‘travel’ and also ‘associate with’ (A Chinese and English Dictionary, 1987). What is fascinating is almost all activities occurring in nature were related to *you*. Since tourism is a

relatively new word, in the following we will use different words to replace it according to their different meanings.

The purpose of this research is to examine the Chinese View of nature by identifying the characteristics of consciously cultural activities occurring in nature, so other activities like roving around as a nomad or travelling for business are excluded from this exploration.

### **3.4.1 Travelling for *(道)***

*is the realities of phenomena and there are different ways to pursue *. As we mentioned previously, for Confucianism the  *of nature is embedded in the human self and can be reached through the cultivation of morals and ethics. For Daoism, the way of  *was by the Self-so and nature was a perfect model. Seeking  *was the objective of travelling. However,  *differs from individual motivation.******

#### **“Travelling and Learning” (游学)**

For Confucianists, knowledge was very important and was the only way for moral cultivation, which is also called *li* (ritual, propriety, decorum, correctness, etiquette, and good manners). Confucius pursued knowledge all his life and he was a great educator. In the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, scholars usually travelled far, seeking knowledgeable sages and following them for their education. This is called “*Travelling and Learning*” (游学), which is also another name for education in Chinese. Today “*read ten thousand books; travel ten thousand Li (miles)*” (读万卷书，行万里路) is still the maxim of all scholars. Knowledge comes from books, but also from life and, when travelling, we can learn a lot from life.

In the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods, which was the great era of “*Travelling and Learning*”, sages of different schools always had many student followers who did not have fixed abodes. They were on long journeys, seeking wise landed gentry who deserved their service and who would help them realise their political ambitions (Gong 2001). Confucius and his students were like this. Between the ages of fifty-six and seventy Confucius travelled all the states and tried to persuade the landed gentry to accept his political strategies to save society from chaos. While travelling, he taught Confucianism and students continued to gather

from all states till he finally had three thousand students. Their travels were the most extensive and most difficult.

In that era, there were thousands of miles between states and most scholars had to travel on foot. As they journeyed, nature was experienced. They enjoyed natural scenery and the View of nature was expressed in certain ways. As mentioned earlier, the Confucian view of nature was from a moral and ethical perspective. Confucius said, “Water benefits all things and asks for nothing. That is moral. Water goes anywhere following the rational way. That is *Yi* (义). Water is continuous and never-ending. That is  *and that is why a gentleman will stop and look whenever he sees a great body of water” (*Xunzi*, Chapter 28).*

The purpose of “*Travelling and Learning*” was to pursue education and knowledge, and realise the meaning of life by serving the state. Confucius said, “A scholar who lingers at home does not deserve to be a scholar”. A scholar with great ambitions had to travel. It was an important part of ancient Chinese education for scholars to travel to the capital city from their home town and meet with sages from many other states.

### **Leisurely Wandering and Drowning Worries**

Gong (2001) points out that there were three levels of meaning to leisurely wandering in nature. First, it presented an easy way of life. They lived a life of ease and leisure. They had plenty of spare time so they wandered everywhere. Second, it was to drown worries, which was the “*riding out and drowning worries*” described in *the Book of Songs*. The third was pursuing the value of life. It was all a way of life. Like the Daoists, they preferred natural settings much more than the Confucianists.

Gong also asserts, “In a word, life should be happy. If you are not happy, then go and wander around to drown these worries” (Gong 2001, p60). This is the Chinese art of living: life is short so be happy and enjoy life.

Lin said, “The Chinese is known as a great loafer”. He asserted (p154),

“A sad, poetic touch is added to this intense love of life by the realisation that this life we have is essentially mortal. Strange to say, this sad awareness of our mortality makes the Chinese scholar’s enjoyment of life all the more keen and intense.” (Lin 1998, p146)

Immersed in both Confucianism and Daoism, the Chinese knew very early on how to harbour power and energy for their personalities and how to obtain release and

purity for their souls from nature. The eternal objective was to keep harmony between soul and life, which is what the Chinese think of as the real meaning of life. That is why even in those most turbulent and dark periods, there were still so many people seeking enjoyment and entertainment in nature instead of religion.

### **Mysterious Wandering**

The Mysterious Doctrine newly emerged during the Wei and Jin Dynasties. It tried to integrate Confucianism into Daoism. In that very chaotic time, orthodox Confucianism was thoroughly discredited and aristocrats and scholars retired to nature. They lived and gathered in natural areas and enjoyed Pure Talk. Before the Wei and Jin Dynasties, officials were recommended for their moral qualities based on Confucianism. With the discrediting of Confucianism, morals and ethics were not as important as before, so abilities and personalities became more important qualities for a scholar. The qualities of recluses in nature fitted this ethos. They banished all worldly cares and worries, travelled in nature, retired to the mountains, or followed the principles of Laozi and Zhuangzi, discussed the most mysterious metaphysical philosophy, and explored the meaning of life in nature while escaping from all social involvement. It was this escape that cultivated some very special spirits that were most essential for Chinese scholars. They were romanticism, elegance, natural grace, haughtiness and not being bound by worldly life. These spiritual qualities were also named the “*Spiritual Demeanour of Wei Jin*” (魏晋风度), which are the highest qualities required for the artistic life for scholars (Zhang 1992).

The most famous scholars were the “Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove” and they were all poets. Liu Ling (刘伶), a great poet, would go on drunken sprees for months. He used to travel on a cart with a jug of wine, a shovel and a grave-digger, giving the latter the order as they started: “Bury me when I am dead—anywhere, any time” (Lin 2002,p51). People admired him and called him “clever”. Another, Ruan Ji (阮籍), “one of China’s first romanticists” (Lin 2001, p281) and also a great musician, forgot to return home whenever he was on a journey in nature. Associated with nature’s wonders, his heart also truly grew big. He looked into the cosmos and thought about life. He was a “big man” who “lived in heaven and earth as his house”, and this big heart and spirit was the object of mysterious travel.

Mysterious travel was very prevalent in the late Eastern Jin Dynasty (东晋, 317~420 CE). Scholars were more inclined to leisurely wandering and entertainment in nature,

although their travels were still thought of as Mysterious Travel and their poems as Mysterious Poems, such as Wang Xi Zhi's *Lanting Gathering* (兰亭序)". They were both officials and recluses who enjoyed their worldly glory while pursuing the independent Daoist personality by leaving the world. This was the achievement of the Mysterious Doctrine that indicated for the first time that "orthodox Confucianism" and "nature" (Daoism) had achieved balance between philosophy and the scholar's practical life (Wang 1990, p88).

### **Wandering in Search for Immortality**

Alongside the development of Daoism as the prevailing philosophy during the Jin Dynasty, another more strictly religious interpretation of Daoism was evolving, which was called 'religious' Daoism (道教).

"The realistic Chinese, apart from their rationalistic scholars, always have a secret desire for immortality. Confucianism has no fairies, while Daoism has". Lin further asserted:

*Daoism, therefore, accounts for a side of the Chinese character which Confucianism cannot satisfy. There is a natural romanticism and a natural classicism in a nation, as in an individual. Daoism is the romantic school of Chinese thought, as Confucianism is the classic school. Actually, Daoism is romantic throughout. Firstly, it stands for a return to nature and a romantic escape from the world, and it revolts against the artificiality and responsibilities of Confucian culture. Secondly, it stands for the rural ideal of life, art and literature, and the worship of primitive simplicity. Thirdly, it stands for the world of fantasy and wonder, coupled with a childishly naïve cosmogony* (Lin 2002, p114).

Confucianism solved the problem of human nature but left out of consideration the riddle of the universe, which was a big hole in its philosophy. This allowed the popular mind to disentangle, with the help of Daoistic mysticism, the mysteries of nature [The Way of Dao had its mysterious side. As Laozi said, it was "Darker than any Mystery" (玄之又玄) (*, Chapter 1), but had nothing to do with religion]. This thinking was soon apparent in *Huainazi* (淮南子, 178~122BCE), who mixed philosophy with the wonder of spirits and legends. The first Chinese Emperor of the Qin Dynasty (221~207BC) once sought immortality with five hundred boys and virgins, travelling to a dreamed-of fairyland on the high seas. Religious Daoism maintained a firm foothold with the Chinese people due to these irresistible imaginary ideas. It had a very wide sphere of influence, which included medicine, physiology and cosmology. This image is centrally represented in the Chinese*

garden with its traditional symbolic pattern of “One Lake and Three Mountains” (一池三山).

There were two ways to become immortal. In the first, the cultivator should leave the world, maintain the naturally inherent “Qi” (气, air, breath, spirit) in the body, breathe the quintessential air of nature, pick celestial herbs and make elixirs by him/herself. Gradually he/she could become an immortal. The second way is much easier. If he/she was lucky enough to meet an immortal and be guided by the immortal, then he/she could immediately become an immortal. However, celestial herbs, celestial air and immortals, were all within the deep and vast mountains, so the cultivators must keep travelling in nature and seeking them.

The side product of these religious travels was transcendence beyond religion. It is certain that Chinese herbal medicine was originally developed from these religious travels and practice. Moreover, “their superstitious pupils glistened with aesthetic lustre” (Zhang 1992, p114). Religious Daoists believed that the immortals had special spirits and the places they inhabited must be special as well, so they were very strict with the natural settings where they would travel and they had a finely honed ability to appreciate nature, including water, mountains, plants and even clouds, as well as all of the elements as a whole. This later resulted in *Feng Shui* (风水) and made a great contribution to Chinese *Shanshui* aesthetic theories and *Shanshui* travel.

Travelling for seeking immortality was popular from the Wei and Jin Dynasties and the Ming Dynasty was the peak time for religious Daoism, although it had already been very popular in the Tang Dynasty. This can be shown by the very popular Tang poem composed by Jia Dao (贾岛):

松下问童子，言师采药去。  
只在此山中，云深不知处。  
*I asked the boy beneath the pines.  
He said, “The Master’s gone alone  
Herb-picking somewhere on the mount.  
Cloud-hidden, whereabouts unknown.”*

### **Buddhist Wandering**

“Confucianism is a kind of social discipline and it doesn’t work in chaotic periods. Scholars must look for other ways” (Huang 2000, p89). We have already seen how

Daoism rose and Confucianism declined during the Wei and Jin Dynasties. In addition, Buddhism was becoming popular at that time.

"Buddhism is the only important foreign influence that has become an integral part of Chinese life" (Lin 2001, p121). It had a very deep influence. "Buddhism conquered China as a philosophy and as a religion, as a philosophy for the scholars and as a religion for the common people. Where Confucianism has only a philosophy of moral conduct, Buddhism possesses a logical method, a metaphysics and a theory of knowledge" (p. 122). Buddhism was imported from India at the end of the Han Dynasty, although it did not have any status. During the chaotic Wei and Jin Dynasties, and the Northern and Southern Dynasties, Buddhism found fertile ground for growth through its evangelical influence on the common people and its general kindness. "There is justification enough in a chaotic country for the popularity of a religion which declares the vanity of the world and offers a refuge from the pains and vicissitudes of this earthly life" (p. 123).

However, Buddhism still had a long way to go if it wanted to become established in China. Buddhism is a religion which emphasises leaving the world, the same as Daoism. So at first it tried to join *Pure Talk* and depended on Daoism to grow. It also followed Daoism to be cultivated in nature, which was helpful in getting rid of worldly desires and showing it had the same qualities and spirit as Daoism. This attracted the admiration of scholars. Buddhism and the Mysterious Doctrine were coming closer and closer together. In the late Jin Dynasty, Mysterious Daoism was replaced by Buddhism as the dominant belief. Buddhists, Daoists and Confucianists associated with each other, wandering in nature and debating philosophical metaphysics. It was a unique landscape in nature in ancient China.

After the Northern and Southern Dynasties, Buddhism became very popular in China and later much more prevalent than religious Daoism. Many Buddhist temples were built in natural areas. However, the common Chinese wanted to leave the darkness of life, not life itself. They still enjoyed their worldly life and their travels were different from that of the masters. "The temples, rites and ceremonies of Daoism and Buddhism in China are more objects of recreation than of edification; they touch the aesthetic sense, so to speak, of the Chinese people rather than their moral or religious sense" (Kubin 1990, p19). Therefore, "in spring, thousands of pilgrims, old and young, men and women, may be seen on the trail carrying sticks and yellow bags, travelling nights and days to the sacred temple. Among them the

spirit of jollity prevails and tales are told on the way" (Lin 2001, 130). It could have been taken for a festival, or spring tour rather than a pilgrimage.

Most temples were situated on high mountains at scenic spots. They provided the Chinese with chances to enjoy natural beauty. Usually there were superior rooms for rent there. The pilgrims arrived, wandered around and talked to the monks while taking nice tea and got their energy and spirit refreshed. It was a leisurely kind of wandering.

### **3.4.2 *Shanshui* Tour: Real Travel**

Unlike the above travels, there were many real travellers who just pursued the beauty of nature and nothing else. They were real travellers and travelling and enjoying nature were their only objectives. Here, the value of "travelling in nature" itself was identified, nothing else. Gong (2001) argues that Confucius's travel was to realise his ideal of saving society; Qu Yuan's travel was because of the loss of ideals. Both of their inner hearts were empty and needed to be satisfied by these travels. Thus, these travels were not what they wanted to do, but what they were being forced to do. Travel was a procedure and method used to reach the objective. So were the other travels or wanderings. They all had their special purposes that focused on the senses of the subject and they didn't have real spiritual freedom in their travels. Since they were forced to leave home, their journeys were always somewhat bitter and emotional. However, the situation changed when aesthetic consciousness was evoked. "Travel changed from being forced, abnormal and emotional, to exploration of the new world; from realising the meaning of life by travelling to identifying the value of travel" (Gong 2001, p244). "Going out and travelling has opened the world of nature (*Shanshui*), and the world of humanism (associated with friends)" (p244).

This pure spiritual enjoyment of travelling in nature can be traced to Xie Linyun, the later Li Daoyuan (郦道元) and to Xu Xiake (徐霞客) of the Ming Dynasty (明朝). Xu Xiake's travel was the widest and most unusual, and his travel notes were also the most interesting. For these travellers, all the values of travel were embedded in the travel itself and this was its essential meaning. In this travel, there was no bitterness at leaving home, no discontent with reality, no worries about life, and no burden of moral cultivation. The only thing it had was pure spiritual enjoyment obtained from beautiful destinations. They were not pursuing external things and for them objective nature was already at one with their minds and souls. They didn't even know why

they travelled. Perhaps it was just like Xie Linyun said, “*Shanshui* is just the place for my personality”.

As mentioned earlier, after the Song Dynasty society did not care about the appearance of objective nature any more and shifted its focus to the spiritual level. Also during this period (Ming Dynasty) the greatest tourists were born. Travelling or not travelling was not just related to personality, preferences and behaviours, but also to choices of life meaning. The conflict between travelling and non-travelling changed to conflict between travellers. Though these real travellers were not the mainstream of society and most still preferred to spend their time in gardens and remote places, we can see they reached a very high level of awareness of the values of travel. The values of life which were associated with travelling in nature were unique.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

Above is the history of the construction of traditional Chinese cultural views of nature. Underpinned by humanistic philosophies and politics, the culture of nature dominated by landscape achievements, followed its own way and reached high levels. It has also been shown how these values changed according to social changes. Thus, the development of the traditional Chinese View of nature is an historical procedure. The traditional Chinese View of nature can be identified by the following characteristics:

1. it is humanistic rather than religious;
2. it is aesthetic rather than scientific;
3. it is shaped by high culture;
4. nature is subjectively constructed rather than objective in origin;
5. nature is a place for cultivation;
6. nature is a symbol of great beauty and morals;
7. nature is embedded with the meaning of ideal life;
8. nature is a place for retreat from worldly society.
9. the value of nature is consistent with human personality;
10. nature is one part of human beings and is an enjoyable and inspiring place;
11. artistic re-built nature is more beautiful than original nature; and
12. the eternal value of nature is for a harmonious and artistic human life.

Based on these perspectives, the Chinese have travelled in nature for thousands of years, seeking the meanings of life while morally and aesthetically enjoying the great beauty of nature. Nature was the most important home of their spirits and

souls. Cultural landscape achievements, as a result of these explorations in nature, greatly enriched and elevated the meanings of nature and represented a unique cultural route.

These conclusions will lay solid foundations for the comparative research on contemporary Chinese values and will inspire the Chinese contribution in international contexts in the next chapters.

# **Chapter 4**

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## **Case Studies of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas**

## **4.1 Introduction**

With its review of traditional Chinese cultural perspectives on nature, Chapter 3 demonstrated that Chinese values of nature have been nurtured by Chinese philosophies, and that Chinese natural aesthetics began with humanism. The traditional Chinese View of nature embodied high human consciousness. This traditional culture was tightly bound up with high culture—the values and interests of the elite. It is this culture that led to the unique cultural characteristics of today's Scenic and Historic Interest Areas and tamed these places, making them highly humanised and far from wild. These areas reflect ancient Chinese culture, philosophy, politics and arts, leaving their marks on the landscapes.

Traditional Chinese values of nature have been explored, and the philosophical and aesthetic foundations of traditional Chinese understanding of nature have been developed. This chapter aims to answer the research question, "What are the contemporary Chinese values of nature?" Since there is currently a gap in research on contemporary Chinese values of nature in China, this research has adopted a case study method to investigate the multiple values embedded in social groups. In this research it has also been guided by ethnographical methodology combined with my heritage conservation project. It will lay the foundations for exploring in the next chapter how contemporary values of nature relate to tradition, and what values have changed or emerged.

## **4.2 Introduction to Case Studies**

In this section, case study design and the situations of the three selected cases will be introduced.

### **4.2.1 Case Study Design**

Case study objectives, theoretical propositions, units of analysis, and case study methods are designed as below.

#### **Case study objectives**

The objective of this chapter is to identify contemporary Chinese values of nature through case studies of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas. Unlike in ancient society, the values of these natural and scenic areas are no longer dominated by high culture in China. Now they are embedded in different social groups. In this contemporary research section, values, perceptions and the expectations on Scenic

and Historic Interest Areas are investigated through the relevant stakeholders. Based on these understandings, the research aims to explore the relationships and conflicts between contemporary values and traditional values, and to examine what traditional values have been inherited and what has been changed in social and cultural contexts. The case study research also aims to reveal the value conflicts between the stakeholders. This understanding is essential for sustainable cultural landscape conservation of these areas through value negotiation, which is a key to sustainable heritage conservation and management today.

### **Theoretical Propositions of the Case Studies**

The case studies in this research are both explorative and explanatory. The research is guided by "how" and "why" questions. The existing relevant theories reviewed in chapter 2 provide a theoretical orientation for exploring contemporary Chinese values of nature through case studies and for explaining and understanding these phenomena in social contexts. The case studies are instrumental, rather than intrinsic, which illustrates that the research interests are for theoretical generation of exploration and understanding beyond particular case interests. Stake (2003,p171) defines instrumental case study as:

*...Instrumental case study is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue to redraw a generalization. The case is of secondary interest, it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else. The case still is looked at in depth, its contexts scrutinized, its ordinary activities detailed, but all because this helps the researcher to pursue the external interest.*

This research maintains that human views of nature are culturally- and socially-constructed. Values of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas reflect the social and cultural values of certain social groups. Different values held by relevant stakeholders are negotiated with each other in a society and have finally been coded in cultural landscapes. Thus, the investigation of the values of stakeholders helps to decode the cultural and social meaning of the landscapes and understand the value of these typical 'natural' lands. In this procedure, understanding the stakeholders in a dynamic social context is a vehicle for decoding the landscape values. Only from this understanding can we interpret the phenomena of landscapes, such as moving locals out of selected areas, and set the exploration of values of nature in a social context. It maintains historical holist meaningful characteristics of real-life events of the positions of ethnography and 'new cultural geography'.

### **Units of Analysis**

To clarify what the units of analysis in case studies are is the fundamental problem in case study research (Yin 1994,p21). Research propositions help this research to define the units of analysis. Although data collection involves individual information, this research will remain with each Scenic and Historic Interest Area, which is a ‘bounded system’ (Stake 2003) under the administration of the Construction Ministry in China, as an entity and an independent unit of analysis. The case studies focus on holistic relevance and differences between cases and stakeholders.

Communities in each unit have been studied as embedded units of contextual events surrounding the unit’s analyses. Community studies have been used as the most effective way for anthropology and sociology to understand social reality and it has been assumed that local communities are microcosms of human culture (Brunt 2002). Two characteristics of communities have been identified by Warren: “place and specific interests” (Warren 1969, in Brunt 2002,p82). In the case studies, three common communities are identified in relation to their value for the management of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas. They are visitors, managers and the local villagers.

### **Case Study Methods**

- **A Multiple Case Method**

The research method of the case studies has been guided by ethnography and explores the ‘thematic’ relevance between units of cases to generalise cultural patterns of contemporary values of nature through community investigation (Tesch 1990). Each case is taken as an integrated system, which comprises a number of rich contexts—physical, economic, ethical, aesthetic, and so on. Three cases are analysed in this research, but only one case is focused on as an in-depth case study. The other two cases are presented as references or as comparisons. Comparison, as a grand epistemological strategy for the case studies (Stake 2003,p143), is also a powerful conceptual mechanism to provide complete contexts and to assist deep understanding of the general phenomena.

- **Selection of Cases**

According to the research questions and objectives, two principles were set for the selection of cases. Firstly, a case should perfectly represent traditional Chinese cultural and aesthetic values of nature as asserted in the last chapter. Secondly, a case should be a complex of changing contemporary values, conflicts and pressures

of economic development, social values and influences of globalisation. Cases will present the legacies, antagonisms and conflicts between traditional values and contemporary values, between national values and local values, between Chinese values and universal international values.

Three sites which are National Scenic and Historic Interest Areas as well as World Heritage sites in China were selected. Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in China are outstanding representatives of the traditional harmony of culture and nature. These case studies present the contemporary conflicts emerging in these areas. More conflicts have been emerging since they were inscribed as World Natural or Cultural Heritage areas. Culture and nature are artificially separated by World Heritage categories. Local, national and international value conflicts are present in these three cases.

The three selected cases are the Wudang Mountains Scenic and Historic Interest Area, World Cultural Heritage; Jiuzhaigou Valley Scenic and Historic Interest Area, World Natural Heritage; and Wulingyuan Scenic and Historic Interest Area, World Natural Heritage. Wudang will be the in-depth case study and the other two will be comparative and complementary.

As already reviewed, Traditional Chinese landscape especially refers to 'great mountains' and 'great bodies of water' with rich cultural attachments. Jiuzhangou is typically famous for its great bodies of water and Wulingyuan for its great mountains. They fit the traditional Chinese aesthetic images of landscape and they belong to the same management system as Wudang. But since their natural water and mountain features are emphasised by their classification as "*World Natural Heritages*", the cultural features in the Chinese national Scenic and Historic Interest Areas system are ignored and under-valued.

These three cases in China are the focus of much debate and have attracted much international concern. Wudang is known for its 'backward management of world heritage' because of its burnt heritage temple and its very under-developed tourism compared with other heritages areas or Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in China. Now it is under great pressure from national and international heritage management to open to the mass tourism market. Similarly to Wudang, Wulingyuan has been criticised for the 'rapid urbanisation' in natural heritage areas, as already mentioned, and its development of heritage areas is always cited as a 'lesson'. In contrast, the

effort to restore the ecosystem, and the model of partnership between authorities and the local people of Jiuzhaigou were commended by the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee (UNESCO 1998). Now this model is strongly recommended by the Central Government of China and all other sites are requested to learn from its experience. However, this model is questioned in this research.

The common themes of the debates in these three cases involve removal of local people out of sites, development of tourism and eco-restoration, which have caused enormous social, cultural and political problems.

- **Triangulation of Data Collection**

The research took advantage of each case study's strength which is "its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence—documents, artefacts, interviews and observations" (Yin 1994, p8). Multiple sources of data collection included documentation, archival records, interviews, questionnaire surveys, observations, and focus groups at different stages as the study progressed and for the purpose of data validation. Documentation, archives records were adopted in the investigation of Wudang's history and the situation of Wudang's social and economic development level. Interviews, questionnaire surveys, observations and focus groups were mainly adopted to investigate different social groups' preferences, perspectives and values.

Visitors' questionnaire surveys were designed in two parts in the case studies. The first survey was taken on a train from Shanghai to Chengdu during the period 2-3 August 2004. The survey questionnaire is attached at Appendix D. This is the main transport from the eastern coastal cities to inner cities including Wudang<sup>6</sup>. Unstructured interviews were recorded because some travellers were quite interested in the topics and wanted to offer more opinions. 559 travellers were surveyed on the train. In the second survey, 419 visitors were surveyed on site over the next two weeks by asking more specific questions in the Wudang Scenic and Historic Interest Area (see Appendix E). Random structured interviews followed, based on the possibility of visitors' limited time onsite. A questionnaire (see Appendix F) was given to the villagers during the period 6 March to 15 March 2004 and was used as a pilot approach to identify potential themes for later in-depth interviews for the villagers and managers during the planning process. In total, 111 local villagers were involved in the questionnaire survey and more than 150 villager

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<sup>6</sup> As this is a major inter city train, these interviewees were not necessarily visiting Wudang.

families were interviewed in order to understand their values and perspectives on the land. Also, 25 local managers were interviewed and seven focus groups were run for the managers by the end of 2005. Interviews and focus groups were semi-structured. The data from the Wudang case was triangulated with the data obtained from Jiuzhaigou and Wulingyuan, mainly by observation during onsite visits in July 2005 and September 2005. Observation and self-reflection are always important in the process of data collection.

The train travellers' non-site-specific questionnaire survey and interviews were aimed at investigating travellers' general perspectives on nature and Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, their motivations for visiting Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, and travellers' preferences. The onsite survey in Wudang aimed to explore visitors' specific motivations, preferences and perspectives on a cultural site, in addition to those general perspectives and characteristics investigated on the train. Local managers' interviews were aimed at investigating local government perceptions of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, their values of nature, and their views on tourism and on villagers. Local villagers' questionnaire surveys and interviews were aimed at investigating their perceptions of the lands where they live, their attitudes towards their lives, and their conflicts with other stakeholders related to those areas. All questionnaires were designed by the author and the surveys were done by the students of Tongji University in Shanghai (see appendix G).

- **Data Analysis**

Analytic generalisation was applied for data analysis in this research instead of statistical generalisation, although quantitative data collection was adopted as well as qualitative data collection. The research aim was that the analysis of each particular case study would generalise findings to broader theoretical propositions and not to populations or universals, because the cases are not "sampling units" (Yin 1994,p31). Understanding the distinction between these two types of generalisation is emphasized by Yin (1994, p30) as "the most important challenge in doing case studies". Yin (1994, p31) further asserted:

*"[m]ultiple cases, in this sense, should be considered like multiple experiments (or multiple surveys). Under these circumstances, the method of generalisation is 'analytic generalisation', in which a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study. If two or more cases are shown to support the same theory, replication may be claimed.*

Some cases used in the case studies are for this “replication logic”. Grounded theory interpretive methodology offers this case study useful guidelines to increase control over and clarity within conducting data analysis research as Charmaz and Mitchell (2002, p171) suggest, especially for the conceptual grasp of empirical phenomena. Grounded theory is adopted in this research with “the perspectives that ethnographical case studies have long shared—an appreciation and knowledge of context, a sensitivity to unstated and unrecognised meanings, and an awareness of layers or meaning in language” (Charmaz and Mitchell 2002, p171). Overall, it is a more reflexive enterprise than a mechanical operation. The theoretical findings will be part of the contribution of this research and could be applied as a vehicle for examining other cases later.

The quantitative questionnaire data were processed and aided by SPSS software. Most outcomes are presented in graphs and multiple choice question outcomes are presented in tables.

#### **4.2.2 Introduction of the Cases: Setting the Case Study in a Social Context**

The three cases all involve conflicts of ethics, land use and values. Their locations are indicated in Figure 4.1.

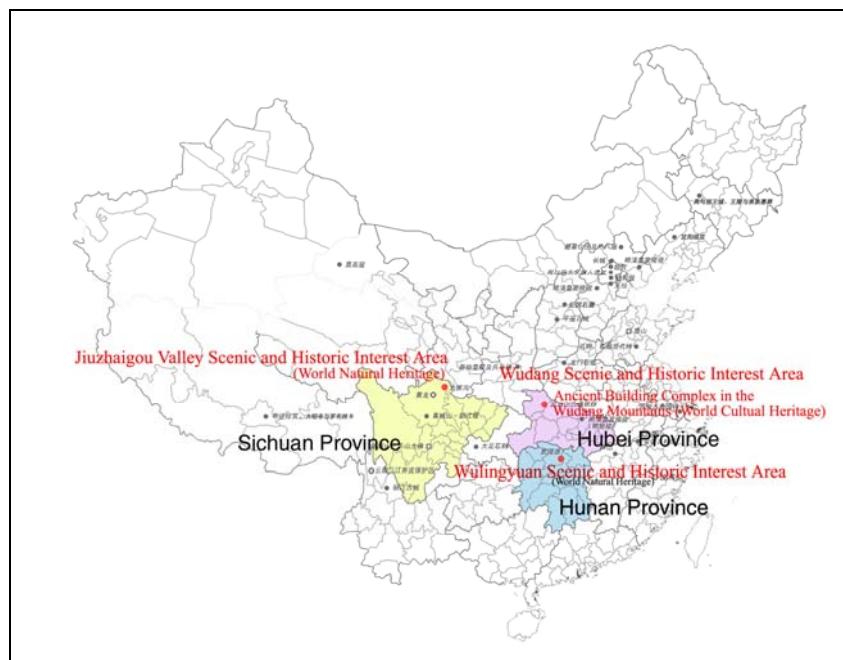


Figure 4.1 Location of sites of the case studies

### **Case 1: Wudang Scenic and Historic Interest Area**

Wudang Scenic and Historic Interest Area is located in the Northwest of Hubei Province in the middle of China. It covers 312 square kilometres of mountains. It was designated as a National Scenic and Historic Interest Area in 1982 by the State Council of the People's Republic of China. In 1994, Wudang Mountains Ancient Building Complex was inscribed as a World Cultural Heritage site by UNESCO.

*The palaces and temples which form the nucleus of this group of secular and religious buildings exemplify the architectural and artistic achievements of China's Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. Situated in the scenic valleys and on the slopes of the Wudang mountains in Hubei Province, the site, which was built as an organized complex during the Ming dynasty (14th–17th centuries), contains Daoist buildings from as early as the 7th century. It represents the highest standards of Chinese art and architecture over a period of nearly 1,000 years (UNESCO website).*

### **The Distinguished History of Wudang**

The Wudang Mountains were also named the Taihe Mountains (太和山) in ancient times. In the mountains, scattered distinguished ancient religious building complexes remind us of its brilliant history. It was once honoured as "Dayue" (大岳, Great Mountains) by the Yongle Emperor of the Ming Dynasty (明朝) and "Xuanyue" (玄岳, Super Mysterious Mountains, above four other famous mountains in China) by the Jiajing Emperor (嘉靖) of the Qing Dynasty (清朝). It was the "Number One Fairy Mountain on the Earth" that no other mountains could compete with and has had a profound influence in south-east Asia<sup>7</sup>.

The complex is of great historical and ideological significance. Wudang religious Daoism was used by the Emperors for enhancing their political positions and the involvement of Ming Dynasty emperors ensured the highest quality of the buildings and structures. It took twenty thousand men twelve years to complete the work. In 1416 over three thousand prisoners were sent to the area to work on the land to provide food for the Daoists. A large military force was stationed in the area and workers were assigned to keep the temples and palace clean. During the Ming Dynasty over 4000 ha of land belonged to the temples, thousands of Daoists lived in the area and 369 imperial edicts regarding the mountains were issued.

The complex is also of great philosophical and artistic significance. Characterised by religious Daoism, which was from the philosophical school of Daoism, the philosophy of the Wudang building complex is deeply rooted in harmony with nature.

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<sup>7</sup> Recorded in Wudang's history, provided by Wudang local government.

Natural topographical features and landscapes were used to achieve harmony between the buildings and the environment, between humans and nature. The complex is a masterpiece of ingenious planning, design and architecture. It is representative of the Traditional Chinese philosophy—being at one with nature (Figure 4.2). Here, natural features have been highly Humanised and integrated with human structures. Sky Pillar Peak is surrounded by 72 lesser peaks and 24 ravines, which symbolises social hierarchy. Nine palaces, eight temples, 36 monasteries, 72 cliff temples and over a hundred stone bridges, divided into 33 groups and following strict principles of religious Daoism of oneness with nature, are scattered in the 400 square kilometres of mountains. They are in the valleys, on peaks, on slopes, along cliffs, on terraces, and tied by Daoist religious stories and linked by a network of sacred roads. The natural elements, much more than the environmental settings of these buildings, play key roles in this environment. Here, the seventy two peaks, twenty four ravines, thirty cliffs, and other features all have their own names, as well as the buildings. Here, even herbs and trees are soaked with the spirit of Daoism. The outstanding features of nature and culture once attracted many famous scholars to visit these great mountains and they left rich poems, essays, calligraphy and other art.



Figure 4.2 Wudang's ancient building in the mountains

- **Double Honorary Titles**

Wudang became quiet with the decline of religious Daoism during the Qing Dynasty (17<sup>th</sup> CE). During that period, many temples and palaces were destroyed by war but, fortunately, the core areas of the ancient buildings survived. Wudang was rediscovered when it was designated as a National Scenic and Historic Interest Area in 1982 when this protected park system was initially established. From then, the complex has been under the administration of the State Construction Ministry and has become a national heritage unit.

In 1993, the exquisite nature of the structures, the lavishness of the decorations and the large number of statues of deities combined to make this an outstanding example of ancient Chinese architecture and it was nominated as a World Cultural Heritage site. In 1994, the Wudang Mountains Ancient Building Complex was officially inscribed as a World Cultural Heritage by UNESCO.

However, no further emphases on natural features were mentioned or recorded as World Cultural Heritage, although it is a Sacred Daoist mountain which is famous for super *Feng Shui* (风水, super natural quality). Since then, Wudang has been managed under both national and international frameworks.

- **Wudang renamed ‘Undeveloped’ or ‘Backward’**

In the 1980s, Wudang became a tourism destination when it was designated as a Scenic and Historic Interest Area. Because of its great historic fame, visits to Wudang were ranked highest, although not large compared with today because mass tourism had not emerged in China at that time. The market economy was just in its infancy and most Wudang people lived on traditional agricultural lands that had supported them for generations. They lived in the mountains peacefully with those heritage buildings. Their living conditions were not good, but their lives were peaceful.

In 1992, the application for World Cultural Heritage status destroyed this peace. Since then, the value of the historical buildings has been extraordinarily emphasised and the complex began to compete with the values of the land serving the needs of the people. The local villagers, including the religious orders, began to be cleared out of the heritage site in order to preserve the heritage buildings and their settings. Social conflicts arose. In 1998, China applied the policy of “Return the Cultivated

*Terrace back to the Forest*" (退耕还林) in order to restore the severely degraded forest ecosystem. More and more farmers lost land.

In the meantime, unlike other World Heritage properties in China, heritage tourism in Wudang was very undeveloped and numbers of visits and income from tourism had not made any progress during the previous twenty years. Visits remained almost the same during the 1980s and 1990s and income from tourism was about one-eighth of the other developed heritage areas. This brought the local government a lot of criticism for not being able to use the heritage resources to enhance the local economy. In order to catch up to other heritage sites, the local government began to emphasise the tourist industry in its local economy and to encourage large tourism development projects. Some projects caused severe cultural and ecological impacts on the heritage buildings and their settings. This resulted in more criticism. Because of tourism, it was assumed local villagers would not be allowed to live there any more, so fights over land and resources broke out.

In 2003, one main temple of the ancient complex was burnt in a fire caused by the careless use of electricity, because the Wudang Gongfu school rented the temple for use as a dormitory for students. In one moment, Wudang gained international attention. The central government was under great pressure internationally from World Heritage organizations and it required the local government to immediately improve management. "Wudang management" came to mean 'failure management', 'backward management' and "short term" in China. All the media focused on Wudang.

- **Wudang as an opportunity for an in-depth case Study**

Under these pressures and circumstances, in 2004 the local government appointed Tongji University to develop an updated master plan for Wudang Scenic and Historic Interest Area aimed at sustainable development and heritage management. The author of this research was appointed leader of the interdisciplinary team for this master planning and has been working on this project for the last three years, which has been a great opportunity for in-depth investigation of the research. The in-depth case is based on careful on site study by the team and its deep understanding of the natural and social situations.

Parallel with the initial planning investigation of the site, the government was applying stricter local management policies to remove more local people from the

site to enhance heritage management and to respond to the above international and national criticisms. This big struggle between the villagers and the local government resulted in the local villagers travelling to the State Construction Ministry in Beijing to lodge a complaint against the local government. With the support of the central government, the local people came back to fight with the local government to defend their rights and values of the land. The conflicts turned white-hot. The use and conservation of Heritage areas involving land use inevitably creates social and political problems.

### **Case 2: Jiuzhaigou Scenic and Historic Interest Area**

Jiuzhaigou Scenic and Historic Interest Area stretches over 720 square kilometres in the northern part of Sichuan Province, the south-western province of China. It was designated as a National Scenic and Historic Interest Area in 1982, and it was inscribed as a World Natural Heritage by UNESCO in 1992.

*The jagged Jiuzhaigou valley reaches a height of more than 4,800 m, thus comprising a series of diverse forest ecosystems. Its superb landscapes are particularly interesting for their series of narrow conic karst land forms and spectacular waterfalls. Some 140 bird species also inhabit the valley, as well as a number of endangered plant and animal species, including the giant panda and the Sichuan takin (UNESCO website).*

Compared with Wudang's sophisticated Daoist culture, Jiuzhaigou Valley is far away from the dominant Chinese cultural stream. It is located in such deep mountains in the southwest of China that we know little about its origins and culture. The only recorded history is that this area was the frontier for the Han Nation in ancient China (Zhang and Li 2004). It has been settled by Tibetans for more than one thousand years and they have created their own legends. It is said that the ancestors of these Tibetans were Tibetan soldiers and they followed their king here to fight with the Han during the Tang Dynasty. Unfortunately, they were forgotten by their king after the battle and left behind. This is all that is known about their settlement (Zhang and Li 2004). It is like a fictitious peaceful land, far away from the turmoil of the world which does not know about it. The Tibetans created their own culture there, which the Han are not familiar with. In the eyes of the Han, this is virgin land compared with Wudang and the other historic interest areas, such as Yellow Mountain and West Lake, which have been famous and have enchanted scholars for thousands of years. The average citizen never even heard its name until 1982 when it was designated as a National Scenic and Historic Interest Area, mostly because of its enormous, beautiful and colourful bodies of water, which are also the soul of this land (Figure 4.3).

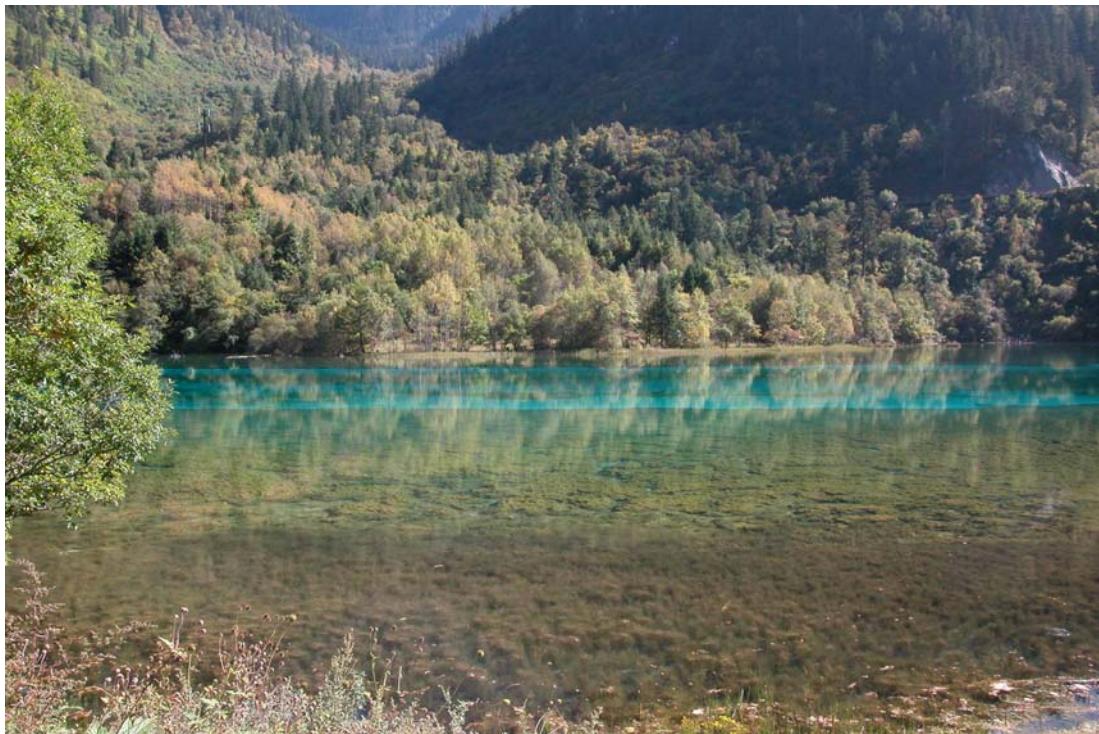


Figure 4.3 Jiuzhaigou colourful ‘fairyland’

The value of Jiuzhaigou Valley was initially realised because of its rich forest resources in the 1950s (zhang and Li 2004). In the middle of the 1960s, two areas were selected for extensive logging. Over the next decade, one third of the 108 lakes dried up because of the loss of forest cover. The forest was scheduled to be logged out by 1985 and, with the shortage of water, Jiuzhaigou was dying. At this critical time, the giant panda saved Jiuzhaigou. As we know, the giant panda is a symbol of China and they are a national treasure. Giant pandas became especially important because of China’s successful *Giant Panda Diplomacy* (熊猫外交) with the United States in 1972. In 1975 a giant panda inventory was taken in its habitat, including the Jiuzhaigou area, but no giant pandas were found in Jiuzhaigou. This meant that the giant panda had already disappeared from this land because of the impact of logging and changes in the ecosystem. Beauty *per se* didn’t concern people in that dark era of the Great Cultural Revolution (from 1966 to 1976) when beauty was equated with guilt, but giant pandas did. In 1978, Jiuzhaigou was designated as a National Natural Reserve and logging finally prohibited (Sichuanet 2003). Jiuzhaigou survived, although there are no longer any giant pandas.

In 1982, Jiuzhaigou was designated as a National Scenic and Historic Interest Area and opened to the public for the first time. It was still beautiful, despite all the

disasters. Tourism began to have a great influence on this land. In the 1990s, mass tourism rapidly increased in China. Visits to this area reached 160,000 in 1991, up from 5000 in 1984. In 1994, it was designated as World Natural Heritage and it became a hot tourism destination. Visits exceeded 1 million every year after 2000 (1.91 million in 2004). As well as profits, the large numbers also had huge impacts on the land. Hotels and facilities were developing every day and it almost became a construction field. The lakes were under threat of pollution. An IUCN evaluation stated that the area was "under threat and there is evidence of 'creeping urbanization'" because the "(Tibetan) impacts are growing and many inappropriate structures and activities still occur and (increasing) visits certainly lead to substantial damage" (WHC 1992).

Under these circumstances, in 2001 the local government decided to close all hotels in the Valley and moved them out. All traditional Tibetan agricultural lands were requisitioned for the forests and traditional grazing was forbidden. All these management actions were related to the concept of eco-restoration. A strategy plan was created by the Sichuan provincial government that set a target to make Jiuzhaigou into a world-famous conference centre, and leisure and tourism destination. The only way to realise this objective was to enhance its natural qualities. The themes of "pristine area", "earthly fairyland" or "fairy-tale world" that was untouched by human beings were established. All Tibetan villagers were stopped from doing their traditional work on the land and were well compensated by the government. They joined the national economy, more particularly the tourist industry. Tourism eliminated their need to "exploit" the natural resources which they had formerly depended on for their livelihood, but at the price of their culture. The people and their houses became simulacra — the tourists' image of Tibetan herdsmen. The Tibetans have rapidly been influenced by Han culture. Tibetans born in the 1970s are no longer able to write in Tibetan and now Tibetan children don't even willingly speak the Tibetan language (Zhan and Li 2004).

The most successful result in Jiuzhaigou has been the increased income for both the villagers and the government as tourism has rapidly increased. The efforts to restore the ecosystem, and the model of partnership between authorities and the local people was commended by the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee (UNESCO 1998) in its conservation report. Now this model is strongly recommended by the central government of China and all other sites are requested to learn from its experience.

However, in this case, due to eco-restoration, the cultures of traditional farming and grazing formed through history have been totally removed, along with the values of the land associated with these activities. It has moved from traditional Chinese values of nature and become close to the Western idea of Wilderness. The idea of being ‘pristine’ began to be criticised by some scholars for erasing the culture created by the local indigenes (Ruan 2006). No cultural features were recorded and taken into the World Natural Heritage inventory. The dizzying beauty of the lakes dominates the place and all other qualities have been removed from view. Jiuzhaigou is losing its cultural identity as the price of being an internationally famous tourism destination.

The Jiuzhaigou model is challenged in this research.

### **Case 3: Wulingyuan Scenic and Historic Interest Area**

Wulingyuan is a spectacular area stretching over more than 26,000 hectares in China's Hunan Province, the southernmost province of China. Wulingyuan's value was recognised in the early 1980s when famous painters, photographers and journalists visited and their work made Wulingyuan famous overnight (Figure 4.4). It was designated as a National Scenic and Historic Interest Area in 1988 by the State

This figure is not available online.  
Please consult the hardcopy thesis  
available from the QUT Library

Figure 4.4 Wulingyuan's sandstone pillars. Photographed by WU, Xiaohui.

Council of the People's Republic of China, and it was inscribed as a World Natural Heritage site by UNESCO in 1992.

*The site is dominated by more than 3,000 narrow sandstone pillars and peaks, many over 200 m. high. Between the peaks lie ravines and gorges with streams, pools and waterfalls, some 40 caves, and two large natural bridges. In addition to the striking beauty of the landscape, the region is also noted for the fact that it is home to a number of endangered plant and animal species (UNESCO website).*

Visits to this site rose from 350,000 when it was inscribed as a World Heritage site to 15.6 million when IUCN experts came for the 5-year conservation review in 1998 (WSRAD 2002). It was sharply criticised because it was "overrun with tourist facilities, having a considerable impact on the aesthetic qualities of the site" (UNESCO 1998). The Mission was also sharply critical of increasing indigenous agricultural activity as well as urbanization caused by rapidly developing exogenous tourism (XHN 2003). In order to respond to these criticisms, a large number of constructions were demolished and villagers were removed from Wulingyuan, as described in the background to Chapter 1.

In the meantime, the constantly developing speculative commercial projects that were being carried out in Wulingyuan, such as had never been seen in China before, caught the media's attention. Some of the capital ventures were upset by these criticisms. In 1998, the same year the IUCN experts arrived, the management rights for one scenic district were rented to a private company for tourism use. In 1999, the company began its first helicopter tours, the first in China. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 1999, hundreds of representatives of the world's media focused on Wulingyuan. On that day famous pilots from around the world gathered at Tianmenshan (天门山), one of the peaks of Wulingyuan and flew through the natural opening in the mountain. Millions of people all over the world were excited about Wulingyuan and subsequently came to visit the site. Visits to Wulingyuan rapidly climbed to 466 million in 2001 (WSRAD 2002). While still continuing the previously mentioned huge demolition project, an elevator was being built from deep underground to the top of a peak to meet the needs of tourism. It has been claimed as the fastest, highest and biggest elevator in the world.

This figure is not available online.  
Please consult the hardcopy thesis  
available from the QUT Library

Figure 4.5 Russian aircraft near Tianmen Cave in March of 2006  
Source: <http://jczs.news.sina.com.cn/2006-03-17/0205357478.html>

It was reported (TOM 2006) that during March 17 to 21 in 2006, more than 140 pilots and other staff from Russia, and over 900 reporters from both home and abroad gathered at Zhangjiajie (张家界). An excellent presentation by the Russian stunt flying team the "Russian Knights" took place over three days. It included demonstrations by 10 Russian aircraft including SU-27 fighter jets, an SU-30 fighter jet, an IL-78 re-fueling tanker and a Yak-52 sports plane. About 20,000 aviation enthusiasts were at the airfield and 100,000 spectators at Tianmenshan (天门山). But the plan to fly through the opening (Figure 4.5) once again was obliged to be cancelled because of the amount of criticism and protests that it could threaten the natural heritage. It was also said the plan was not part of the scheduled activity at all and that it was only set up by the tourism company, along with the local government, to attract tourists for commercial purposes. This attracted much criticism and investigations into the huge tourism profits.

Wulingyuan seems to have gone its own commercial way, taking the risk of going against international and national heritage conservation principles. What Wulingyuan did made it a target because of its radical use of natural resource for short-term tourism commercial purposes. But it seems that nothing can stop the tourism constructions there. The local government is diametrically opposed to the central government and is continuing its constructions while demolishing others. The values which have emerged from this conflict are worth investigating.

Wulingyuan Scenic and Historic Interest Area is a hotly debated case and calls for deep thought. Unlike the famous conventional Wudang culture and the peaceful Jiuzhaigou lakes, the character of Wulingyuan is rebellious. Located in the south, it was recorded in ancient official history as a remote and wild area where the government would banish prisoners, or where defeated Warlords would go. It was far from central lands and the control of the Emperors. Only a few famous historic persons are mentioned in its legends and only a few poets had been there, leaving few poems. It has no splendid history, but it does have its people. The indigenous *Tu* people (土族) were famous for their bravery and recorded by history even back as far as 11BCE. Their character is just like the jagged sandstone peaks that they live with in the dense forest—challenging, untamed and strong (Zjnet 2006). This seems to suggest that Wulingyuan's fate is full of unusual challenges and risks.

### **4.3 Values Presented from Case Studies**

The most important task of this research is to explore the contemporary Chinese values of nature. In case studies, values of nature are investigated from three social groups: the visitors to Wudang, the local managers and the local villagers.

#### **4.3.1 Visitors' Perspectives, Motivations and Preferences**

In visitors' investigation, visitors' perspectives, motivations and preferences are the focuses.

##### **Perspectives of Scenic and Historic Interest Area**

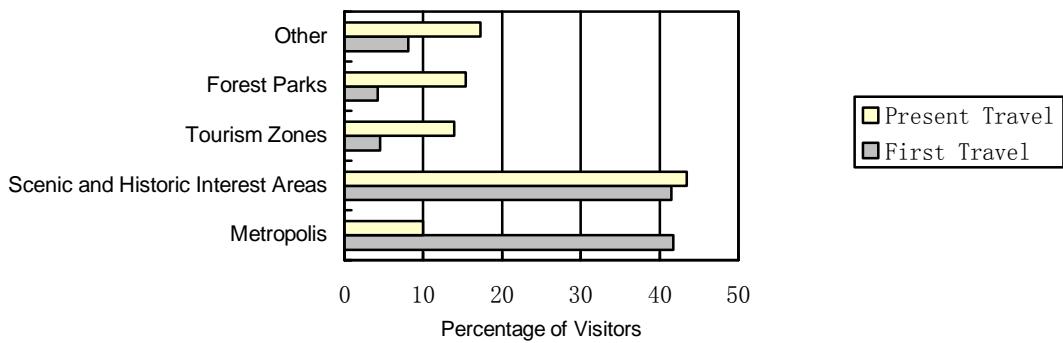
As Scenic and Historic Interest Areas are the representatives of nature in China, the investigation of visitors' perspectives of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas will help to explore the contemporary Chinese View of nature.

###### **• Most popular tourism destinations**

The most impressive conclusion from the surveys is that Scenic and Historic Interest Areas are in a dominant position in domestic tourism in China (Figure 4.6).

Surveys indicate that the first destinations in traveller's lives are Scenic and Historic Interest Areas and metropolises such as Shanghai. The numbers visiting these two kinds of destinations are almost the same. Earlier, when the economy was not so developed in China and the level of urbanisation was very low, people yearned for the flourishing city life. People also visited the famous mountains and lakes, the

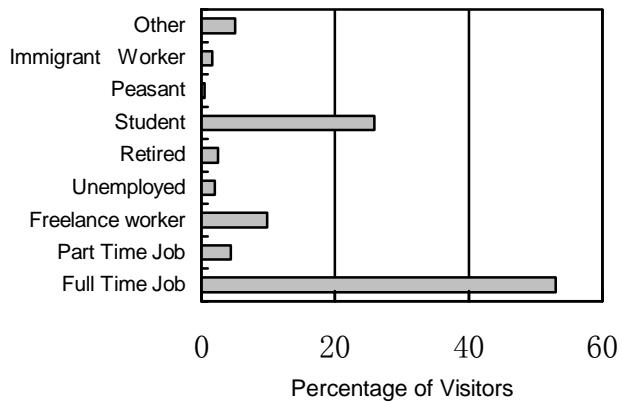
typical Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, because they were influenced by history. However, the urbanisation rate in China rose to 40.5 per cent in 2003 from 28 per cent in 1993 (XHN 2004). More and more people moved to the cities. City life is not a dream any more and nature is getting further away from daily life. Large numbers of visitors began to want to travel in nature from the late 1990s and Scenic and Historic Interest Areas became hot destinations. In the survey, 43.4 per cent visitors regarded Scenic and Historic Interest Areas as their first destination choices, higher than other nature-dominated areas such as forest parks or tourism zones. The choice of metropolises had dropped to 10 per cent. 54 per cent of travelers were sure they would visit Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in one year and another 33.7 per cent of visitors said that probably they will visit such sites in the next year.



12 missing cases; 966 valid cases

Figure 4.6 Traveller' first tourism destination choices

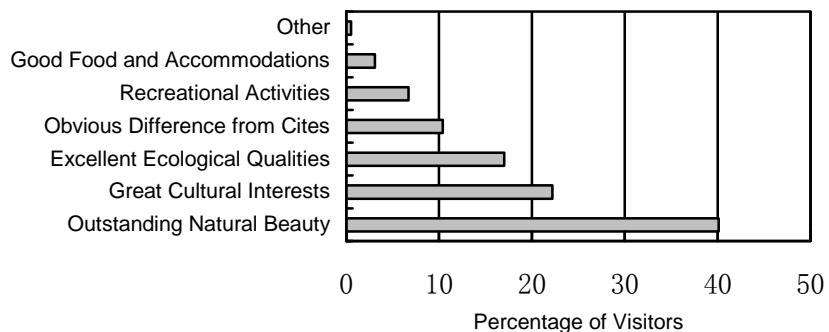
The survey also indicated that most tourists were from cities or towns and most of them have full time jobs. Students were also important because the surveys were done in their summer holidays. This information is important for the analysis of visitors' preferences (Figure 4.7).



25 missing cases; 953 valid cases  
Figure 4.7 Visitors' general job backgrounds

- Qualities of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas**

The investigation of qualities of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas indicates that there are four most important qualities. They are related to outstanding natural beauty, great cultural interest, high quality of the ecological environment and the obvious difference from cities. In the survey, 40.1 per cent of the visitors thought that the most important quality of a Scenic and Historic Interest Area should be extraordinarily beautiful mountain or water scenery; 22.2 per cent of them thought that there should be some cultural elements, such as traditional pavilions, landscape buildings or historic interest. However, 17 per cent of visitors thought it would be enough to have excellent ecological qualities, such as fresh air, clean water and dense forest, all of which they could not have in cities. 10.4 per cent of visitors thought Scenic and Historic Interest Areas should be far away from cities, remote but still accessible. The wish for ecological quality is quite strong (Figure 4.8).



33 missing cases; 945 valid cases  
Figure 4.8 Visitors' images of Scenic and Historic Interest

### *Natural Aesthetics*

In the survey, natural beauty is listed as the most important quality of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas and it is very much aesthetically dominated. Beautiful images of mountains and lakes are deeply rooted in people's minds. Many visitors even asked: "If they are not beautiful, how could they be designated as Scenic and Historic Interest Areas?" They think the sites should be the best places for seeing natural scenery. Visitors are very familiar with famous mountains and lakes in China and their names are frequently mentioned by the visitors.

In China, mountains and lakes are ranked by natural qualities, cultural importance, and their humanised characters thorough history. There are the famous top 'Five Mountains' and 'Five Lakes' and each of them is distinguished by a special feature. Wudang is titled as a 'Super Mountain' to transcend the top five and is famous for its Daoist Qing (清, being aloof from the world) character. Yellow Mountain is famous for its peculiar clouds, fogs, peaks and pines. It is said that after seeing its mountain scenery 'one will never be interested in other mountains after seeing Yellow Mountain'. A similar description of Guilin is 'the mountains and waters of Guilin are the finest under heaven', and Hangzhou and Suzhou are honoured as 'Heavens on Earth.'

Interestingly, the traditional rankings are being re-classified. Newly discovered beautiful landscapes such as Jiuzhaigou and Wulingyuan are being appreciated by visitors and comments such as 'just back from Wulingyuan and will never see anything like Yellow Mountain again' and "back from Jiuzhaigou and will never see such water again" indicate that the reputations of such landscapes are rapidly catching up with the reputations of traditional ones.

### *Cultural Features*

Culture is still important, but the meanings or content of culture are being re-thought. The study indicates that visitors have 'conflicted' attitudes towards culture.

On one hand, cultural tourism seems to be one of the most welcome forms of tourism. People visit sites because they have admired these places for so long. Most of the Scenic and Historic Interest Areas are recorded in history, poems, paintings and essays, and the Chinese have grown up aware of their great fame. Some tourists even say that they will "never go to a place without culture" and "visits

without culture are a waste". Most visitors said that they would "feel somewhat regretful if a place had no cultural features" and that it would "be a little bit boring". New sites, such as Jiazhaigou and Wulingyuan, are always criticised by highly educated visitors as lacking culture. To catch up with older Scenic and Historic interest Areas which are very famous in China for their culture, managers are always trying to add cultural attractions. In Jiuzhaigou, although the Tibetans are not allowed to farm and graze any more, they are still allowed to live on their properties and to keep their houses and customs as a minority culture for the tourists. The villages and lakes still retain their Tibetan names. In Wulingyuan, managers are busy naming all the peaks, valleys and streams to give cultural identities to them. They hope that one day the area's nature will be seen to be as 'civilised' as Wudang and Yellow Mountain where all mountains and peaks are named as if they were human. Culture is always emphasised if managers want a site to be seen as high class.

On the other hand, it seems that visitors only care about the appearance of culture, rather than deep understanding. Even in Wudang, such a well-known cultural heritage site, although 63.5 per cent of onsite visitors acknowledge that Wudang is a World Cultural Heritage and a sacred religious area, only 18.4 per cent of visitors come for a cultural purpose. The others only think of these great buildings as part of the environment. They are 'good looking' and make the place different from other places. Visitors are not really interested in Wudang's history, architecture, art achievements and religious culture. Survey indicates that compared with Wudang's high culture, Jiazhaigou's minority culture seems more attractive for visitors. The visitors used to live and eat in the Tibetan homes. Although they are not allowed to do that any more, they still dress in colourful Tibetan clothes and ride local Mao cows to have their pictures taken. They enjoy themselves, but do not necessarily understand Tibetan history, customs and religion. Most interviewees said: "I like culture, but I don't want to stress my brain any more", and "I only want something new, fun, relaxing and pleasant", or "I am stressed enough, I want something relaxing".

### *Ecological Qualities*

The ecological theme is related to urbanisation. Chinese people have never experienced such high pressure at work and such a poor living environment before, and this is threatening their health. For those who live in polluted cities, a healthy ecological environment is the most important quality for their destinations and it is

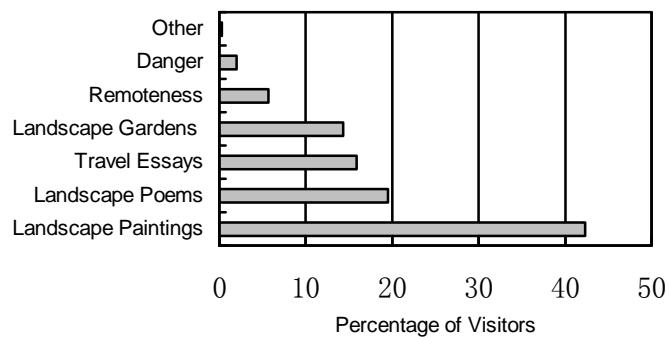
regarded as the best medicine for their tired and stressed spirits. In Wudang, the most frequently heard words are, "The air is so fresh here!", and in Jiuzhaigou: "How clear the water is!" However, the dilemma is that while outstanding ecological qualities attract visitors, these very qualities are threatened by increasing numbers of visits. Recently, resource monitors have been adopted at World Heritage Sites and National Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in China. This has been required by the State Construction Ministry and State Cultural Heritage Bureau. The international criticism of management of World Natural Heritages in China has been behind this development.

### *Difference from Daily Life*

Another characteristic of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas is that they are imagined as places far from worldly cares. It does not mean that they are physically far, but refers to the special character of these sites that are different from ordinary daily life. Scenic and Historic Interest Areas should be the places full of imagination and wonder. Compared with ordinary life, Scenic and Historic Interest Areas are romanticised and idyllic. Visitors feel "free to do something that is not allowed or is restricted in daily life". Outstanding ecological qualities, lively holiday events, striking natural scenery, fascinating customs and even strange people, all delight visitors and are a refreshing change from oppressive daily life. 'Be different from boring daily life' is a constant call.

#### **• Sources of Images of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas**

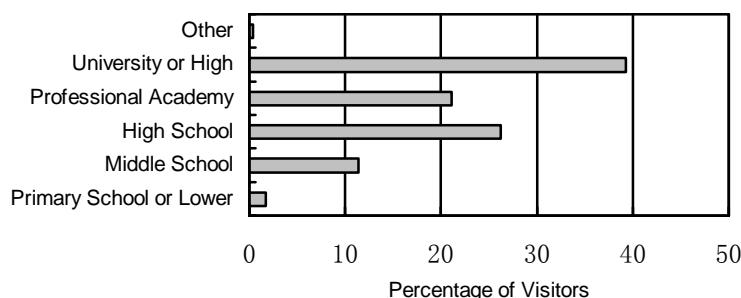
This research proposes that visitors' images of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas are influenced by traditional cultures and so the sources of these images have been further investigated. In the survey, 42.3 per cent of visitors' images were associated with landscape paintings, 19.5 per cent and 14.3 per cent with Suzhou classical landscape gardens, and only 5.7 per cent and 2.7 per cent associated these nature-dominated areas with wild, remote and dangerous places. The survey indicated that visitors are strongly influenced by Traditional Chinese landscape cultures. Their associations for these nature dominated areas are very different from Western ideas of wilderness (Figure 4.9).



37 missing cases; 941 valid cases

Figure 4.9 Visitors' Associations with Scenic and Historic Interest

Visitors' educational backgrounds were also investigated. It was found that most visitors to Scenic and Historic Areas are highly educated (Figure 4.10). Only 1.7 per cent of visitors' educational backgrounds were primary school level or below. According to China's educational requirements, traditional landscape literature is taught from primary school to university and now they even begin in kindergarten. Investigations indicate that traditional cultural landscape achievements have a great influence on the visitors. Famous mountains, lakes and scenery-like paintings are the two most important images of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas.



27 missing cases; 951 valid cases

Figure 4.10 Visitors' education backgrounds

### **Motivations for Visiting Scenic and Historic Interest Areas**

To meet visitor's needs and provide high quality recreational experiences is one of two missions for national parks around the world. An investigation of visitor's motivations is important for resource managers to understand the value of the resources and to provide appropriate tourism products to meet visitors' needs.

- **Being relaxed in Nature**

Surveys and interviews indicate that the most important motivation for tourists is relaxation, which is much simpler than expected (Table 4.1). The important reasons which were assumed to motivate tourists, such as to learn about history, culture and science, are very much under-valued by the tourists. The influence of history on the visitors seems only to affect their choice of destination. This is driven by the fame of the destinations which has grown through history. Most of the visitors came to visit to “be relaxed in nature”, “change environment”, “leave tension and pressure”, “be away from city noise and pollution” and “breathe in nature”. The wish to be healthy is important. Some office workers complained: “My life is in air-conditioning all the time. I can’t even tell the difference between day and night, summer and winter, sunny or rainy days. It is very unhealthy”. “I just want to come out and breathe fresh air and smell the grass. It’s so simple”. This simple motivation fits in with visitors’ expressed ecological requirements of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas explored before. Different from other relaxing recreations, this pursuit of healthy relaxation is accompanied by the enjoyment of scenic and cultural Interest sightseeing in nature. Sightseeing is still important and is listed as the second motivation.

Table 4.1 Visitors’ general motivations

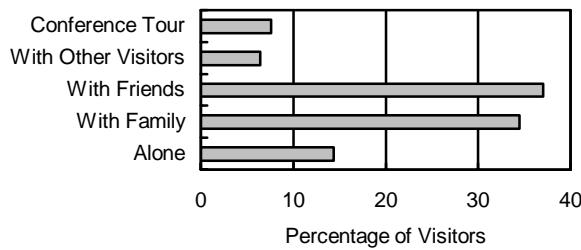
Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
Sightseeing of Interests	1	191	23.0	35.8
Being Relaxed in Nature	2	349	41.9	65.4
Religious Purposes	3	7	.8	1.3
Risk	4	28	3.4	5.2
Social Communication	5	37	4.4	6.9
Knowledge of History	6	51	6.1	9.6
Natural Sciences	7	63	7.6	11.8
Conference Tour	8	33	4.0	6.2
For Its Reputation	9	73	8.8	13.7
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total responses	832	100.0		155.8

25 missing cases; 534 valid cases

- **Gatherings with family and friends**

Another important reason for travel and visits is to be with friends and family members. This is a great difference from ancient China. Modern life has not only changed the rhythm of people’s lives, but it has also changed the structure of Chinese families. Traditionally the Chinese lived in big families, but now they are small. However, the tradition of being close to family and friends has not been

changed in the minds of the people. The intense competition and pressure of work in modern society occupy all of their usual daily time. "There is rarely time to be with friends and with family, and even no time to play with the children". Vacations and holidays become the 'only good opportunities for families to get together and to maintain friendships'. In the survey, 37 per cent of visitors travelled with friends and 34.5 per cent with their families. Travelling together becomes a chance to express love for family and friends and for physical and psychological recovery (Figure 4.11).



41 missing cases; 937 valid cases

Figure 4.11 Visitors' companions

Even in Wudang, a typical cultural heritage site, visitors still come mainly for relaxation and getting together, rather than cultural or religious purposes. The survey indicates that Wudang is valued more as a natural recreational destination than for its cultural values. Although it is still famous for sacred Daoism, its main functions have changed. Visitors' pursuit of culture is not obvious. Tourists feel that life "is tiring enough from day to day. I just want to be relaxed, mentally and physically". About culture they say, "If there are some cultural things to see, it would be good and can add some colour to the visit, but if not, that's fine. It's enough to appreciate such beautiful nature and breathe such fresh air". When visitors were further asked in interviews if they acknowledge the value of the ancient buildings, most of them said that "they must be valuable because they are world heritages" and now they are interested in seeing "what world heritages are". It was observed that most of the visitors walked away when tourist guides were explaining the values and histories of the buildings. They were busy taking pictures for each other.

Determining the visitors' motivations is important for the research. They show their changes in perspective and their new behaviour indicates a preference for nature. It also indicates a mixture of modern and post-modern tourism characteristics that will be explored in later chapters (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Motivations of visitors to Wudang

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
Being Relaxed in Nature	1	151	29.3	37.1
Appreciate Cultural Heritages	2	95	18.4	23.3
On vacation with Friends	3	122	23.7	30.0
Pilgrimage	4	41	8.0	10.1
For its Reputation	5	50	9.7	12.3
For Gongfu	6	5	1.0	1.2
Religious Culture	7	17	3.3	4.2
Other	8	34	6.6	8.4
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total responses	515	100.0	126.5	

12 missing cases; 407 valid cases

### **Preferences of the Tourists**

The perspectives and motivations for Scenic and Historic Interest Areas determine how visitors behave. Visitors' preferences for transport, accommodation, recreational activities and attitudes to locals have been investigated. These preferences normally greatly influence the input of the tourism facility to the sites and cultural landscapes. In recent years, almost all criticisms of the scenic areas have been related to tourism facilities, such as cable cars, hotels and restaurants. All of these are related to visitors' preferences. Resource managers are always criticised for satisfying visitors' needs rather than resource management. From the investigation into preferences, it is confirmed that visitors' comfort and pleasure come first in management.

- **Transportation and Circulation Systems**

Transportation is the most important infrastructure in today's busy China. "Build roads to be rich" is a well-known slogan. Wudang's tourism is undeveloped because it is located in the middle of China and it is hard to access from rich coastal areas. In order to attract rich and busy visitors, it is necessary to build an airport. Within the Scenic areas, efficient transportation is necessary for effective site management. Many Scenic and Historic Interest Areas are building high-speed cable cars to access the most important scenic spots to meet the busy visitors' needs, although the construction of cable cars in natural areas is hotly debated in China due to visual and ecological impacts, as mentioned regarding Wulingyuan. But the construction of cable cars continues because of their efficiency, convenience and high profits.

The main circulation systems in China are walking, shuttle buses and cable cars. From case studies it has been found that walking is still the visitors' favourite. In Wudang, visitors showed little interest in shuttle buses because "they lack human character", although they are the transport system most recommended by the government (Table 4.3). In Jiuzhaigou, almost no visitors are satisfied with the shuttle buses. Everyone hurries to catch the shuttle buses to the next scenic spot and worries about the last shuttle bus to take them out of the valley before it gets dark. Busy visitors from cities are fond of walking and taking cable cars, or comfortable small vehicles which can save a lot of time for natural enjoyment while walking. In contrast, the elderly and young students prefer cheaper and safer transportation. They care about saving money more than time.

Normally cable cars make a lot of profit. Since the cable car was built in 1997 in Wudang, it has made huge profits, even while total tourism income declined because tourists reduced their stays. The visitors head straight to the highest peak, Golden Shrine (the icon of Wudang), and leave by cable car. It was observed that people will queue for the cable car for more than one hour and take another twenty minutes to the top, although the traditional hiking routes built in the Ming and Qing Dynasties provide much more beautiful natural and cultural scenery. Very few visitors take these routes because it takes at least three hours to climb to the top. Surveys and observations indicate that visitors like walking, but do not like hiking far because "it is too exhausting". It seems the visitors are very 'busy' and 'lazy' except

Table 4.3 Preference of transportation of the visitors to Wudang

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
Shuttle Bus	1	68	15.4	18.3
Small Scenic Van	2	83	18.8	22.4
Bicycle	3	27	6.1	7.3
Walk	4	148	33.5	39.9
Featured Transportation	5	54	12.2	14.6
Cable Car	6	62	14.0	16.4
	-----	-----	-----	-----
	Total responses	442	100.0	119.1

48 missing cases; 371 valid cases

students and the elderly who have plenty of time. Most visitors are still satisfied with their short visit because now they can tell others "I have been to Wudang and I can show you pictures". In order to meet visitors' needs, the site managers are trying to construct more efficient and comfortable transportation.

- **Activities**

Although many visitors' initial motivations are to 'breathe fresh air', they prefer to have some additional recreational activities besides lazily walking and sightseeing, especially in those areas where natural scenery is not striking enough. They like to do something they are familiar with and enjoy. Boating, picnicking and performances are welcome recreational programs. In general, compared with Western tourists, Chinese tourists prefer more passive activities. Visitors show little interest in active programs such as risk exploration, hunting, riding, and so on. The survey showed once again that mass tourists do not like historical cultural monuments or relic sites (Table 4.4, Table 4.5).

To meet these needs in Wudang, dams have been built to form lakes for boating in the valleys just next to the ancient buildings. A park was built along the valley stream and was planted with many garden flowers and even monkeys have been imported to attract the visitors. The recreational programs in these natural areas are not too different from those of urban parks.

One notable thing is that although Wudang is famous for its cultural building complex, visitors to Wudang did not show much interest in this cultural relic and it was only 1 per cent higher than the general cultural preferences of visitors surveyed on the train. Although food was not included in the survey, from observation it is clear that eating is important everywhere. Chinese food is famous around the world and food culture has a long history. In China, business and friendships are all connected to food. Tourism is the same. Visitors come for pleasant things and beautiful food is one of the very things they are after. Eco-tourism means eco-food too. Wild vegetables, wild animals and wild fish are all favourites. Many villagers live on these wild resources. Their restaurants always do good business if they are allowed to run them. In Wudang, the temples provide special Daoist food and the locals make delicious mountain food. The artistry of the foods is very impressive.

However, Jiazhaigou seems to be ignoring tourists' preferences. Almost no other recreational activities are allowed within the area except sightseeing. There is only one restaurant to serve fast food. All other activities which were allowed before, such as riding, boating and eating, are prohibited now. Visitors are only allowed to get on and off the shuttle buses, walk to the scenic spots and take pictures. This makes Jiazhaigou very different from the other traditional Scenic areas and the visitors feel they are "not in China" because "it is too efficient and clean", which does

not fit traditional rhythms and habits. The atmosphere of ordinary leisure is not observed in Jiazhaigou, instead, there is sense of tension because everyone is driven by timetables.

Table 4.4 General preferences for activities of visitors in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas

Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
Sightseeing	1	293	27.5	54.7
Boating	2	95	8.9	17.7
Walking	3	173	16.2	32.3
Camping	4	116	10.9	21.6
Monuments and relics	5	70	6.6	12.3
Riding	6	52	4.9	9.7
Hunting	7	28	2.6	5.2
Shopping	8	38	3.6	7.1
Hiking	9	24	2.2	4.5
Photographing	10	139	13.0	25.9
Risk Exploration	11	39	3.7	7.3
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total responses	515	100.0		126.5
23 missing cases; 536 valid cases				

Table 4.5 Preferences for activities of visitors to Wudang

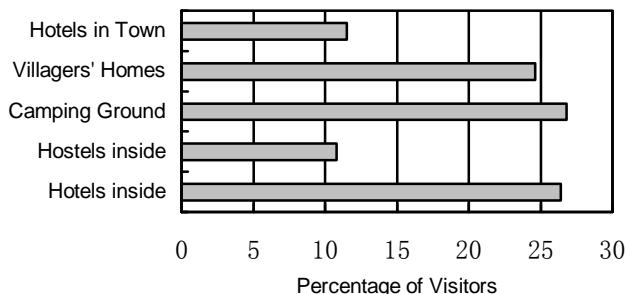
Category label	Code	Count	Pct of Responses	Pct of Cases
Sightseeing	1	227	36.8	55.2
Boating	2	25	4.1	6.1
Walking	3	154	25.0	37.5
Camping	4	21	3.4	5.1
Monuments and relics	5	47	7.6	11.4
Riding	6	14	2.3	3.4
Hunting	7	8	1.3	1.9
Shopping	8	7	1.1	1.7
Hiking	9	27	4.4	6.6
Photographing	10	61	9.9	14.8
Risk Exploration	11	26	4.2	6.3
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total responses	617	100.0		150.1
8 missing cases; 411 valid cases				

#### • Accommodation

Recently, influenced by the Jiuzhaigou model, Scenic and Historic Interest Areas have been recommended to move all hotels outside to control ecological impacts. In Wudang, there are still more than 2000 hotel beds concentrated on the tops of

mountains without any facilities to deal with their pollution. The surveys show that visitors have a strong preference to live inside the site. Nearly 90 per cent of visitors would like to live in the areas to achieve the best natural experiences. Many visitors think that "It is ridiculous to live in a town so far away from the city". "Hotel pollution is a management and planning problem. That is nothing to do with us".

In China, traditionally there are no camping grounds in natural areas like in the West. Mostly, when it is mentioned it means picnicking. Camping is related to wild nature and means risk-taking, which is unsafe. Interestingly, among those 90 per cent of visitors who prefer to live inside the areas, 26.8 per cent of visitors would prefer camping. Camping is becoming a new tourism tendency in China (Figure 4.12). From this investigation, camping was the first choice for accommodation ahead of hotels and village homes. It seems that attitudes to nature have changed a little from a conservative view to a more open one which looks forward to some stimulation and challenges. However, the survey also indicates that these choices were made by the young generation. Most visitors still chose comfortable hotels with facilities. Villagers' B&Bs are welcomed for their low prices, experiences of local customs and especially for their "formal local food". In recent years, the local people have been providing better quality B&B than before and attract more visitors from cities to experience 'real country life'. The theme tour "Enjoyment in peasant's homes" is very popular.



43 missing cases; 935 valid cases

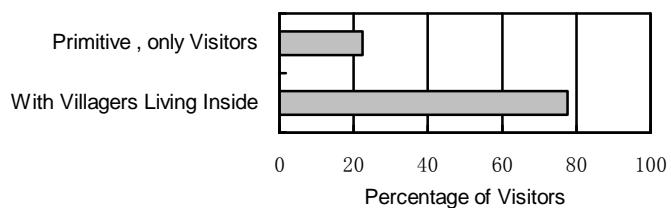
Figure 4.12 Visitors' preferences of accommodation

### **Attitude to the villagers**

The research investigated visitors' attitudes to villagers because this relates to the removal of the villagers from sites. One of the most frequent reasons for removal used by local government managers is that visitors do not like the villagers. They

say villagers and visitors cannot be friendly and villagers' poor living conditions will upset visitors' pleasant experiences.

From the accommodation preference survey, it is very clear that visitors are not prejudiced against the villagers and in fact it is just the opposite, 77.6 per cent of visitors prefer villagers to live in the mountains because "they make the mountains lively" and full of pastoral atmosphere (Figure 4.13). They do not think that the local houses are "scars" on beautiful nature. They are interested in and curious about every local thing from the villagers, such as food, handcrafts, mountain medicine and customs. The only thing that visitors complain about is that the villagers' attitudes are becoming more commercial than before and many good qualities such as simplicity, sincerity and kindness are disappearing.



21 missing cases; 957 valid cases

Figure 4.13 Visitors' attitudes to the local villagers

In conclusion, no excuse for removal could be established. The reasons for removal will be further explored in the next chapter.

#### 4.3.2 Local Managers' Perspectives and Expectations

##### Management of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas: Dilemmas

Compared with the relaxation and pleasure of visitors, the managers are heavily burdened. They have worries and misgivings about resource management and local development. There are two missions for management of national parks in developed Western countries: resource protection and recreational experiences (VERP, see chapter 2). However, in China, the missions of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas include developing the local economy as well as these two missions, so management is much harder than it is in the West although these missions are also important in tourism development in declining industrial areas in many Western countries such as in UK, USA and Australia.

Although the management of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas is monitored and supervised by the State Construction Ministry, daily resource management is undertaken by local governments. However, local governments get little financial aid from the central government. The amount of financial aid from the central government for National Scenic and Historic Interest Areas is about 10 million RBM per year for each site, which is only enough for building a toilet. The lack of financial support makes local governments unable to act on resource management. In the Wudang case, although the site gets another 1 million RBM annually from the provincial government, it still means an utterly inadequate budget for preservation of 530,000 square kilometres of ancient buildings. Crumbling buildings are seen everywhere. Where to get the money is a big problem for the local government. Being entrusted to manage national heritage with little financial support is the constant dilemma for the locals.

#### **Scenic and Historic Interest Areas as Resources for Local Economical Development**

Most importantly, the local government has an essential mission to enhance the local economy to get rid of poverty and improve local people's lives. This needs resources to support development. In China, most Scenic and Historic Interest Areas are located in remote areas. Inner parts of these areas are hard to access because of their geological conditions and because their economies are much less developed than coastal areas. Lacking facilities, resources and financial investment, the only resources they can rely on are provided by the land. Natural products are the only available resources and this primitive mode of life is vividly described as to "Eat mountains and drink waters". It is also the traditional model for local peasants. Natural resource use typically includes logging, farming and mining.

In China, scenic landscape resources are classified as one of the ten non-renewable national resources and are not allowed for commercial development use. In reality, the conflicts over use or conservation of these resources have never stopped. Local managers normally regard improvement of the local economy as their first priority. They take it for granted that they should use natural resources for local development. As already mentioned, in Jiuzhaigou extensive logging has resulted in lakes drying up and the disappearance of the giant panda. Similar things have happened in Wudang. Although logging has been forbidden in the Wudang Mountains since the Ming Dynasty, recent extensive logging has sacrificed almost 20 square metres of forest for construction of huge projects—reservoirs, railways and an automobile

factory in the 1960s (Zhan and Li 2004). Now, even with its double crown of World Heritage and National Scenic and Historic Area, an annual 15 hectares of forest is cut to maintain the basic lives of the forest workers.

The people's poor lives and the state of conservation in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas have been described as "begging with a golden bowl" (Ding 1994). However, this model is not workable any more in today's market-economy China. "It is not practical to preserve natural resources when people are starving", most local managers say: "We must use the resources of Wudang as they are the only resources we have."

### **Temptation of Income from Tourism**

"To use the resources" is definitely the attitude of the local government. The only concern is how to use these resources and this is debatable. Before mass tourism, income from tourism was not an obvious contributor and could not support the local economy. With the increase in mass tourism, use of heritage resources for tourism has come to be seen as a higher use of resources than traditional primitive logging and farming. Nowadays, heritage tourism is 'super hot' in China and World Heritage status is a golden crown for tourist destinations. In interviews, the following names and figures were quoted many times for media reports (XHN 2003) by the local government managers:

*Pingyao ancient city, World Cultural Heritage, tourist ticket income was 820,000 RBM in 1996 before it was designated and rose to 47.6 million RBM in 2004 after designation. It was a 58 times increase.*

*Jiuzhaigou's ticket income in 2004 was 240 million RBM. Peasants' income increased from an annual 390 RBM in 1982 to 14200 RBM in 2005, the highest in Sichuan province.*

*Huangshan's (Yellow Mountain) ticket income increased from a few million RBM to 200 million RBM.*

All these statistics indicate the economically successful use of heritage resources. Compared with these 'great achievements' of heritage sites, Wudang has not matched its expectations. As an early designated world heritage site, it has not created a corresponding contribution to the local economy. Visits and tourism income have remained almost the same as ten years ago at only about one-tenth of the above sites. In 2004, Wudang's ticket income was 20 million, only 10 per cent of Jiuzhaigou's. Essentially, Wudang does not only have an economic task to perform for the local area; it also must contribute the whole province. "There is a big gap

between its world heritage position and the economic expectations of the provincial government and people" (Chen 2003). In the Hubei provincial tourism blueprint, Wudang is counted as a leader with two mountains (Wudang and Shennong) and one river (Yangtze). In this respect, Wudang's inactivity has restricted the development of the whole of provincial tourism and attracted severe criticism from the provincial government.

In 2002, it was revealed that the Wudang mountains would be sold for 400 million RBM, although finally it was designated only for commercial speculation and it seems that the sale of all of the mountains was not going to occur. However, this was still criticised by the media. In response, the local government explained that this was a strategy called "enhancing the local economy through projects" to attract tourism investment. "We have to do that, otherwise how can we get money for development?" Managers stated, "We have to use our resources to gather the initial start-up money for constructions". "We didn't sell national lands to private commercial companies. We only cooperated with the developers and rented the right to use the land ". Normally, when aiming to enhance the local economy, those who solicit business for tourism projects are very weak in producing scientific, ecological and cultural feasibility studies. Tourism developers can easily get access to prime land in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas at very low cost (this low cost is still a large income for local governments). The criticism has been made that "such projects, which are a disguised form of sale of lands, make exchanges between local governments and developers more secret and prone open to cheating" (CCN 2002). In other words, they are involved in selling national heritage lands to private enterprises for huge profits, which is forbidden by the central government.

However, in Wudang interviews the local government managers' responses are amazingly unanimous. "We are too conservative in resource use. We are too slow in policy making. If we were as audacious as Jiuzhaigou or Wulingyuan, we would not be in such passive position today". In local managers' eyes, economic failure should be attributed to the slow growth of commercial tourism in these heritage resource areas. At this point, the central government's preservation policies are in conflict with local economic pursuits. Local governments have explained, "We do not want to be starving." Local governments are looking for any loopholes in the policies of the central government to try to maximise benefits for locals.

### **Villagers as Obstacles to Development**

It is debateable who will benefit from local government policies. Interviews in Wudang indicate that there is a severe conflict between the local government and villagers. Local managers are very critical of villagers who are living on the site. "Their short term tourism pursuits have severely damaged long term management," one official said. "They do not know how to preserve the land and do not know how to link their benefits to management of the entire resource". When managers were asked how they would deal with the villagers, most of them firmly expressed the opinion that the best way is to move them out. "They are destroyers of management policies", complained one official. "They are farming in the mountain terraces, using timber, producing pollution and chasing visitors for tourism business regardless of management policies. It would be much easier to manage the land without the villagers". The managers also feel ashamed to show villagers' activities, thoughts and living conditions to outsiders because they are backward aspects of the area and make the local government lose face.

The interview below is very thought-provoking. The interviewee is a young on-site manager. He is from a peasant family, but he is not local. He also believes it is best to move the villagers out.

"*What do you think the most difficult thing in on-site management is?*"

"*To manage the villagers. If they leave, we'll make great improvements.*"

"*Why?*"

"*They are too old-fashioned. They hardly cooperate with us. They can't understand the situation and they don't follow policies.*"

"*Where are your parents and your grandparents?*"

"*They still live in the mountains.*"

"*How old are your grandparents?*"

"*They are over eighty year old.*"

"*Are they happy with their peasant lives?*"

"*Yes, they have been peasants all their lives. They are used to that*" (smile).

"*If the mountain where they live in was designated as a heritage area and all the people living there had to be moved out, what would you do? Would you support that?*"

"*Of course, I would. I would persuade them to move here to live with me (in town). We should obey policies and sometimes sacrifice is necessary.*"

"*Sacrifice? Do you think they would come to live with you and be happy with town life?*"

"*I'm not sure, but I would try my best,*" said the young man, his face full of sincerity...

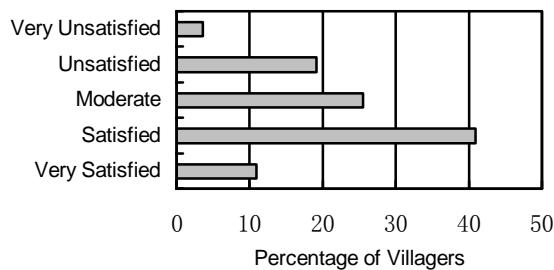
This young man believes that the local villagers are somewhat ashamed of their rural life and that town life is better than country life. But it is also obvious that he is not confident whether his grandparents would come to live with him and would be happy with the new life. He only mentioned the habits and emotions of life on the land, but are there other reasons that he knows of, but which he did not like to

mention? The interviews with the villagers below include those things which he might not like to mention as a manager.

#### 4.3.3 Local Villagers' Perspectives

In Wudang, 111 villagers from 111 families in seven villages located in the core of the preserved area were surveyed and interviewed (see questionnaire in Appendix F). This accounts for about one fourth of the families in this area. Their attitudes to the land where they live and how they value the land are in conflict with others. This is the focus of this research.

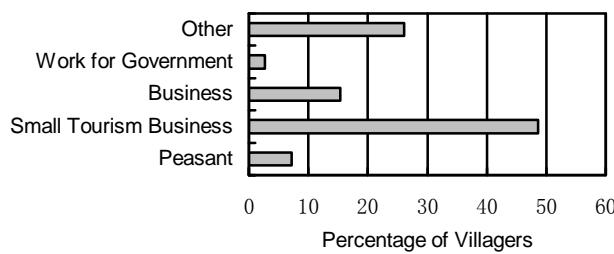
##### A Homeland Perspective: beyond beauty



5 missing cases; 106 valid cases

Figure 4.14 Villagers' satisfaction ratings for life in Wudang

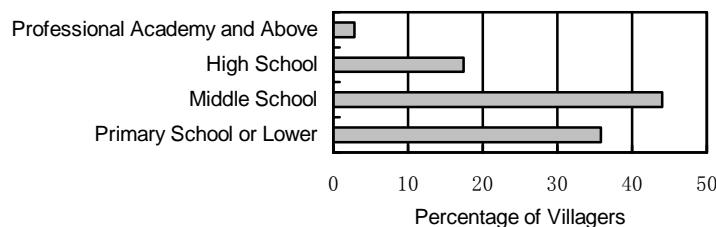
86.5 per cent of the interviewees have been living on the land and have been peasants for generations, while 13.4 per cent are from outside. About half the villagers are satisfied with their present lives. The policy of "Return terraces to the forest" has been applied since 1998 with compensation from the central government and now it is not permitted to farm on slopes steeper than a 25 per cent gradient. Even so, the survey indicated that most villagers are happy with their onsite lives (Figure 4.14). 22.7 per cent of villagers are unsatisfied with their lives, mostly because of their difficult relationship with the local government regarding tourism. The survey indicates that most of the villagers run small tourism businesses and only very few continue their traditional agricultural lives (Figure 4.15). The others mainly plant fruit trees. The traditional tight relationship with the land has been changed. Most of the villagers are concerned about their futures and worry very much that one day they might be obliged to leave the land. Most of their conflicts with the managers are due to this.



8 missing cases; 103 valid cases

Figure 4.15 Villagers' income sources in Wudang

"It is my home, I only know this land and for generations we have lived here. What should I live on if I leave the land?" "We are happy Wudang is more famous than before and more visitors come so that we have more opportunities to earn money". Surveys and interviews indicate that the villagers' educational backgrounds are much lower than the visitors. Most of them do not have any special skills other than farming (Figure 4.16). Once leaving the land, most young men can only be labourers, working in such low-paid jobs as construction work in the towns, while the elderly will lose all income. The local villagers also expressed their most simple emotions about the land: "A golden home or a silver home are not better than my straw home", which is also a Chinese idiom. They love their homes better than any other place.



5 missing cases; 106 valid cases

Figure 4.16 Villagers' educational backgrounds in Wudang

Traditionally the villagers supported themselves from the land. They grew rice or tea in the mountains (Figure 4.17). The villagers take it for granted that the mountains, valleys and rivers are an organic part of their ordinary lives, their external homes. Mountains and lakes all have their functions and it is natural to use them. "Otherwise, what is the use of them?" "Sightseeing? That can't fill your stomach!" The visitors are often laughed at by the villagers. They do not realise how beautiful the mountains and lakes they see every day are. The only thing they strongly feel is that this place is different from the cities. The air is much fresher and the mountain is

greener, and these are good for long life, so they feel relaxed within these mountains. They have their own emotional attachments to the land that are not easily understood by outsiders. Traditionally, they expected to obtain food from the land, but tourism is changing their minds. The great interest visitors show in natural features makes them curious and to re-evaluate familiar things. When the visitors are enjoying the scenery, the villagers curiously observe these 'strange outsiders'.



Figure 4.17 Traditional tea terrace in Wudang

### **Living with Heritage**

Villagers' attitudes to natural or cultural heritage vary from site to site. Not all heritage values for mountains, lakes and buildings are valued by the villagers. In Wudang, the villagers live with these buildings without being aware of their historic, artistic, religious, philosophical or scientific value (Figure 4.18). They have been protecting these buildings from forest fires since historic times but, at the same time, they unconsciously use and destroy these buildings, regardless of their original religious functions. Some of the villagers only moved out of the temples several years ago. Some of them built their new houses on the sites of ancient relics by using the bricks and stones of the temples without any idea of heritage conservation. They are not religious and most of them are atheists, so they do not feel humble about these great religious temples. They live with them without feeling any self-abasement. Their hearts are free and not bounded by history or religion.

Occasionally they come to the temples to pray for their safety or for good harvests. They give all their attention to the land, weather, water, rain, fog, and so on. All of these things relate to their harvests and their daily lives. They have their own languages, legends and myths of the mountains and lakes. Onsite, children play on the sites of relics without any worries. Local guides led us to places deep in the mountains that are not recorded by any government. Their knowledge of the mountains reminded us that they are the masters and we are guests.



Figure 4.18 Living with history in Wudang

In Jiuzhaigou the Tibetan people believed that there were gods in charge of the mountains, lakes, forests and animals, and the gods were looking after them. They lived in this rich and extraordinarily beautiful land for thousand of years and had great religious respect for the mountains and lakes. They believed that the land was a gift of the gods and any blasphemy would be punished. Also, they asked no more than food from the land and protected it with their beautiful philosophies. Their dream-like world continued its story until the Han arrived and everything changed. Just the same as the Wudang villagers, they did not know they were living with heritages until they were told the entire environment where they live is a heritage site. It is now a pristine paradise. They are not allowed to touch it any more and there is no evidence to indicate that they once lived on it.

### **Leaving the Land: Losses or Opportunities?**

More and more villagers who traditionally lived on the land are leaving, mostly because of local government removal policies. The village survey in Wudang was done in March 2004, before the government's removal of the core villagers. In May, a series of removal policies were drawn up without consulting with the planning team. By the end of June 2006, 205 families and 726 villagers had been moved out of the core site.

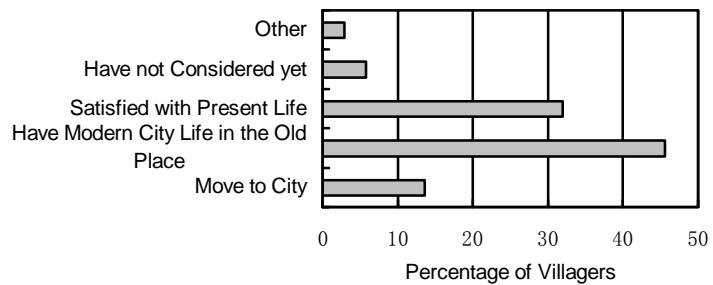
77 per cent of interviewed villagers do not want to leave the land. The number declines to 55.7 per cent if there is enough government compensation. 91.8 per cent of villagers think there will be economical loss if they move out of the site. Interviews indicate that the most important reasons for unwillingness to move are income worries and emotional attachment to the land. "Why does the government say we are destroying the environment"? "We have been here for generations, earlier than the establishment of the Scenic Area". "There are already many management policies and we will obey them, so why should we leave"? "I just do not want to leave home". "What shall I live on if I leave here"? These are the most frequent arguments and questions from the villagers.

In the investigation, it was found that the government compensation was not enough for the villagers to move from the mountains and settle in new homes in towns. The 'rich' among them can only afford to buy some land and cannot afford to build houses any more. Most of them cannot afford land and have to live with their relatives. Some families even moved into a broken-down abandoned school in the mountains where four families were living in one room and the living conditions were very poor. "I grew vegetables in the mountains and never worried about food before, but now I am counting money to buy vegetables instead of meat to save money everyday because I had no money left after buying the land for housing", one said sadly. "Now I don't have a place to live, no land to grow food on. How can I survive in the future?" "We didn't expect that we would have such a large loss and so many problems with our lives after moving. We have to ask for more compensation."

Wulingyuan had a similar fate. 546 families were scheduled to be moved out of the core site from 2001 to 2003 and in 2006, when we visited the site, there were only a few of them left. Compared with Wulingyuan and Wudang, Jiuzhaigou has been lucky because it is a minority settlement and they are protected by special policies in China. So the Tibetans are still living in this area but they are not allowed to farm

and graze, or run home businesses on the site any more. Every year they can get a lot of compensation from the administration's tourism income, which means they can have much better lives than the other villagers, even if they just rest at home. They are very lucky compared with the villagers in other Scenic and Historic Interest Areas. At least they do not need to resettle.

However, not all villagers would like to live on the land all their lives, especially the younger generation. As an historical agricultural community, farmers' incomes have always been the lowest. Each year large numbers of farmers leave their land and their families to come to the developed east-coast cities to look for jobs, such as construction work, home service and work in those factories where high education is not required. In Wudang, about 13.6 per cent of villagers expressed their wish to leave the land, to leave their traditional life style and become city people, which means higher income and higher quality of life. 45.6 per cent of villagers' ideal is to have a modern life on the same land (Figure 4.19).



3 missing cases; 108 valid cases

Figure 4.19 Villagers' ideal life hopes in Wudang

Onsite, the changes for the locals are obvious. Since the policy of 'Return lands to the forest', more villagers have turned to the tourism business and plant fruit trees to make more money. Now it is easy to distinguish those who run tourism businesses from the farmers because of their clothes, language and houses. The belongings of these people are much closer to city standards than traditional styles. The villagers are proud of these changes and pursue them. They know that traditional farming did not bring them wealth and that it is the visitors who bring them money. At this point, the villagers are anxious to be close to the visitors to realise their dreams. To remove the villagers means cutting off both their traditional income sources and their new income sources. There will be always hope or opportunities if they remain on site.

### **Fighting with the Local Government**

The removals in Wudang resulted in a big fight between local villagers and the government. Representatives of the villagers went to the State Construction Ministry to lodge a complaint against the local government after they failed in their negotiations with them. They came back with instructions from the Construction Ministry that the local government “must ensure that the villagers’ living standards are not lower than before removal.” The local government finally gave in and gave more compensation to the villagers. However, the fight did not end because most of those who were removed are still worrying about their future income. Now no onsite villagers are willing to move out and the removal policies have become stuck at the application stage.

In Wudang the remaining villagers are not free as they were before to carry out tourism business on site. Before they could freely run their small businesses in their homes scattered in the mountains, but now they are concentrated in assigned places. The government administration built shops and sold or rented them to the villagers. The administration even wholesales the souvenirs to the villagers. Some villagers had to move their whole family to live in the shop and villagers who live far from the visitors have not been able to benefit from tourism. As a result, 55.7 per cent of villagers are not satisfied with the government’s management policies. It is popularly thought by the villagers that the management policies are “weapons” and the government is using these policies for its own benefit. There is a huge gap in communications and understanding between the government and local villagers.

Even the lucky Jiuzhaigou villagers are not satisfied because they think the government policies are not intended to protect their opportunities. They could have made more money if they had been allowed to run tourism businesses at home. In 2001, the site administration moved all hotels and restaurants out of the site for eco-restoration, including the local villagers’ Bed and Breakfast establishments. The administration encouraged investment in all tourism facilities outside the valley. The management policy also proscribes staying overnight in the valley. If the tourists do finish a tour in one day, they have to leave and come back the next day, which means they need to buy two day-tickets and spend the night in hotels off the site, rather than stay in local’s homes. All these policies greatly increased hotel and ticket income. Local villagers were pushed to compete with commercial tourism and they lost the advantages of their onsite home businesses. Among the more than 100 hotels outside the valley today, only 30 per cent belong to locals (Zhan and Li 2004)

and all of them are low standard because that is the only level they can achieve based on their incomes. In this competition, the Tibetans are also at a disadvantage due to their low educational background. Most of them can only work as cleaners or serve in restaurants and their best hope is to be employed by the administration as tourist guides on the shuttle buses.

#### **4.4 Conclusions**

In this chapter, in the Wudang in-depth case study, and the Jiuzhaigou and Wulingyuan comparative and complementary case studies, visitors' motivations and preferences have been investigated and presented. Further, the values of nature held by the visitors, local government and managers, and local villagers have been investigated.

It has been demonstrated that Scenic and Historic Interest Areas are the most popular destinations for contemporary tourism in China. Also, visitors' images of nature have been deeply influenced by traditional landscape culture. However, visitors' motivations for visiting these areas are very different from their ancestors. Instead of spiritual pursuits in nature, these modern tourists regard these natural areas as places to escape from urban life for physical relaxation. Even if the contemporary visitors are "drowning worries", it is achieved by sensory distraction rather than the deep engagement with nature as the ancient scholars. The contemporary visitors are less interested in serious. Traditional high culture does not dominate these areas any more.

The contemporary views of nature which are held by visitors, local managers and local villagers in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas are totally different and there are social conflicts between these three social groups. Local villagers especially contest the values of nature and of their lands with local managers. The local villagers are experiencing cultural prejudice from local government and face the threat of being moved off their lands. The use of landscape resources by tourism has further deepened these conflicts and exacerbated the intense relationship between social groups. However, the strength of local villagers is growing and they are fighting for their rights.

It has been found that tourism has an extremely powerful influence on Scenic and Historic Interest Areas. All events in these areas now seem related to tourism. Also,

national and local governments have different attitudes to tourism. There are also conflicts between national and international values over heritage management.

The values presented in these case studies are much more complicated than expected, especially as reflected in the planning process of Wudang. When researchers were not involved in real planning cases, their research was more high-culture, or idealistically and scientifically oriented. When the investigations delved further into stakeholder's benefits and rights, the implications of these special land uses became much more social and political. The management and conservation of heritage landscapes have become increasingly dependent on social, economic and environmental aspects. Pressure from human activities, reduced financial and environmental resources, value conflicts between different stakeholders—all these indicate that Scenic and Historic Interest Areas face international — and national — and local — difficulties in heritage landscape management.

To understand the social contexts of these values is essential for this research. None of these questions can be answered without further investigation and interpretation in a dynamic historical context, and this will continue in Chapters 5 and 6. The next chapter will focus on values, comparing values in the past and the present, and identifying linkages with the economy, society and culture in a wide social context.

# **Chapter 5**

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## **Continuities and Discontinuities with Tradition: Themes Emerging from the Case Studies**

## **5.1 Introduction**

Chapter 3 clearly demonstrated that Chinese values of nature have been nurtured over millennia by Chinese philosophies and that natural aesthetics are accessed through humanism. These ideas about nature operate at a deep level of human consciousness. This traditional culture is tightly bound up with the elite world of scholarship and intellectual pursuits. It was this culture which led to the unique cultural characteristics of today's Scenic and Historic Interest Areas and tamed these places, making them highly humanised and far from wild. These areas reflect ancient Chinese culture, philosophy, politics, literature and art, all of which leave their marks on the landscape.

The data analysis of case studies in Chapter 4 indicated that this traditional consistency in cognition of nature has been broken. Conflicting values of nature and contested landscapes have emerged in today's Scenic and Historic Interest Areas. Various contemporary social groups have different values and views of nature which obviously differ from the traditional values. Although today's Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, which are now on the World Heritage List, were historically created and prized by high cultures, they are not dominated by high culture any more. On the contrary, the influence of high culture has been very weak for some time. But, no matter how many changes there are, this research operates under the belief that values are constant social structures and there must be contextual relationships between history and the present, so that changes can be interpreted in a dynamic framework of social change. Thus, this chapter, supported by a retroductive research strategy, will go deeper to locate and interpret these themes in contemporary and historic social and cultural contexts while identifying the themes emerging from the cases. This chapter will be more focused on domestic contexts. International contexts will be explored more in the next chapter.

This chapter, based on data analysis from Chapter 4, aims to answer the following sub-research questions: "What are contemporary themes for values of nature?", "What are the relationships between traditional themes and contemporary themes?", "What are the social and cultural mechanisms underpinning these changing values?", and "What are the conflicts and contests between these values?"

Researching these questions enables three vital objectives to be reached, namely:

1. to generate the cultural themes emerging from case studies;

2. to identify which themes are consistent with traditional values and which themes are new, or conflict with traditional values; and
3. to explore the changes between traditional themes and contemporary themes, and interpret these changes in a contemporary social, political, economic and cultural context while generating themes.

## **5.2 Inherited from History: Themes Related to Tradition**

There is a Chinese idiom called *Shui Di Shi Chuan* (水滴石穿), which says that dripping water can wear through rocks, symbolising the power of constant effort accumulated day by day. Normally this power is very weak at the beginning and may not be easily perceived, or may even be ignored. Traditional Chinese culture has this power. Culture is life style and culture is embedded in details of life (Yang and Han 2002; Xu 1996). From the case studies, it was found that the ways of thinking about and seeing landscapes still have deep relationships with tradition. The influence of traditional culture is profound and tradition has been usually inherited unconsciously. In general, there are five themes relating to Chinese traditions that have been identified in this research: first, perspectives of nature are strongly aesthetics-based in natural areas; second, nature is regarded as an enjoyable extension of home and visitors enjoy human activities; third, nature is for human beings to live in, but the landscapes of local settlements are under-valued; fourth, constructions are common and acceptable organic parts of natural places and need to be built to attract visitors, or provide facilities to offer comfortable and enjoyable pursuits for tourists; fifth, the contemporary Chinese lack of scientific awareness is similar to their ancestors'. The five identified themes are explained in more detail below.

### **5.2.1 The Aesthetic Orientation: Pursuing Natural Beauty**

The influence of the traditional Chinese achievement of *Shanshui* (山水) is profound and is strongly demonstrated in the case studies. Almost all visitors know about traditional landscape poems, landscape gardens and landscape paintings at some level and they hold amazingly identical views that show traditional aesthetic values regarding nature. The traditional theme of *Shanshui*, water and mountains, is an icon of nature. The most impressive aesthetic image received from the Chinese ancestors is that nature should have extraordinarily beautiful waters and mountains.

Following this principle, today's remarkable Scenic and Historic Interest Areas firstly feature *Shanshui* mountains and water with aesthetic values. The three presented

cases are evidence. In tourists' eyes, Wudang is beautiful firstly because it is a Daoist sacred mountain. *Feng Shui* (风水) is an important component of Daoist beliefs and practice and Wudang embodies many significant aspects of *Feng Shui*. So Wudang must be a beautiful natural area and it is also a fairyland, because only in such a wonderland are immortals found. In Wudang, contemporary visitors are not attracted by the ancient relics, but they are all absorbed in the beauty of nature. Interestingly, compared with Wudang, Jiuzhaigou and Wulingyuan are rather new Scenic and Historic Interest Areas sites that were first recorded in literature more than a thousand years later than Wudang. But they soon became as famous as Wudang. How could they achieve that fame? At first glance, one might think that a historical background is not valuable at all. But when we explore more deeply, we find that Jiuzhaigou and Wulingyuan became famous not because they have great potential to be culturally significant places, but because they fit the typical traditional Chinese cultural and aesthetic images of nature: Jiuzhaigou has remarkable bodies of water and Wulingyuan has great mountains, and both are qualified as World Heritage sites. This gives these two new sites the potential to compete with the older sites. So essentially they have the same traditional cultural foundation as Wudang. Additionally, the construction of these two new sites involved great contemporary social, economic and cultural changes, which offered a chance to construct a new order of landscape based on contemporary values. Indeed, the traditional order has been re-constructed. Today, the traditional descriptions in ancient poems such as "Guilin's Waters Beats All Others in the World", "Wuyue (five top mountains in China) Dwarfs All the Mountains But Huangshan Dwarfs Wuyue", are being replaced by tourist promotion slogans such as "Back from Jiuzhaigou Never Look for Water Again" and "Back from Wulingyuan Never Visit Mountains Any More". Today, the new crown of World Natural Heritage is held by Jiazhaiogou's lakes and Wulingyuan's mountains, so they have become the most valuable attractions for visitors.

Today, *Shanshui* is such an important theme that in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, no matter how many cultural attractions there are, if there is no beautiful *Shanshui* landscape, it is hard to attract Chinese visitors. In contrast, a natural area which has a beautiful *Shanshui* landscape can still become a very popular tourism destination, even if there are not many cultural attractions. Of course in China there is no pristine land without cultural attachments. Especially in the Changjiang (长江, also known as the Yangtze River) delta area, and the ancient Wu (吴) and Yue (越)

regions, where the ancient high culture of scholars was concentrated, almost every river and mountain has been depicted and described in numerous ancient landscape paintings and poems. Today this region represents the most elegant poetic images of Chinese landscape and attracts numerous visitors from all over China. The famous West Lake (西湖) in Hangzhou (杭州) and the ancient private gardens along Tai Lake (太湖) in Suzhou (苏州) are typical of these cultural *Shanshui*.

Today's ongoing popular theme of *Shanshui* and related aesthetic pursuits are strongly influenced by traditional cultural achievements and benefit from their broad promotion throughout history. Although landscape aesthetics and other arts, such as landscape painting, landscape literature and landscape gardens, were initially created by the high culture of ancient scholars, since the Song Dynasty when landscape aesthetics were extraordinarily developed, it began to penetrate all details of daily life, as happens in any mature culture. Landscape paintings and poems, characterised by *Shanshui* images, commonly appeared on fans, furniture, calendars and family decorations. This predominance of landscape aesthetics had a lot of direct visual influence on all classes of people and they gradually became familiar with these images, finally accepting them. Only then did landscape aesthetics become a tradition that linked high culture and low culture. It became a structure or schema of a nation and a common language for all (Xu 1996, p15). This tradition ensures that landscape aesthetics are not only alive within the upper classes, but also in all the details of life that common people encounter in their daily activities. In this process, the ancient Chinese inventions of printing and paper made a great contribution to promoting landscape aesthetics. Today, the Chinese inherit a tradition of reading and publishing which exerts an edifying influence on classical landscape understanding. Unlike many other countries, books are extraordinarily cheap in China so that everyone can afford to build a home library. The number of both books and readers in China might be ranked number one in the world. In a recent annual book exhibition in Shanghai in August 2006, there were 110 publishers exhibiting about 30,000 newly published books and 200,000 visitors attended the exhibition over 7 days. Among these books, thousands of interpretations of historical culture, including landscape books, were published for different interests and ages. Many of these publications have been newly interpreted and illustrated and the language has been simplified instead of using traditional Chinese, so they are much easier to read and understand. In China this is a very

important way to propagate traditional cultures, including landscape culture, to the population, including children. The theme of *Shanshui* has been enhanced again and again through history in these ways and shows no signs of weakening. Today, it is still quite common to see *Shanshui* paintings hanging in a typical family home as decoration.

### **5.2.2 Enjoyment of Humanity**

Case studies indicate that people who live and travel in nature are humanists and this humanism embraces human sensory enjoyment. Many visitors, although visiting sacred religious areas, are not really religious and they do not believe in any super power of nature. They enjoy their worldly lives and human attachments, from spiritual and physical points of view.

As reviewed in chapter 3, Chinese culture can be characterised by its complete humanism found in both Taoism and Confucianism. In the early Jin Dynasty of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century the Chinese aesthetic and humanistic senses of landscape were aroused, based on a foundation of “*Lao Zhuang Gao Tu*” (老庄告退) after religious illusions had faded. This humanity was strongly presented in Chinese landscape paintings where, filtered through a humanistic lens, there is no darkness or heaviness in religion, no super-power above human beings, and no ferocity or danger. Rather, there is touchable beauty and harmony which represent an ideal, but also a real life. In those paintings, we see people freely travelling in peaceful and beautiful nature, drinking and playing, in company with friends, or settled in small straw houses to enjoy their artistic and poetic lives. Although in such paintings, human beings, their constructions and activities are small in scale related to the vastness of nature, the influence of this humanity is very powerful. Today, this traditional culture has penetrated everywhere. When we open any illustrated Chinese textbook of Tang Poems for primary school pupils, we see ancient scholars leisurely wandering in great mountains and by pretty waters, expressing emotion and composing poems. In these natural settings, there are always village houses, study houses, pavilions or temples. Scholars are always accompanied by a bright moon, friends, beautiful women, wine or musical instruments, and they always encounter boats with people picking lotus flowers, children playing, and more (Figure 5.1).

This figure is not available online.  
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available from the QUT Library

Figure 5.1 Illustrated *Tang poems* in a primary school text book

This unlimited enjoyment of poetic leisure in nature might seem unlikely to Westerners. However, repeated descriptions and presentations of scenes related to natural settings in various ways means that from childhood Chinese believe that nature is an enjoyable, poetic place and a good place for thinking. They never link nature to any threat or challenge to their lives. What they have is unbounded dreams and yearning for that ideal land. They have learned that beautiful nature is a fairyland, but made real; it is a myth, but the myth can continue; it is a paradise, but it could be for human life. It is such a beautiful and pleasant place that everyone longs for it from childhood and feels they must seek it out. Nature is also a place that has a big 'heart' to tolerate everything to do with human beings. In a word, nature is a symbol of an ideal life. This humanistic image has been constructed through Chinese history for thousands of years and could never have been achieved by a short-term process. It is the Chinese humanistic cultural tradition of nature appreciation.

As we see, this humanism is not abstract. It exists vividly in all details of life. In Wudang, the sacred mountain, most locals and visitors do not carry the burden of religion, except a few Daoists and pilgrims. They enjoy their practical lives and do not bear religious worries or seek out physical tests of endurance. Visitors wander enjoyably in the beautiful natural mountains and among the lakes and rivers, appreciating the striking scenery at a leisurely pace. There are no misgivings and no worries. The only emotions in their faces are satisfaction and excitement. They are excited because finally they are at this famous site that they have heard and read about hundreds of times. The beautiful scenery, which previously they had seen only on TV programs, films and in books, is now a reality in front of their eyes. They do not hide their delight and satisfaction at realising their childhood dreams and enjoy everything to their hearts' content. Although some visitors also burn joss sticks

in temples, they are just praying for a safe journey and futures instead of for religious purposes. Most visitors come to the temples for another important reason—for delicious Daoist food. While they are satisfied by the spiritual and visual feast, they also care about their stomachs. This is about the “Feast of Life of Chinese cheerful humanity” (Lin 2002), in which the enjoyment of life should begin with food, which is essential for life. “Spiritual enjoyment should not be separated from physical enjoyment. All human happiness is sensuous happiness. Lovely things, health, should all become sources of happiness” (Lin 1998, p303) . This is part of the Chinese “art of living”. To make one’s life happy, firstly one must enjoy sensuous happiness. The Chinese like to consciously enjoy this happy worldly life. They enjoy nature not only because of its artistic and picturesque parts, but also its sounds, smells, tastes and pleasant atmosphere. So visitors to Wudang, from big travel groups to small groups of family and friends, all gather around tables and enjoy delicious food from restaurants and temples, or in farmers’ yards, without any outward religious displays. On the top of the mountain, three foreign visitors were laughed at in a restaurant because they were complaining how expensive the dishes were. Finally they only ordered two dishes. As one of the most important cheerful things in a journey, food cannot be saved on and made light of, which is one of the important principles of Chinese culture. To be angry with the cost of food and to destroy the pleasantness of travel is the most ridiculous thing for the Chinese.

In Western eyes, the Chinese visitors are real hedonists and in Chinese eyes, the Westerners are too ascetic. The Chinese visitors are not backpackers. They never bring food, water and heavy tents with them. They do not camp in the wilderness because they think it is troublesome and dangerous. They come to nature not for challenging themselves and training their wills to overcome difficulties. That is not consistent with their purposes at all. Rather, they come to nature for relaxation and enjoyment as their ancestors. They will not endure the humiliation of eating in the wind and sleeping in the dew—to endure the hardships of an arduous journey would ruin the experience of beauty or meanings of nature. They think that is not deserved and is odd behaviour. On the contrary, they eat in restaurants and rest in comfortable hotels or stay in the locals’ warm and friendly homes.

In Wudang, even when pilgrims come to worship at the most sacred temple on the top mountain, they take a comfortable cable car instead of hiking on foot as devout religious followers. They are not really seriously religious if compared with the

pilgrims in Tibet. More interestingly, the case study survey found that many pilgrims who come to Wudang and burn joss sticks in temples do not know who they are praying to and confuse the Gods of Daoism with Buddhism. Burning joss sticks in such sacred places is more a habit for most people, rather than a serious religious practice. They are not really controlled by the Gods and do not show serious respect to the Gods, so it is very difficult to tell the pilgrims from other visitors. Usually, after they have finished burning joss sticks, the pilgrims become ordinary visitors and begin to wander and enjoy exploring the beauty of the mountains, lakes and streams.

Compared with these shallow pilgrims, foreign visitors are extremely serious about what they are doing. In Wudang, a French visitor was surrounded by Chinese visitors. He had been practising Taoist Gongfu for hours in the strong August sun as his master instructed. The visitors were kindly sniggering that this young man was too honest and too serious and even too inflexible. They thought that the master must have other apprentices, but where were the others? Chinese apprentices would not have to endure such hard conditions because Chinese immortals were looking for fantastic lands and a pleasant life. One does not need to suffer like this to achieve what they want. That is the Chinese humanistic logic. As great hedonists, the Chinese never stop enjoying life, although the pace of their leisure has been affected by intense modern life.

This humanistic point of view could explain why visitors to Jiuzhaigou are unsatisfied and uncomfortable with their visits to this World Natural Heritage site. The visitors enjoy nothing but the strikingly colourful water. Compared with the water, the other distractions are not so interesting. Five years ago, after they had wandered in the mountains in a leisurely way and by the lakes in the daytime, after their hearts were softened by the beautiful scenery and when it was getting dark, they could lazily rest in the Tibetans' homes. They could drink traditional Tibetan butter tea or highland barley wine while appreciating Tibetan dancing and singing around the fire, enjoying the warm company and the feast of enjoyment. But now, in the day time, they have to hurry for shuttle buses, hurry to get to the next scenic spot, take some pictures and hurry to the next spot. They do not even have time to take a deep breath. They only just arrive at the service centre before they have to hurry off again. What is waiting for them is fast food instead of the traditional feast. There is no leisurely pace in Jiuzhaigou. Everyone is worrying whether they can catch the last bus to get out of the valley before dark and then they can go to a real feast outside the valley. So although visitors are happy with the aesthetics of the natural scenery, they are

not happy with their whole journey. This kind of tour is just the sort criticised by Zhang Chao (张潮) of the Qing Dynasty: “Those who gobble up a feast and roughly tour striking beauty totally lose their essential meanings” (*You Meng Ying*).

What makes the visitors feel strange and uncomfortable is that this site runs at such a fast pace with high efficiency that they feel manipulated beyond their control. It can be seen that everywhere is highly organised by onsite management, like a modern factory or company. The great ‘Chinese loafers’ who were used to wandering in nature suddenly feel as if they have been put on an uncontrolled assembly line without any human concern. They cannot be their own masters any more. Here they are pushed by an organising hand and have to be very humble towards nature. This does not fit the traditional Chinese mode. My onsite experience was also uncomfortable. I was hurrying all day and had to omit several scenic spots in order not to be late for the last shuttle bus out of the valley. When I arrived at the shuttle bus stop near the exit, I found I still had twenty minutes more to get out of the valley. I hurried to get into the Tibetan tea house and the enjoyment of those twenty minutes with a cup of warm butter tea was even more impressive than the striking natural beauty in Jiuzhaigou. I felt refreshed to be back in the human world which was so beautiful, warm and unhurried.

There is a typical Chinese term “*Atmosphere of Human Beings*” (人气). The Chinese emphasize that “*Atmosphere of Human Beings*” is the premise for any successful life. It is the same in nature. This should be the basis of Chinese humanistic preferences, so a wilderness exclusive of human beings is not acceptable to the humanist Chinese.

### **5.2.3 Living within Nature**

The case studies show that there is pressure for onsite management to consider different ways of living with nature. While visitors are happy about their needs being met (except in Jiuzhaigou), local villagers strongly oppose being moved from their homes. However, from these contested views, two conclusions can be drawn. First, both visitors and local villagers take travelling or living in nature for granted. It has been so widely accepted that nature embraces human beings and that nature should be for living in and living on, that any change to this tradition seems unacceptable. Second, today the visitors are highly valued and local cultures related to nature seem to be under-valued.

This attitude can be traced back to the traditional Chinese attitude to the local farmers and it is highly consistent with tradition. China is an ancient country and agriculture has been essential throughout its history. With a large population and a long history, agricultural landscapes have been the most important type of landscape and agricultural settlements can be found in all natural areas, including Scenic and Historic Interest Areas. Most of them have a history of settlement which can be traced back thousands of years. Therefore, the use of natural land for agriculture and related settlements has been accepted by the Chinese without question. The relationship with the land has been regarded as the most important characteristic of the Chinese (Feng 2004). The elite class of ancient China were landlords and most scholars were from those families. The class which possessed the land and lived on it was the mostly respected orthodox social class in ancient China.

However, this does not mean that all settlements in natural areas were ideologically and culturally valued. Peasants and landlords, although both linked to the land in their own ways, had totally different social positions in ancient China. Those peasants who engaged physically in agricultural activities had different values to the scholars who appreciated these activities. Peasants, fishermen and even religious people “lived in nature but could not acknowledge the happiness of the hermit”. Their hearts and bodies were limited by practical considerations that prevented them from enjoying the beauty of nature and understanding its meaning with a free heart (Zhang Chao, *You Meng Ying*, Chapter 137). Scholars, although hermitic in nature, seemed to enjoy a rural ideal, but in fact they “can only water gardens, but are unable to cultivate the lands”, “can only remove grass, but are unable to cut fire wood” (Zhang Chao, *You Meng Ying*, Chapter 26). Nevertheless, this rural life provided the rural ideal and became the aesthetic objective of scholars. Following the instructions of Laozi and Confucius, scholars began to admire rural life and took it as a symbol of the “Good Man”. They consciously connected the Daoism of the recluse, retirement to the mountains, the worship of rural life, cultivation of the spirit, the prolongation of man’s life, and the banishment of all worldly cares and worries, and so formed the most characteristic charm of Chinese culture, the rural ideal of life, art and literature (Lin 1935,p101) which has been evident throughout Chinese history. The scholars, the class of *Shi* (士) who created the splendid Chinese landscape cultures, based their lives on this belief.

However, what really enchanted the scholars was the natural state of the rural life which fitted with Daoism's "way of life". It was not the ideas and attitudes of the peasants and their physical activities. The very hard lives of peasants were neither appreciated nor culturally valued. The scholars, such as the famous poet and painter Wang Wei (王维), built his famous Wang Chuan Villa (辋川别业) and the famous poet Bai Juyi (白居易) who built his Straw House in Lu Shan (庐山草堂). These buildings were idealised hermitic places for appreciating natural beauty and rural life. They did not want to be real peasants, nor to experience peasants' hard lives.

For the peasants, things were totally different. Nature was their only home, not an extension of their homes as was the case with the scholars. This nature had nothing to do with aesthetics and spiritual moral cultivation. They cared about every feature of nature because it could directly influence their harvest and thus their survival. Their emotions about nature were simple, but real. These emotions were partly perceived by the scholars and they were sympathetic, as shown by their literature and paintings, but ancient Chinese culture was centred on the high culture created by the scholars. This determined the cultural or even social positions of peasants. Traditionally, local peasant cultures were under-valued, except for the parts that were regarded as aesthetic and symbols of the ideal life for high culture. So although scholars and peasants lived on the same land through history, their cultural sentiments were not equally valued. However, the image of nature that included peasant settlements was confirmed in the Chinese mind.

The influence of tradition is profound. Visitors come to these areas to enjoy the natural beauty and the peasants' rural lives, just as their scholar ancestors did, and the peasants insist on living on the same land as their peasant ancestors. However, visitors' needs are regarded as the requirements of a higher class and higher culture than the peasants' by the local government and the onsite managers. Their needs always have priority over those of local villagers. Local villagers, treated as a low social class, are under threat of being moved out in order to meet today's economic and political purposes. In some cases, onsite management believe that local settlements are the only traditional land use that is not worth protecting. Even when some villages are large, very few of them are considered to have intrinsic cultural values, except those which have vernacular architectural styles which have become tourist attractions. The managers and visitors are not concerned with the peasant's

values. From the local government's perspective, the only contribution of these villagers is that they can keep a watch for forest fires. Normally if these villages are old and poor-looking, they are considered an embarrassment to the government who lose face because they represent a 'backward' culture. This is one of the most important reasons behind the removals in Wudang and Wulingyuan, where villages have been moved out of sight or off the tourist routes. Today's local managers are ashamed of the 'low culture' of the villagers.

Although visitors do not oppose the villagers' staying, what they do care about is that the villagers should keep providing delicious food and convenient accommodation to help them to experience real rural life and, most importantly, they can produce a "human atmosphere". As with the managers, very few visitors realise that these agricultural settlements and the villagers have their own intrinsic cultural values. Both the local governments' and visitors' attitudes are arrogant towards the local villagers and that is because of a deep lack of respect for their cultures. It has come down to whether the existence of the local villagers can be justified for meeting the objectives of aesthetic consumption or not. It is clear that the tradition of living in nature is not questioned. The question is whose life or what kind of living in nature is valuable, and that requires urgent reassessment. 'Come from the rural' and 'return to the rural' (Lin 1935) was preached by the Chinese ruling class for thousands of years and this rural ideal has been deeply embedded in the Chinese consciousness. The majority of today's visitors, who live in busy cities, go back to nature to enjoy life at any opportunity. They might have motivations from their ancestors, but living in nature is a continuing fascination for Chinese. Many retired people even move into the mountains and live in peasant homes for several months each year. Nature is the eternal home for all Chinese.

#### **5.2.4 Human Constructions in Nature**

It seems that no other country constructs within nature on such a huge scale as China. In each of the case studies, there were huge constructions. Newly built, well-concealed switchback roads for modern buses provide access to every corner of the sites (figure 5.2) and even some mountain peaks. Cable cars, hotels and restaurants are scattered in many places in the mountains (Figure 5.3) or along lakes and streams, and new scenic spots are being constructed all the time. This Chinese preference for structures in nature for comfort or aesthetic purposes related to Chinese culture and has been a part of Chinese tradition or culture for centuries.



Figure 5.2 Wudang's sealed roads in the mountains



Figure 5.3 Wudang's newly built hotel

In ancient China, the number and scale of constructions in nature was remarkable. The world-famous Great Wall is the biggest defence project ever built anywhere in the world and took the longest time to construct. It is hard to find a similar project to compare with it anywhere. It took more than 2000 years to construct from the 7th century BCE and it extends from northern and middle China over more than 50,000 kilometres. The Wudang ancient building complex, at its peak time, stretched 70 kilometres from the foot of the mountains to the top peak, "the Golden Shrine". Along this ancient imperial route were 33 groups of building complexes, more than 200 individual buildings and 20,000 rooms in temples. The total occupied land for Wudang exceeded 160 hectares, twice that of the Forbidden City in Beijing. Even now there are still more than 200,000 square metres of buildings left after six hundred years. From these two cases, the scale of the constructions in nature in ancient China can be understood and they are not two isolated examples of this type of construction. In China, almost all Scenic and Historic Interest Areas with a long history have structures, such as at Wuyue (五岳, Five Top Mountains). All of them have been characterised by the extension, reconstruction or restoration of buildings throughout history and they display obviously different layers of time and styles corresponding to variations in Chinese architectural courtyard layout. Because of the vulnerability of timber structures, once old buildings were destroyed by fire or war, they were soon restored or rebuilt (Figure 5.4). More importantly, for hundreds of generations the Chinese believed that they could build these structures in nature and that they made nature more ordered and more beautiful, so they never stopped doing it. This is a strong component of Chinese humanist traditions. Humanist and landscape aesthetics have had a profound influence on these structures in nature. Traditional high Chinese culture emphasised that aesthetic principles should be implemented in all details of daily life. Scholars developed

elegant living art theories and, to achieve a quality artistic life, each environmental detail and setting had to be carefully organised to fit in with these theories. To achieve the best quality of nature, one should appreciate “mountains up stairs, snow on the city wall, moon with lanterns, the glow of sunset in a boat, and beauty in the moon”. Music should be appreciated in different settings in order to master its different spirits. Thus *Qin* (琴) should be appreciated in pine trees, *Xiao* (蕭) should be in moonlight, the sound of a waterfall should be in a ravine, and *Fan Bei* (梵呗, Buddhist Songs) should be in the mountains” (*You Meng Ying*, Chapter 82).



Figure 5.4 Wudang's newly rebuilt palace

All details of nature are connected to meanings of life and their valuable inspiration should not be ignored or wasted. When travelling in nature, where to appreciate the moon, where to enjoy the mountains, where to drink, where to eat and where to play all should be carefully arranged according to those traditional principles that have been fully described in ancient books. To meet these elegant needs, the Chinese constructed many things in nature and reshaped nature. First, it was necessary to rebuild nature to fit the Chinese *Shanshui* image because wild nature is not always “perfectly beautiful”. Normally, beautiful features will be enhanced. Second, nature should always be decorated with human structures such as pavilions, laneways and houses to provide recreational functions, appropriate places for appreciation and meditation, and also add more interest and meaning to nature to fit the Chinese

aesthetic and cultural images found in *Shanshui* paintings (山水画) and *Shanshui* poems (山水诗).

The functions of Chinese structures are different from those in Western national parks. A functional structure, such as a visitor centre for information, is a very recent introduction in China. Chinese structures in nature are mainly for aesthetics, comfort and enjoyment. For example, at the top of mountains with clouds curling up, a “Heavenly Street” would be built in order to provide a setting for visitors to enjoy the worldly paradise. Visitors could eat and rest in special hotels with fantastic surroundings to experience an immortal’s life. A village could be built in deep mountains just to pursue an artistic perception of the rural ideal. All of these constructions are related to humanist ideas. In China, especially in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas which have strong historical and cultural connections, all facilities represent human concerns. When you are thirsty, you will not be served by a drink machine. Instead there will be shade, a comfortable chair and a pot of tea waiting for you. When you are enjoying the beauty of nature, you will be invited into a pavilion to protect you from the sun or rain. You can be a living part of the scenery while you are appreciating the scenery yourself. When you feel that your heart is not content, you can stay comfortably and safely in a hotel to recover your energy without threats from the wild and then continue your journey the next day. All these structures are required to fulfil the needs of Chinese preferences for enjoying nature. Only from this perspective can it be understood why the Chinese continue building in nature.

According to Chinese cultural traditions and humanist principles, they need these structures. A Westerner might be shocked by the number of restaurants in a Scenic and Historic Interest Area, but if they knew that the Chinese must eat three meals per day and each meal, even in a typical family, should have at least four or five dishes, they will then understand it is a lifestyle penetrated by Chinese culture. All of life’s details are worth such attention. When a Westerner suggests that visitors might do with some biscuits, water and a tent, they are too far away from the enjoyment of Chinese culture. Such a way might save a lot of trouble and resources, but the Chinese would simply turn it down with a smile and say “that is not life”. It is this attitude that resulted in 2000 beds being available at the top of the Wudang Mountains<sup>8</sup> (Figure 5.5), over 5000 beds and hotels before 2001 in the Jiuzhaigou

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<sup>8</sup> Onsite investigation of Wudang Master Planning, 2004

valley (Zhan and Li 2004) and 360,000 square metres of buildings in Wulingyuan before 1998, most of them restaurants and hotels (XHN 2004).

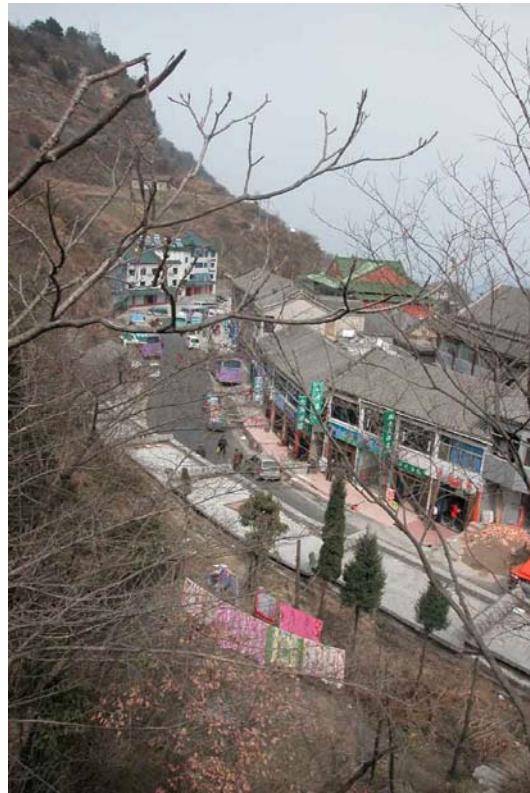


Figure 5.5 Wudang's restaurants and hotels in the clouds

Traditionally, the Chinese have an unquenchable interest in great mountains and bodies of water. Tradition tells us that as long as there were great mountains, rivers and lakes, one had to go (*You Meng Ying*, Chapter 166). The ancestors managed to explore every corner, every peak of great nature in order to find the most beautiful scenery and spirits of nature. They even invented special shoes for climbing mountains, such as the famous *Xie Gong Shoe* (谢公屐) invented by the aforementioned great poet *Xie Linyun* (谢灵运) of the Jin Dynasty. There was also a kind of sedan chair called *Hua Gan* (滑杆), normally carried up the steep slopes to the top of the mountains by two servants. The *Hua Gan* (滑杆) was used for a long time in many Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, such as the famous *Huangshan* (黄山) and *Taishan* (泰山), long before cable cars were built in those areas. It still can be seen in many such places. The World Natural Heritage area of *Huanglong* near *Jiuzhaigou* still has such transportation.

Case studies indicate that most visitors like comfortable and convenient cable cars, although they are sharply criticised by scholars today. Wei Xiaoan, the director of the State Tourism Bureau, supports the social value of cable cars from a humanistic perspective. Wei (2001) argues that the “construction of cable cars in nature does away with the ugliest types of enslavement between human beings” (p384). From this perspective, the cable car itself is possibly a modern humanistic achievement of high technology, and it fits the Chinese idea of comfort and the preferred pursuit of enjoyment. Therefore, although Wulingyuan’s giant elevator was stopped for a while because of media criticism, it opened again soon after and has become one of the most attractive recreations on the site and is creating record profits. Taishan (泰山), one of the most ancient mountains and the first World Heritage site in China, has never stopped expanding its cable ways. Despite overwhelming criticism, the number of cable cars has increased from one to three. One consequence of these battles is that the power of traditional Chinese preferences has been demonstrated.

I was once informed by a high government official, “if Wudang had tried to build that cable car when it was applying for World Heritage status, I would not have approved it... its cable car should be demolished soon. Those who are not able to climb to the top of the mountain should stay where they are”. But now, after reviewing Chinese traditions, I believe that if the cable car is demolished, then *Hua Gan* (滑竿) will come back because Chinese visitors will always want to reach the top peak which was enchanted by their ancestors. But they will never have the same amount of leisure time as their ancestors to climb the mountains, so we will be back to the enslavement of human beings. From this perspective, cable cars, hotels, restaurants and other structures are all reflections of Chinese tradition and culture. However, the disadvantages of traditional cultural influences are discussed in the next chapter.

### **5.2.5 Lack of Natural Science Awareness**

Traditionally the Chinese lack scientific attitudes forward nature. The Chinese scientific attitude to nature was once described by Lin Yutang (林语堂). He asserted that “the Chinese failed to develop botany and zoology” because “the Chinese scholar cannot stare coldly and unemotionally at a fish without immediately thinking of how it tastes in the mouth and wanting to eat it” (Lin 1998,p46). Chinese are interested in how to enjoy all the animals and plants and not what they are in themselves. This traditional attitude has not changed in today’s China. Jiuzhaigou was trying to force visitors to observe fish and plants in a scientific, rational and

unemotional way, but this makes most visitors uncomfortable. Visitors wondered at the strikingly colourful water of Jiuzhaigou, but did not have any interest in learning the scientific reasons behind them. In Wulingyuan, one of the most popular activities was to have a fish feast from a stream. In Wudang, the delicious Daoist food which was made from wild mountain plants was always most welcome. In China, it is well known that one of the most important things when travelling in nature is to eat natural healthy foods, which constitutes the main meaning of a "Chinese ecological tour". Although there are conservation management actions to protect animals and plants, it is very hard for visitors to resist these delicious foods, even those who have ecological knowledge. It is also very hard for the locals to stop serving these foods to express a warm welcome to visitors. Any plants and animals can be food for the Chinese and to "not be poisoned is the only practical and important consideration" (Lin 1998,p46). So only six months after the controls instituted because of SARS in 2003, wild animals came back to the Chinese table again.

In Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, nature is destroyed and pollution is everywhere. In Wudang, sewage from 2000 hotel beds pours down mountains and streams without any control. Hills have been flattened to build large-scale resort villages. Mountain ravines have been blocked by dams to build lakes for boating, and monkeys have been imported to amuse visitors. Valleys have even been planted with differently coloured flowers. It seems that the managers and visitors know nothing about modern ecological science at all. The Jiuzhaigou valley is famous for its ecological management and every natural element has been extremely strictly managed. However, out of the valley large amounts of untreated sewage from hotels are dumped into rivers. In Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, local governments would like to invest huge amounts of funds to construct hotels, roads and scenic spots, or even remove villages, but they contribute hardly any funding towards scientifically managing pollution or other problems. The only way they would like to do that is to limit or forbid human activities as has been done in Jiuzhaigou. They have never thought that villagers or visitors could remain onsite if there were appropriate management controls based on environmental science to limit pollution or other impacts on the natural environment. This does not mean that there is no way to negotiate different uses of the land, but that managers are not interested in doing any research or applying any scientific understanding. They just adopt the easiest way, which is limiting or prohibiting human activity, which then causes social and cultural problems. From an historical perspective, managers, visitors and villagers all lack a scientific attitude towards, or understanding of, nature.

### **5.3 New Themes Detached from Tradition**

While many of the themes mentioned above are strongly related to Chinese tradition, some of the emerging themes are new in China. They have grown out of today's social environment and are inseparably connected with economic and cultural conditions in the whole society. Seven new themes have been identified in this research: first, visitors' needs to escape from congested city life; second, economic utilisation of landscape resources by capital; third, political use of landscape; fourth, cultural consumption and the decline of high culture; fifth, China's 'new wilderness' achieved through removal of villagers and eco-restoration; sixth, nature as symbolic of privilege; and seventh, the landscape aesthetic handicap.

#### **5.3.1 Escape from City Pressure**

In the case studies, it was found that most of the visitors who came to Scenic and Historic Interest Areas are from towns or cities. The motives for their visits were extremely simple. What they needed was a beautiful natural place which allowed people to breathe clean air and to recover from intensive city work. Although nature was initially recognised as a place to "Drown Worries" in early Chinese landscape history, different values were socially created over thousands of years. Now it seems that values of nature are back to the starting point and visitors regard "Drowning Worries" as their most important motivation for visiting nature. Visitors' pursuits today have returned to the second level of Gong's hierarchy (2001) (refer to Chapter 3, 3.1.2) which is absolutely different from the ancient scholars' pursuit of moral and aesthetic cultivation. This new phenomenon is commonly perceived as a 'regression' of culture and philosophy in today's cultural debates in China (Gong 2001).

This phenomenon has emerged in an absolutely new social environment in China. Escape from city pressures is tightly related to the lifestyle of China's current major shift to modernism. Today's Asia is famous for its work ethic, especially China. China is working hard day and night to catch up with the West and to narrow the gap which has grown over the last 200 years. Now everyone hopes that the speed of life can be slowed, but it seems impossible. Since 1978, the annual growth of China's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has remained at 9.4 per cent and in 2005 its GDP was ranked fourth in the world (XHN 2006). China has been undergoing an economic miracle. It took China nine years to double its GDP from 1978 to 1986, another nine years to do it again from 1987 to 1996, and again in nine years from 1997 to 2006. Compared with other countries, it took Japan nine years for its first

doubling, but twenty-one years for its second. It took the UK 58 years and the US forty-seven years for the first doubling (Liu 2006). In 2003, it was a milestone for China when the average income reached USD 1000 for each person and in 2005 it reached USD 1703 (XHN 2006). Although there is still a huge gap from advanced countries, this hides China's great economic achievement and its great contribution to the world. China has taken one-fifth of the population of the world rapidly out of poverty and peacefully improved their lives.

However, this rapid development has brought great changes to China. Urbanisation and modernisation are sweeping across the whole of the country and it is stepping into an industrial and post-industrial world. While Chinese lives are getting better day by day, they are beginning to experience other troubles. They suffer high pressure from work and daily life. Since the economic reforms of 1978, people can no longer take advantage of socialist welfare, including free housing, a free medical system and education. They have to work for everything by themselves. The middle-aged working generation, described as the 'sandwich' generation, is in an especially hard situation. They not only have to fight for their own futures, but they also have to look after the older generation and bring up the next generation. To achieve a stable income, they must fight to keep their jobs, which is quite difficult in big cities such as Shanghai. The fact that China has plenty of human resources makes every job opportunity involve queuing and now that many foreigners are coming to China there is increased competition for these opportunities. Normally, it is not enough for employees in big cities to work conscientiously. They must also work extraordinarily hard and have super tolerance in order to keep their jobs. If they relax for a minute, they can be replaced at any time. It is reported that the stress on white collar workers in China's big cities exceeds that of any other country and that China's office work is the hardest in the world (Newschina 2006).

The pressure is not only from work, but also from changing values. In the socialist society, people had the same income and it was impossible for one person to be richer than others. But now everything has changed. Each person is valued by how rich they are and how much they earn, so salary and wealth have become the only standards for valuing a person's ability. In order to be accepted by society, one must fight for a higher salary to be rich and to show others. The whole society is getting into a vicious values circle and being enslaved by economics, as in the West. Traditional values, such as sincere and caring moral and cultural cultivation, are threatened and the current generation is both physically and mentally sick. Their

knowledge and health are heavily burdened because of changes to the economy, ideologies and values. In 2004 a survey was undertaken by the Psychology Institute of the Chinese Academy of Science (CSA 2004) to investigate work pressure in big cities. It found that 20- to 30-year-olds suffer the highest mental pressure. Most of them were just out of school or university and entering the workforce, but lacked experience. They also faced the pressure of marriage, buying an apartment and having babies. The report also showed that 30- to 45-year-olds, as the elite of society, were mentally and physically extremely exhausted. They were the “sandwiches” that had the responsibility to look after both the old and young and their work places were extraordinarily competitive. Among those investigated, more than 60 per cent had symptoms of insomnia, easily lost their temper and were anxious. 70 per cent of the population was unwell. However, even in such an unhealthy situation, over 82 per cent of the population would voluntarily work for more than 15 hours per day to keep their jobs or earn high salaries.

High pressure must seek a release. For people with high-pressure jobs in the cities, their only way is to escape. They yearn for the past when, although they were poor, they had leisure time and were happy. More and more people escape from the cities once there is an opportunity to escape from concrete forests, polluted physical environments and intense social relationships. They need places to breathe as normal healthy human beings. Obviously, Scenic and Historic Interest Areas are ideal. Their main purpose is to slow down their life rhythm, to be “largo” rather than “prestissimo”. They are too exhausted to absorb any more knowledge and improve themselves. What they need is to recover first, so they need relaxation, relaxation and more relaxation. Therefore the destinations must firstly be comfortable. In fact all they need is to be surrounded by green trees, sleep in comfortable beds, be served good food and to be far from work. If they can be accompanied by their family and good friends, then that is life in paradise. They normally settle down in onsite hotels and enjoy a good sleep, then naturally wake up late in the morning and take a walk around the hotel, chatting and having cups of tea. This is the most common scene in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas. It is a physical and mental recovery procedure for the visitors and they resist being involved in anything demanding physical stamina or intelligence. Therefore, it is not strange if even in Wudang, a World Cultural Heritage site, visitors are not interested in its culture at all. They are “travelling, escaping and resting” instead of the traditional “travelling and learning”.

This motivation is absolutely different from their ancestors' exploration of moral cultivation and the meaning of life in nature. Essentially, traditional cultures were fostered by "leisure" (Lin 1998). Leisure was the source of poetry and philosophy. But obviously the great leisure era in China has been ended by modernisation. The Chinese are transforming from 'great loafers' into great hustlers. They are becoming poor modern people who "toil and work and worry their hair grey to get a living and forget to play" as Lin Yutang mocked seventy years ago (Lin 1935). Fortunately, during this painful change, modern Chinese still remember what their ancestors instructed: "If you have worries, go to nature", even if they are not able to clearly remember what else their ancestors said.

### **5.3.2 Nature as an Economic Resource: the Priced Landscape**

Case studies indicate that natural landscape resources have become a commodity for the tourist capital which now operates in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in China.

Landscape resources, managed by local governments, now face both great temptations and threats from the tourism market. As previously mentioned, after developing for more than twenty years, the living conditions of Chinese people have rapidly improved and their income has rapidly increased. Mass tourism is very popular now in China. In 2005, the number of domestic tourists reached 1.2 billion (NTB 2005) which means that on average almost every Chinese travelled once in a year. This is a great commercial opportunity for capital. When capital began to aim at Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, the hottest tourism destinations, landscapes, became in danger of being commodified—literally, objectives of commerce manipulated by capital.

Huge tourism capital was no longer satisfied to be limited to existing constructed landscapes in theme parks in cities. There has been a search for opportunities to work with rare excellent tourism resources. Now capital has targeted natural landscape resources, real mountains and bodies of water, and aims to produce a "landscape feast" for the market. To achieve this objective, capital must cooperate with local governments who manage and own the rights to use the land. For local governments, this is an excellent opportunity because they are short of money to develop these landscape resources. This is a great opportunity for both of them. Capital offers funds and local government offers the resources and the land. While developing this collaboration, the forms of their cooperation have constantly been

changed to side-step the central government policy that it is not allowed for management and rights of use for national landscape resources to be transferred to private or commercial sources (State Council 2005).

The trade has continued. In 1994, the Wulingyuan District Government leased Baofeng Lake to a Malaysian company for 60 years and this started the history of selling natural landscape resources. In 1998, the Wulingyuan District Government leased Yellow Dragon Cave (黃龍洞) to China Datong (大唐) Industrial Company (Beijing) for 45 years for 525 million RBM (Mao 2006). The local government celebrated this trade and the general manager of this company was additionally awarded 300,000RBM by the government (Mao 2006). Following these successes, the Feng Huang (凤凰) County Government leased eight scenic spots in this ancient town to the same company for 833 million RBM for 50 years (Mao 2006). In 2002, the Hua Qiao Cheng Group (华侨城集团) purchased the management rights for nine scenic areas, including the Temple and Cemetery of Confucius (孔庙) and the Kong Family Mansion (孔林) in Qufu (曲阜) in Shang Dong (山东) province (World Cultural Heritage listed), for 50 years for 30 million RBM (PeopleNet 2004). Sichuan Province, however, intended to do the largest business. The provincial government even tried to combine all the scenic resources in the province, including Jiuzhaigou and other top cultural and natural resources, and looked for a buyer (FinanceNet 2002). In 2002, it went further. When the media exposed the fact that Guilin (桂林) would sell its famous mountains and bodies of water for 1 billion RBM and Wudang was valued at 400 million RBM (XHN 2002; BeijingYouth 2002), it showed that the business of managing landscapes in the whole country was out of control (ChinaYouth 2002). These developments forced the Construction Ministry to urgently decree: "Scenic and Historic Interest Areas are national treasures and non-regenerated natural and cultural heritages. All forms of lease, transfer, including changes of management rights are illegal and against the present constitution" (Ministry 2001). Under this prohibition, Wudang began to change its policy from "selling landscapes" to "developing the local economy through projects" to attract capital to certain tourism landscape development projects (Zhang and Zhang 2002). However, these projects were in fact controlled by capital. They were the same in essence and only had their names changed to cover "more secret and more deceitful" actions (ChinaYouth 2002).

While tourism capital keeps expanding into natural landscapes, real estate capital has also begun to aim at these areas (Wang 2002; PeopleNet 2002; Yi 2002). Scenic and Historic Interest Areas are experiencing unprecedented pressure from capital. This is the first time in Chinese history that natural landscape resources have been owned and managed by commercial enterprises instead of being national resources controlled by governments. It is also the first time for landscapes to be considered a commodity to be consumed by mass tourism. Whoever owns the right to use these landscapes has access to enormous capital gains. Therefore, the fight for the right to control landscapes is a fight to re-distribute social wealth. At this stage, politics comes into play.

### **5.3.3 The Political Identity of Landscapes**

Although in ancient China landscape did relate to politics. Many scholars lived in nature because of political reasons. However, today's landscapes become more symbolic of political privilege and are more politically controlled than in the ancient China.

#### **GDP and Politics**

For local governments, transforming landscape resources into a commodity for tourism is not only driven by economic purposes, but also, more importantly, by politics. In the last twenty-five years, economic development has been the driving force in China. However, during this rapid development, the drawbacks of the economic and political system have been discovered. Reliance on GDP statistics is one of the problems. The currently applied Statistics Act of the People's Republic of China was approved ten years ago and has not been adapted to the current changeable situation. According to the Act, the GDP statistics for the whole country are added up from the GDP of each province. GDP has become a very important indicator for measuring the achievements of local governments. Their political positions are tightly related to their GDP and those ranked last can be eliminated (Wen 2006). As a result, every province competes with the others and transfers this pressure to lower-level local governments. Under these circumstances, GDP has become political and local officials are strongly driven by their GDP goals. Some have even tried to manipulate or counterfeit the figures, which led the National Statistics Bureau to query these statistics. In 2003, the National Statistics Bureau declared that the final control of statistics by local governments was withdrawn and local GDP statistics had to be re-examined by the central government before

finalisation. A “Statistics Offensive” was begun to disinfect the “distorted” GDP numbers from 2004 onwards (Xue 2005).

The tourism industry plays a decisive role in the generation of GDP statistics at the local level. Landscape resources, as utilitarian tourism resources, cannot avoid being used for short-term political purposes. Normally, the success of a Scenic and Historic Interest Area is measured by its contribution to the local GDP. The media have reported that although Wulingyuan and Jiuzhaigou were listed as world heritage sites in the same year, Wulingyuan has beaten Jiuzhaigou because international tourism receipts in 2005 from Wulingyuan were USD 17 million, which was more than from Sichuan Province and three times more than Jiuzhaigou and Huanglong (a sister world heritage site near Jiuzhaigou) (XHN 2006). Both Sichuan province and Jiuzhaigou admitted they had been outdone by Wulingyuan. From this perspective, it seemed that all the ecological restoration and pollution control work done in Jiuzhaigou was meaningless and not valuable at all. At least, Jiuzhaigou itself was not confident about what had been done. This is one example of how a Scenic and Historic Interest Area or World Heritage site contributes to the local, provincial and even national economy. Wudang was the same. The income from this site was directly linked to the political and economic position of Hubei Province in China. Wudang had been sharply criticised by all social groups because it had not made any economic contribution over the previous ten years, while other sites such as Shaolin (少林, Buddhist Gong Fu) had made great profits from their world heritage sites<sup>9</sup>. Such political pressures have driven local heritage landscape managers to cooperate with economic capital and put all these landscape resources on the market to make profits.

### **Landscape: manipulated by political ideology**

Local governments not only economically compete with each other in the management of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, but they also compete culturally and ideologically. Especially in recent years, while still concerned about economic achievements, local governments began to pay attention to social and cultural issues, such as sustainability. Firstly, this relates to sustainable tourism income which is essential for GDP. Secondly, after the initial accumulation of economic capital, officials began to realise that their political positions also depend on their cultural and ideological accomplishments while reforms across China deepen.

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<sup>9</sup> From onsite interviews

Ecological management has become a cultural fashion which is assumed to represent cultural concerns about nature, as well as traditional knowledge and respect for it. The concept of ecology has also been used politically. Pristine nature, in many leaders' minds, even in many academics' minds, represents the most advanced management mode of the West. Thus, to adopt this form means that they stand at the frontier of international management—which could ensure their political futures (XHN 2003). Therefore, Jiuzhaigou became a popular example for the whole of China and took on a leadership role in the management of World Heritage sites and Scenic and Historic Interest Areas.

The meaning behind the Jiuzhaigou situation is that it created an absolutely different mode of practice from Chinese tradition. Most importantly, it followed international ideas and its actions were always commended by international organizations, as mentioned before. It represents an 'international standard' and it has been assumed that those who do not agree can or will not meet international standards and do not have an international perspective. This perspective is normally regarded as one of the most important qualities of a politician in China. Therefore, all site managers followed this new trend without thinking because they did not want to be 'backward', especially when they saw the huge economic profits to be made from 'eco-restoration'. Cleaning people out and creating pristine lands was the prevailing wisdom. This resembles the European story of the "Emperor's New Clothes". People just followed and did not see the naked reality. This kind of management is not done from a real scientific perspective, or due to the victory of ecological planning, but rather it is the result of political and ideological competition without real understanding of and concern for science or culture.

According to this logic, if one day local government officials are informed that the Jiuzhaigou model is not representative of advanced international thinking in heritage management, they will get rid of it immediately. That is what happened in Wudang. When the master planning team moved in to begin fieldwork in 2004, the local government was busy removing villagers from the site. The planning team tried hard to communicate with the government and prevent these removals based on cultural landscape values and environmental ethics. It did not work and the removals continued. In March of 2004, it was proposed at the seventh US/ICOMOS international symposium that culture could not be separated from nature, and it got wide support from the international community of heritage practitioners. This was clearly demonstrated in the Natchitoches Declaration (US/ICOMOS 2004) which

was subsequently created. The planning team passed this information on to the local government and pointed out that Jiuzhaigou's pristine mode of nature conservation was not appropriate to the culture of Wudang as a World Cultural Heritage site. Further, the planning team had to suggest the political implication that if Wudang could keep the locals onsite it would mean that the local government of Wudang could ideologically and culturally replace Jiuzhaigou's leading political position in world heritage management in China. Fortunately, this time the local government liked this interpretation, especially as the pressure from villagers' complaints was being felt in Beijing. Finally, the removals stopped in July of 2005. Obviously, it was a victory of politics rather than heritage conservation. Cultural landscapes, including their physical forms, their existence and contents, are dominated and determined by politics. It also shows that proper ethical procedures for heritage conservation have a long way to go in China.

#### **5.3.4 Cultural Consumption: Culture as Landscape Flavouring**

China is a large and traditional country with many cultural flavours. Its traditional philosophies and politics have been influenced by these cultures (Gao 1989), but does this country still have such a cultural spirit in today's rapidly industrialising era? This has been hotly debated in recent years in China (Qiu 2004). The case studies indicate that culture has been always an important theme for Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, but its meanings, content and forms have often been very different from traditional meanings. Traditional high culture has been replaced by popular culture and cultural consumption is now on the rise.

The case studies also indicate that although visitors followed the images of nature created by traditional high culture and their choices of destination have been strongly driven by this preference, today's Scenic and Interest Areas are no longer dominated by high culture. Traditional landscape cultures have become commodities for mass tourists. Visitors' attitudes to culture, both historic and local, are concentrated on cultural consumption and superficial enjoyment. Visitors are not concerned about authenticity and real cultural meanings and they do not want to explore. In Wudang, the pursuits of philosophy, morality, literature and even religion are not of the least interest to visitors. Visitors only enjoy the combination of ancient building complexes and natural beauty, but they show no interest in the great heritages of ancient building complexes and totally ignore the relics. They wander through the buildings, burning joss sticks in temples and appreciating beautiful scenes from buildings, enjoying tea or *Gongfu* (功夫) performances in temples

(Figure 5.6). For these modern Chinese tourists, the ancient buildings only provide traditional backgrounds for these entertainments. The history of these buildings and the values of this ancient complex are of no interest to them. They take pictures of each other, but are not interested in any interpretations of Wudang's history or buildings. Few of them would know which Dynasty this building complex was made in when they finish their tours.



Figure 5.6 Wudang Daoist Gongfu performance

It is the same in Jiuzhaigou. Theoretically, Jiuzhaigou's minority culture could be very attractive to Han tourists. But onsite, no serious dialogues between these two cultures have been observed and there is no serious interpretation of the history of this land and its people. Visitors excitedly appreciate the strikingly colourful water and they pass by the Tibetan water mill and religious temples, only showing interest in their bright colours and unique styles. They do not ask what this region was and how this religion influenced the Tibetan people of this land. They are more interested in dressing up in colourful Tibetan clothes, riding on Mou Cows and posing for pictures (Figure 5.7). At night, they go to see the Tibetan singing and dancing performances outside the valley and enjoy delicious Tibetan food and wine. That is enough for the visitors and they are very satisfied that they have experienced wonderful Tibetan culture, even if after their visits they still did not know where these Tibetans came from. This is typical cultural consumption of mass tourism in China. Most visitors love culture, or more accurately, things labelled as cultural, but only as flavouring for a landscape.



Figure 5.7 Visitors busy dressing up in Tibetan clothes for photographs

Site management is similarly biased, with culture regarded as “decoration”. In ancient China, scholars were the top class, above any other, and business did not have high social standing. In today’s China, no one would like to be regarded as lacking cultural sensibility. Although values are centred on the economy now, culture is always good ‘decoration’ for one’s social position. Compared with Wudang’s splendid history, Jiuzhaigou always felt disadvantaged because of its lack of substantial history and culture. So Jiuzhaigou’s managers have endeavoured to maintain the traditional cultures of the Tibetans, such as temples and houses, and Tibetan place names add cultural colour to the site. However, this was to compete with other sites instead of expressing sincere respect for local culture or history. In Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, history and culture are not respected. Managers commonly ignore the original history of the land and rename mountains, rivers and even cities, and interpret the landscapes in their own ways. They demolish the old, less-than-perfect buildings and rebuild them, adding new structures that imitate traditional styles to make the site ‘culturally attractive’ with ‘history’.

As Wudang is a world cultural heritage site, all cultural information should be treated as important and should be carefully recorded. Unfortunately, many classical names of valleys, streams and places have been changed and they have lost their relationships with historic cultural contexts. Managers are not usually professionally trained in heritage management and do not understand the meaning of ‘World Cultural Heritage’. What they focus on is how this culture can be a weapon to beat

other sites in the tourism market. With this expectation of culture, it is not surprising that managers, in order to meet perceived market needs, are especially keen to interpret the Wudang culture as a Daoist escape to enjoy nature, instead of emphasising the historical values of the ancient complexes. Daoist culture has been vulgarised and even abused, and used as cultural reasons to build dams in ravines to allow recreational boating. Other tourism attractions, such as classes in Daoist *Gongfu*, a base for *Gongfu* film making, and wild food restaurants, are all commercial manipulations in the name of culture. Culture has become a commodity for tourist consumption. Serious cultural heritages that cannot be commodified are simply locked or left to decay (Figure 5.8).



Figure 5.8 Wudang's locked temple and decaying relics

Historically, the Chinese have been educated that culture is important and the Chinese will never lose this. However, historical cultures today are being transformed into commodities for consumption. In landscape tourism, both the producers and the consumers have been satisfied by this ‘culture-flavoured feast’, because they are making profits and enjoying themselves. They can also advertise their cultural identities to enhance their social positions and to satisfy their ‘cultural vanity’.

### 5.3.5 Creating Wilderness: Removal of Inhabitants and Man-made Structures

In today’s China, the scale of construction in nature is unprecedented. Natural or semi-natural areas are being rapidly urbanised. In contrast, the removal of human settlements and the prohibition of construction, with the requirement to “leave nothing except footprints” is also unprecedented.

The year 2001 was a landmark for China's Scenic and Historic Interest Areas. In that year Jiuzhaigou declared that the agricultural era which had existed for more than one thousand years had come to an end after 400 hectares of farmland was returned to the forest. From then on, Jiuzhaigou began to promote pristine nature. Except for homes of the Tibetan people and sight-seeing, no other human activities are allowed. Even the toilets are movable and can be recycled. Nature is the ruler of the land and human beings are temporary visitors. It could be called a "New Chinese Wilderness" (Han 2005). More recently, this wilderness model has been rapidly adopted in the rest of China. Wudang and Wulingyuan are examples and many other Scenic and Historic Interest Areas are clearing locals from the land and trying to catch up with Jiuzhaigou. However, the idea of wilderness is not a cultural phenomenon in China and it has distinctly international origins. This theme will be explored further in the next chapter.

### **5.3.6 Landscape as a Symbol of Wealth and Power**

In ancient China, landscape gardens were normally owned by the Imperial court, the wealthy and scholars, and landscape appreciation was a special interest of certain social classes, such as scholars. So landscape as a social, cultural and political symbol has been part of Chinese tradition. Traditional landscapes were highly valued, both culturally and spiritually, so that scholars' gardens were the most highly ranked. Landscapes designed to show off wealth would be regarded as demonstrating a lack of cultural taste and at risk of offending the Emperor. However, in today's China, since landscapes can be sold and commodified for consumption by capital, and manipulated by politics, they have become symbols of wealth and power, serving the privileged new elite urban class who can afford the prices. However, today's urban elite is an economic one instead of the traditional cultural and spiritual elite.

Local villagers have been moved off their original lands, away from the sight of visitors (WSRAD 2002). Their homelands are being rebuilt to be a paradise for the visitors. This indicates that local people cannot enjoy this landscape and are shameful to outsiders, which is social prejudice. This making of pristine nature is designed to meet the needs of the new urban economic elite and certainly not for local villagers.

Years ago, big cities were competing with each other over the scale of their urban squares to show their achievements. More recently, after the fundamental accumulation of capital, they have begun to compete for environmental kudos, and the most important indicator of this is how much nature is owned in a city. Natural landscapes have become luxury consumables. A wealthy city can afford the huge cost of buying big trees from other areas, or even importing trees from foreign countries, and building high-maintenance, costly lakes to make a city ecologically ‘healthy’ and ‘naturally’ beautiful. Politicians are impatient for trees, so in big cities large pollarded trees are transplanted everywhere. “Transplantation of Big Trees” is happening all over China. Villagers from the mountains are very happy to help in this business. They see this as a chance to be rich because they never thought that the trees surrounding them for generations could make money. The villagers help to look for big trees in the deep mountains and stones in rivers, or even mud to sell for city gardening. In big cities, such as Shanghai, it is very easy to judge the social class of people by the size of the trees and quality of landscape design in the residential communities where they live. Landscapes are representative of their social identities.

In crowded and speedily developing Chinese cities, after the elites have achieved their first economic targets, they begin to compete for how much leisure time they can spend. This means how much time they can spend in healthy pursuits, and the ability to escape from the sick cities and frequently visit nature. To have leisure time and be healthy are luxuries for urban elites and those who are still struggling to earn bigger salaries do not have the opportunity to enjoy these goals. This enjoyment belongs to a special social class. It is the ideal elite life to be rich, to make money and lead an elegant city life, but also to be able to escape into pristine nature, going boating or fishing. This is the life advertised by the media and pursued by the new urban elite.

Today’s nature is prepared for urban elites and symbolic of wealth. Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, such as Jiuzhaigou, have become icons for this ideal, aimed at the urban elites rather than mass tourists. In China, the average entrance fee to National Level Scenic and Historic Interest Areas or World Heritage Sites is nearly 1 per cent of average GDP per person, about ten times more than that of other countries. This has the three characteristics of being expensive, market controlled and elitist (Xi 2005). Striking landscapes do not belong to the public, but are the wealth of the privileged.

### **5.3.6 The ‘Visual handicap’**

Contemporary constructions in nature are heavily criticised, as previously mentioned. One of the most important reasons for this is that the new constructions lack the aesthetic sense of those created by ancient Chinese. The lack of aesthetic sense could be described as a ‘visual handicap’.

In ancient China, the builders were scholars. They were all painters and poets. Large constructions in Natural areas, such as Wudang and West Lake, were all supervised by the Emperors or great scholars (Chinese Emperors were great scholars too). Their high aesthetic taste ensured the integration of these constructions with the natural settings.

However, today’s tastes are far from those of the ancients. It seems that the contemporary Chinese do not have the aesthetic ability to produce harmonious constructions which compete with their ancestors. This absence of aesthetic appreciation in contemporary Chinese could be described as a ‘visual handicap’ (Gruffudd 1997).

It is a lack of aesthetic awareness that leaves ‘scars’ upon nature that are strongly attacked by environmental conservationists who call for their demolition. It has also happened to landscape planners and designers, as their planned and designed landscapes commonly are not beautiful at all. Most of the onsite constructions examined in this research were designed. They have ‘authenticities’ that truly reflect today’s aesthetic tastes, but their works are not harmonious with nature.

The central government realized this problem and it became one reason why many strict policies have been passed in recent years to restrain constructions in natural areas. In order to be easy for management, it is simply not allowed to construct anything in the core parts of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas because it is feared that once it is allowed, then whole areas will be soon be destroyed by developments of poor aesthetic quality.

## **5.4 Changes, Social Roots and Conflicts**

From above analysis, it has been clear that there are many values of nature have been changed between the traditional values of nature and contemporary values of nature. However, all these changes have been based on social contexts which will be explored in this section. These changes also brought many new social conflicts.

### 5.4.1 Changing patterns

Patterns of values of nature have enormously changed. However, some of the traditional values have been continued and some have been discontinued. The continuities and discontinuities with tradition values are synthesised in the Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Comparison of traditional and contemporary Chinese values of Nature

Values	Tradition Values of Nature	Contemporary Values of Nature
<b>Philosophy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ontology of philosophy;</li> <li>● Confucianism;</li> <li>● Taoism</li> </ul>	---
<b>Aesthetics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Greatest beauty;</li> <li>● Objects of aesthetics; Permeated in all life details;</li> <li>● to power moral cultivation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Visual Pleasure;</li> <li>● Aesthetic consumption.</li> </ul>
<b>Culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Origins of landscape culture achievements;</li> <li>● Representatives of Chinese high culture;</li> <li>● Scholars' interests and personalities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Representatives of mass consumption culture</li> </ul>
<b>Morality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Symbols of great human morals.</li> </ul>	---
<b>Economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Agriculture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Objects of Capital;</li> <li>● Utility use of all resources;</li> <li>● Landscape commodification;</li> <li>● Tourism industry.</li> </ul>
<b>Ecology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Base of <i>Feng Shui</i> theory;</li> <li>● Pursuing Long Life as Immortals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Physical and emotional health;</li> <li>● Wilderness.</li> </ul>
<b>Life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Artistic way of life;</li> <li>● Settlement;</li> <li>● Extension of home;</li> <li>● Pleasant and enjoyable place;</li> <li>● Meaning of life.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Place to escape from city life;</li> <li>● Settlement;</li> <li>● Extension of home;</li> <li>● Place of enjoyment and amusement;</li> <li>● Achieving immediate sensuous delights.</li> </ul>
<b>Politics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Connect to imperial power;</li> <li>● Retirement place for scholars to express different political positions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Capitalized for economy and politics;</li> <li>● Privileges of city elite class;</li> <li>● Symbol of the Wealth</li> </ul>
<b>Social</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To balance the powers between serving society and retiring from society to eliminate social conflicts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To heal the illness of urbanization;</li> <li>● Escape from urban life.</li> </ul>

From the above analysis, it is clear that traditional Chinese values of nature have changed greatly, but that many of them are still present, although they are sometimes hard to observe and are more imbedded in the details of life. Broadly, values of nature have been changing from the spiritual to the material and are aimed at utility, health, consumption and commodification rather than the traditional philosophy, morality or high aesthetics. Although landscapes are still symbols of politics and culture, they are now very different. In Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, the most important characteristic of today's landscapes is the combination of politics

and capital and the culture of landscapes is manipulated by both of them. Popular culture has been overwhelming China (Hu 2006), including Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, as traditional high culture is moved off the main stage. Today's values of nature are much more diverse and contested than in ancient China. Traditional values have been destroyed, reconstructed and reordered. The main changes in values of nature are shown in the above Table.

#### **5.4.2 Cultural and Social Roots**

Among all these changes, the change of cultural values is the most notable. The traditional Chinese cultures, centred on life philosophies, created unique achievements, including landscapes, and left many artistic treasures that are honoured as China's heritage today. The most inspiring and fascinating parts of this culture, which underpinned the material heritage, were its philosophical perspectives, aesthetic life attitudes, persistent moral cultivation and responsibility for the country. These are not highly valued today. The Chinese have lost many of their traditions and the whole society is very dominated by Western values (Han 2003). This phenomenon continues because the Chinese keep "happily killing their cultures" (Feng 2001). The Chinese are in a cultural crisis now. However, this enormous cultural change of undervaluing Chinese tradition and over-valuing westernisation did not happen simultaneously with the industrial and economic revolution of the last twenty years. It is a consequence of the great cultural change that began two hundred years ago. This change needs further interpretation and exploration from its historic cultural and social roots.

#### **Three Types of Chinese Tradition**

He Huaihong (2005) described Chinese cultural tradition as three stages: "Millennium tradition", "Century tradition" and "Decades tradition". "Millennium culture" is also called traditional Chinese culture or Confucian Culture, while "Century tradition" was formed in modern history, especially after the *Wusi Movement* (五四运动), which was firstly a period of enlightenment and later a revolutionary era. It was also called China's Renaissance since it brought China new thoughts and attacked traditional Chinese social structures. The "Decades tradition" began with China's reopening to the world in 1978 and is characterised by rapid development of the economy and great improvements in living conditions. "Millennium culture" historically influenced Chinese cultural values and belief in an unseen but permanent way. "Century tradition" provides today's national structure and political beliefs. "Decades tradition" is changing our daily lives very fast. The last

two hundred years, especially the last century, are characterised by changes from Chinese traditions and the pursuit of Westernisation.

### **The Cultural Flux of Westernisation: Impacts of Centuries of Cultural Revolutions**

The biggest characteristic of the movements within society during the last century is the continuous total denial of tradition (Han 2003). “Our era is one where everything is valued by standards that are not consistent with tradition”. The 20<sup>th</sup> century was a period of denying tradition and being westernised (Han 2003).

The ancient Chinese civilisation had its own unique logic and characteristics, and developed independently over five thousand years with many brilliant achievements. As the most stable and richest country in the world, ancient China enjoyed its wealth, power and good life. But these dreams ended when the door was opened by Western weapons during the Opium War (1840). It was from this point that China became a half-colonial and half-feudal society after many centuries as an independent country. The 20<sup>th</sup> century was the darkest era for China. The Opium War was only the beginning of the Chinese frustration and disgrace. While China was defeated again and again by the West in later wars, the social elites began to question traditional Chinese social systems and values. This is the background to the movement against traditional cultures and thought in China's modern history. The social elites tried in all ways to save China, especially the elite scholars who followed the Confucian teaching that to serve their country was the most important thing in their lives. Firstly they tried to save their country by learning about new technology from the West, such as during the *Foreign Affairs Movement* (洋务运动) from 1860 to 1890. Although this movement greatly stimulated the development of primitive capitalism, they failed to save China from being invaded and oppressed by the West. China was defeated again in the later *Jaw War* (甲午战争, 1894) with the Japanese. The Chinese elite began to realise that small surgery could not save China, because its disease was deeply rooted in its solidly feudal social system. They had to think about rebuilding this system thoroughly and renewing it with Western capitalism, and this is the main characteristic of the later *Modernization Movement* (维新运动) from 1895 to 1898. However, all the reforms failed under the traditional power of feudalism. It was not until 1911 that the *Xinhe Revolution* (辛亥革命) led by Shun Zhongshan (孙中山) ended China's last feudalist Qing Dynasty (清朝). The foundation of the first capitalist system of the Republic of China (中华民国)

国) in 1911 declared that the feudalism of more than two thousand years was finished and there would be no more emperors. It was a great moment in the history of China's modernisation and it showed that it was possible to be a country without an Emperor. This greatly liberated all new thoughts. Traditional values had been overthrown by basic society. However, this revolution was not complete and soon the president of the Republic of China was replaced by a new Emperor, Yuan Shikai (袁世凯), on December 12, 1915. However, he had only been in this position for a hundred days when the Republic of China was reinstated. This proved that the revolution was not as thorough as had been expected and China was still a half-colonial country.

The groundswell against the old social system built up until 4 May 1919, when China's unsustainable government was obliged to sign the "*Nanjing Unequal Contract*" (南京不平等条约) with the Western invaders. It was a huge insult for all Chinese patriots and a large-scale protest started in Beijing. Rapidly the whole of China responded. This movement was led by the new intelligentsia, which were mostly students. The *Wusi Movement* in 1919 was a milestone and the beginning of a change to a new democracy. As "China's Renaissance" it enlightened democracy and science. This new era in China had a profound influence, especially in the ideological and cultural fields. The motive of the *Wusi Movement* was to break down the bondage of all traditional systems which had exerted so much influence through two thousand years of Chinese history. These traditions were regarded as the anchor that would stop Chinese society from developing. The feudalist social system had lost its vibrancy and strangled new enlightened thought. The new intelligentsia rethought Chinese social and cultural systems and concluded that it was the lack of Western democracy and science that allowed China to be defeated by the West and lose its sovereignty. Therefore, to change this system from the roots up and to study Western democracy and science was the most important way of saving China. These radical thoughts broke down China's social system and its culture. It was a great cultural change because from then on traditional cultures were completely denigrated, including old beliefs such as Confucianism. It laid the foundation for China to accept later radical thoughts of revolution, such as the French and Russian Revolutions, and finally resulted in Mao Zedong's (毛泽东) contemporary revolution.

The culture resulting from Mao Zedong's revolution forms the ideologies of modern China. The establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, successfully

saved China from being half-feudal and half-colonial, and ended the wars which had plagued the country for more than one hundred years. It was a great social and political change in China's history. After liberation, the peasants became masters of the country instead of their historical positions as slaves of the land. From then on, the elite class that was linked to traditional high culture lost its dominant position in society.

The later *Great Cultural Revolution* (文化大革命), from 1966 to 1976, essentially destroyed the historical Chinese culture based on Confucianism. All traditional cultures were regarded as poison to society and were demoted, while the intelligentsia were driven to the countryside and the education system collapsed. It was the darkest cultural era and a great cultural disaster in Chinese history. It is normally referred as the "Decade of Disaster" and brought huge pain to the whole country. Traditional cultural values were totally abandoned. During that time China was an isolated socialist country surrounded by Western or Westernised capitalist countries. All the generations since then have been separated from their histories and their ancestors are now beyond their reach. The social elite today were all born in the 1960s or after and generally they lack historic sensibilities.

When the *Great Cultural Revolution* (文化大革命) ended and when China reopened to the world in 1978, the whole society was extremely weak. Once again Western ideals were regarded as best recipe for saving the country. To have a modern economy was the only objective considered by the whole society and to be westernised in ideology would help realise this target.

During the 1980s, every university student was reading the writings of Freud, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Sartre, and so on, and traditional cultural values were totally ignored. The 1980s was an important decade of Western cultural input. At the end of the 1980s some leading scholars began to think about the conflicts between modernism, globalisation and the loss of Chinese identity. They realised that China was experiencing a great cultural crisis and they felt they lacked cultural foundations while they were facing the enormous influence of Western culture. They began to consciously retrace their traditional roots. In literature, the focus shifted from "*Scar Literature*" (伤痕文学) of the Great Cultural Revolution to "*Seeking Roots Literature*" (寻根文学). It rapidly caused a nation-wide debate over modernity. The reconstruction of the Chinese spirit seemed possible and within reach.

Unfortunately, just when China began to be aware of the possible negative aspects of modernism and the positive aspects of traditional culture, China entered the 1990s. The economy began to increase rapidly and it was emphasised as the only true focus for China. Everything was centred on economic reforms and the market became the only guiding principle. Under these circumstances, to call Chinese culture back and to be wary of modernity was considered undesirable. The burgeoning movement to recall Chinese culture failed.

"The 1990s were mostly characterised by boredom" (Gan 2006). All values, including social and cultural lives, were rapidly commodified. "Criticism of the Western capitalist position and epistemology from cultural perspectives almost disappeared in China" (Gan 2006). Culture was suffering from 'aphasia'. Commercialised society resulted in the commodification of everything and the prevalence of popular mass culture which left people spiritually empty. The market economy coldly broke the traditional principles of the harmony between morality and discipline among human beings. Society was hierarchically re-classified by wealth. While social wealth has rapidly been accumulated without the constraints of traditional moral and cultural beliefs, the Chinese now are experiencing all kinds of social and cultural crises affecting trust, honesty, family, marriage and beliefs. Chinese tradition and spirit have disintegrated and spiritual emptiness is hidden behind the prosperity of the economy.

The Western influence has been characterised by rapid globalisation. China's modernisation and industrialisation are led by the information industry, which is highly globalised (Hu 2006). Chinese social values are not only centred on industrial production, but also on consumption because globalisation is also centred on consumption (Hu 2006). Globalisation enhances the dominance of popular culture and the loss of national tradition. In today's China, although industrialisation is not yet finished, it can be seen that there are mixed cultural characteristics of pre-modernism, modernism and post-modernism.

The examination of history shows how traditional Chinese culture was gradually destroyed. In the last one hundred years, the linkage with tradition was interrupted and gradually the Chinese lost their ability to talk to their ancestors, while China experienced political and economical turmoil and lost its foundations. This is essential for understanding today's cultural phenomena in China and in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas. Only from this historic perspective can the changes in

cultural themes be set into social contexts. The cultural changes emerging in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas are linked to the changes in all social, cultural, political and economic contexts. Only when we understand these contexts, can we understand the meanings and values of Chinese attitudes and behaviours, and understand why popular culture can be so dominant in today's China. However, this problem has just been recognised nationally (Gan 2006). "Rebuilding the Chinese Spirit" (Qiu 2004) has a long way to go.

### **5.5.3 Conflicts and Contests**

The above section on modern Chinese history helps us to understand and interpret the changed cultural values emerging from the case studies which exhibit strong Western characteristics and lack Traditional Chinese values. It reveals that the changes in cultural values are consistent with social value changes and have their own historic cultural and social contexts. This is a continuing process.

Today, there are social and cultural conflicts embedded in these values. The conflicts emerging in the management of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas can be identified in five ways.

First, there is conflict between the expansion of capital and restraints on it. The power of capital has been demonstrated. It has caused conflicts between different departments of the central government and between the central government and local governments over the use of capital. Generally speaking, the central government always plays a key role in restraining capital to maintain balance in society, but different departments have their own objectives. In the management of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, the State Construction Ministry has a totally different attitude from that of the State Tourism Bureau. The task of the State Construction Ministry is to safeguard these areas as national symbols, while the State Tourism Bureau regards these areas as perfect tourism destinations. Local governments, who are appointed by the State Construction Ministry to manage these areas, do not willingly work under its strict management policies. They would much prefer to be under the management of the State Tourism Bureau that allows them to use these precious heritage resources as commodities for short-term income. The highly priced "landscape feast" is strong evidence of the power of capital. Even at the state level it is hard to control the influence of capital in this economically dynamic era.

Second, there is a conflict between heritage conservation and tourism use, and this is a contradiction in values. As mentioned previously, traditional high culture has been rapidly replaced by popular mass culture. It has become a matter for concern. National Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, some of them world heritage properties, were historically created by high culture. As products of high culture, it is necessary to maintain their characteristics to protect their authenticity, but as destinations for mass tourism, they are popular culture consumables. Popular culture requires the transfer of high culture into secular culture and the provision of entertaining commodities for consumption by mass tourists. The mass tourists in the case studies are not interested in serious cultural history. Under these circumstances, onsite heritage conservation to maintain the authenticity of traditional culture is extremely difficult because high culture and under-valued traditions have no way to survive. In the case studies, we saw the cultural consumption of Tibetan culture, the Wudang religious culture. Elsewhere we also had cars driving through the Great Wall for advertisements, a new giant Buddha scheduled to join the original in the World Heritage area of Leshan (乐山), and an expensive Chinese medical feast served in the historical Chinese medicine house Hu Qing Yu Tang (胡庆余堂). These activities are at odds with the authenticity of heritage areas. Traditional high culture is under-valued and is always defeated when it encounters popular culture.

Third, the social conflicts have been exacerbated by social resources being re-distributed under the influence of capital. From the case studies it can be seen there are severe conflicts between local villagers and local governments. China was a major agricultural country for over two thousand years. Mao Zedong (毛泽东) won the Liberation War (解放战争) because he understood that the most important thing in China was the land. It was Mao who let every peasant become master of the land, which is how he won their trust and support and eventually won the war. Although today's rapid urbanisation creates many opportunities for farmers to leave the land and to have new lives, not all of them have left the land because of urbanisation. In the case studies, the removal of villagers was not based on improvements in their quality of life. It was because the natural resources that the villagers had lived on for generations were politically and economically re-distributed to the urban elite tourists, the upper class of today. The local villagers, regarded as a low social class, had their lifestyles sacrificed in the name of eco-restoration. Eco-restoration has been used as an economic and political mechanism, instead of for real scientific purposes.

Fourth, the conflict between national identity and globalisation emerged. China signed many international agreements, such as the World Heritage Convention, and became more and more active in global events. China is deeply influenced by international values and to meet international criteria has sometimes meant sacrifice for the Chinese. Jiuzhaigou and Wulingyuan are typical examples. Also, when many World Heritage sites in China were initially nominated, they had strong national or local identities, but all these identities were soon destroyed after they obtained the 'golden brand' of world heritage listing and became international tourism destinations. They were rapidly changed by global commercialisation.

Fifth, there is a conflict between cultural tradition and scientific management. The lack of scientific spirit in traditional Chinese is causing severe ecological crises in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas. Their preferences, attitudes and behaviour towards nature are severe threats to the natural environment.

### **5.5 Conclusion**

Trends from the case studies have been identified and their relationships with tradition have been explored. These changes have been interpreted in historic social, cultural, political and economic contexts.

In summary, today's values of nature are a long way from the traditional ones at the epistemological and cultural level. The traditional philosophical, cultural, moral and aesthetic pursuits in nature that were related to spiritual cosmic harmony and aesthetic life have faded away and have been replaced by globalised cultural consumption. The values today are dominated by Western ideas. Exploration of Westernisation during the 20th century shows that the decline of Chinese tradition and the dominance of Western values has historic origins. Changed values are not only a consequence of recent industrial and economic progress, but also the consequence of continuous social and cultural counterattacks. From this perspective, it can be seen how globalisation dominated by Western values was so rapidly accepted by the Chinese. However, the analysis also strongly showed the power of Chinese cultural traditions "running like an underground spring" and "existing in today's Chinese life" even without ideological awareness of these traditions. Many details of Chinese life, such as the preference for human structures in nature, and pursuit of sensuous enjoyment based on humanism, reflect the great influence of tradition which accounts for the distinct Chinese characteristics of today's globalisation. The perception of subjective oneness with nature has never changed

through history, although traditional high culture has been vulgarised and even abused.

The changing values of nature in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas have caused severe social conflicts. It has been clearly demonstrated that landscape is not an ideal and romantic concept, but that its nature is deeply rooted in dynamic social, political, cultural and economic contexts. In China, the contemporary conflicts over the values of landscape are much more intense than in ancient China. Politics unites with economics to manipulate landscapes in a new way in China's history and this has caused a re-distribution of social space. Social and cultural prejudice still exists and has even been enhanced by the manipulated landscape. The symbolic meanings of landscape are extending. Landscape also presents contested values on international, national and regional scales.

Many problems in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in China are also international concerns and attract global interest. Based on the exploration and interpretation of Chinese themes of values of nature, the next chapter will explore Chinese values in international contexts.

PART 4

# Chapter 6

## **Theoretical Arguments: Locating Chinese Themes in International Contexts**

## 6.1 Introduction

In Chapter 5, values of nature emerging from the case studies were identified and their relationships with Chinese tradition were explored. It was found that some are related to tradition and some are not. Some traditions have been inherited while some have been changed or are new, but closely related to contemporary social and cultural changes. The relationships between tradition and the changes have been interpreted in historic and dynamic Chinese social, cultural and political contexts. Conflicts between the new values have been identified. This chapter will focus on those values and conflicts which are also of contemporary international concern, thus moving the interpretation of these themes further into international theoretical contexts. At the same time, the potential theoretical contributions of the Chinese experience will be identified based on their uniqueness. Discussions will be carried out to respond to the theoretical foundations outlined in Chapter 3 for this research. Overall, this chapter will move from interpretation to theoretical discussion and aims to answer research questions 2 and 3: "What are the mechanics of the values of nature?" and "What are the contributions of Chinese values?"

This chapter aims to explore the four main themes with international relevance, namely the philosophical cognition of nature the meaning of landscapes, wilderness and moral ethics of nature. It is a process of theoretical generation and will lay the foundation for the exploration of implications.

## 6.2 Humanised Nature and Naturalised Human beings: Philosophical Views

*Mankind might not have another chance like the Chinese had over several thousand years to build a cultural system from structure to forms until every detail was extremely fine and was in perfect harmony. The experience of realising this harmony is unique in human history and others may be inspired by this experience in the future (Wang 1990).*

人类社会可能永远不会再有机会象中国的古人们那样慷慨，舍得花几千年的光阴使一种文化形态从其体系，直到其中每一个细微构建的和谐完善都达到极致。因此，这种实现和谐完善的过程和经验在整个人类历史中也就是独一无二的，将来的人们也许可以从这里得到启发。”

—— 王毅 (1990)

One of the most important focuses of contemporary Western theories of environmental philosophy and New cultural geography is on the culture of nature, the recognition of the social and cultural construction of nature, or the humanism of nature (Cosgrove and Jackson 1987). However, in China, the humanism of nature was historically recognised and it penetrated life for thousands of years, as has

been described in detail in previous chapters. It is worth emphasising that there is another Chinese characteristic of the relationship between human beings and nature, the unique quality of “naturalised Human beings” (Zhang 2005; Wang 1990). This characteristic has not been recognised in historical research yet in China (Gong 2001), but it has been a very important characteristic which has created a unique quality of traditional Chinese culture: the dynamic interaction between nature and human spiritual worlds. Its unique outcome is not only humanised nature, but also naturalised human beings. While nature was attached to human cultures, human beings were deeply influenced by nature in their spiritual and material lives. However, for human beings to be ‘natural’ is both easy and difficult. According to Marxism, human beings come from nature and, as organic parts of nature, inevitably are creatures of nature (Gao 1989). On the one hand, it is easy to be ‘natural’. On the other hand, human beings are social creatures and their minds are already highly influenced by social knowledge, so they are both ‘artificial’ and ‘natural’. The ancient Chinese philosophers realised this human dilemma. They tried to solve this human problem right from the beginning. They aimed to transcend human limitations as natural creatures, consciously cultivating and elevating their human qualities to overcome the disadvantages of social knowledge. During this process, they claimed the highest qualities of nature as eternal principles for the cultivation of life. In this way the ancient Chinese created a perfect model of life: human beings who recognise they are part of nature, who live in harmony with nature and who will return to nature. This attitude avoids many social problems.

This consciously ‘natural’ pursuit was such a hard journey that it was pursued throughout China’s two-thousand-year feudal history. It was the characteristic of Chinese culture which most distinguished it from Western culture (Gong 2001). During this process the Chinese landscape, as the major feature of nature, has been maintained as both the most tangible and intangible evidence. This has all been historically attached to such rich symbolic and metaphorical meanings that they cannot be fully understood if we do not understand their creators: the Chinese in nature. Therefore, it is necessary to further discuss their philosophical origins, which might also help to provide further interpretations for today’s many confusing phenomena, such as how the Chinese could consume nature in so many insensitive ways while they have the tradition of “being oneness with nature”. It seems there is severe contradiction between the harmonious ideas with nature and the consuming behaviours. The Chinese traditional idea of “being oneness with nature” needs re-thinking.

### **6.2.1 Chinese Ontological and Epistemological Obliteration of Nature and Human Beings**

Chapter 3 showed how the Chinese traditionally showed little interest in ontological questions. Nature as an empirical objective had never been separated or fully developed from the subjective outlook of the Chinese (Gao 1989). Confucianism was regarded as complete humanism because it never discussed any other ontological possibilities of the cosmos outside human nature and society (Lin 1935; Gao 1989). The only concern of Confucianism was human beings and their worldly society. “Oneness with nature” of Confucianism emphasised the initiatives of Human beings. The value of the individual was elevated to relate the whole of society and then to the whole cosmos, and so the cultivation of harmony of the individual personality was essential for a harmonious society and world. Human beings were as great as nature, Heaven and the Earth. Nature could be totally integrated into human hearts and was represented by human ethics. Thus, in Confucianism, Human beings and nature were ontologically mixed. Although Daoism followed the ‘Way of nature’, this nature was “a nature perfectly filtered by Chinese life philosophy and it was also not a real objective world. It was a beautiful and romantic ideal imagined by the Chinese” (Lin 2002). Only those aesthetic and enjoyable experiences of life in nature were appreciated and accepted. The harsh aspects of Darwin’s principles of evolution had been historically and consciously ignored (but that does not mean they had not been observed) (Gao 1989, p74). However, the “Being at One with nature of Daoism emphasised eschewing human initiatives and going back to nature because of the belief that human knowledge prevented them from experiencing the great beauty of nature and having a natural, harmonious life. Eventually Confucianism, humanised nature and Daoism made Humans part of nature. Ontologically, both of them were inclined to dispel the boundaries of subjective and objective humanity as well as nature, and to keep the world sensorily integrated (Gao 1989, p190) in order to achieve a ‘happy life’ (Lin 1935). The Chinese put all their energies into constructing an isomorphic relationship between nature and Human beings, instead of the heterogeneity sought in the West (Gao 1989). This philosophical integration of harmony with nature resulted in the most important characteristics of Chinese culture which distinguished it from Western analytical and divisive perspectives on nature (Lin 1935; Gao 1989; Wang 1990; Feng 1990).

Chinese philosophies are about human beings and their highest practices involve the aesthetic pursuit of life itself. Traditional landscape aesthetics that feature the

most interactive relationships between nature and human beings form the main body of Chinese ancient aesthetics. Therefore, to some extent, Chinese philosophies are more suitable to being interpreted by aesthetics or, more precisely, by landscape aesthetics (Peng 1998). “Constructing a direct aesthetic experience between nature and human beings” is one of the most important characteristics of traditional Chinese aesthetics (Zhang 2005). The lives of the Chinese intelligentsia, the scholars, were most valued by the level of the aesthetic and moral personalities that they cultivated. The principles, standards and characteristics of nature were consciously and persistently pursued by the ancient Chinese intelligentsia as the highest principles for human society. They believed that to follow these principles would eventually lead human beings to spiritually transcend the ‘ego-self’ and achieve perfect harmony between the human world and nature. This poetic ideal resulted in natural aesthetics penetrating all details of life and scholars’ moral cultivation. Some contemporary scholars have even directly asserted that matters of life were also matters of aesthetics, and that the essential Chinese life was a “poetic” one (Feng 1985; Lin 1937; Xu 1996).

### **6.2.2 Subjective and Objective Nature: Chinese Landscape Achievements**

The above philosophies developed into the Chinese humanism that clearly proclaimed a human-centred universe and laid down the rule that the end of all knowledge was to serve human happiness, a simple life in harmonious social relationships (Lin 1935). The aesthetics of Confucianism were centred on *the Doctrine of the Golden Mean* (Zhong and Yong, 中庸之道, refer to chapter 3) and its task was to apply these principles of harmony to human ethics, while Daoism sought escape from society to a spiritual refuge in nature to pursue eternal harmony. These harmonies were strongly reflected in ancient Chinese art and showed a deep relationship with nature.

Ancient Chinese artists were judged firstly by their ‘moral character’. A Chinese artist must absorb in himself the best of human culture and nature’s spirit. The best moral cultivation was to travel in nature. “The Chinese artist is a man who is at peace with nature, who is free from the shackles of society and from the temptations of gold, and whose spirit is deeply immersed in mountains and rivers and other manifestations of nature” in order to “chasten his heart” or “broaden his spirit”. He should be a “good man” first (Lin 1935, p281). Retreating to the mountains or lakes also meant searching for moral cultivation and elevation, which was the last and most important reason for travel. They were “travelling, learning and cultivating”.

Then their chastened spirit went into their art pieces and they made Chinese art characterised by “the spirit of calm and harmony, the flavour of the mountain air tingled with a little of the recluse’s passion for leisure and aloofness” (Lin 1935, p283). However, their travels into nature were not for the purpose of achieving supremacy over it, but for harmony with it, and to become one with nature by immersing themselves in nature.

However, in Chinese landscape paintings “we decidedly feel that the artist has interfered with material reality and presented it to us only as it appears to him, without losing its essential likeness or intelligibility to others” and “it manages to achieve a decidedly subjective appearance of things without creating contortions” (Lin 1935,p291) . Scholars entered nature, observed nature and experienced nature instead of directly sketching from it, which is a distinguishing characteristic of Chinese paintings. At a first glance, Chinese landscape paintings lack perspective and proportion, so they do not look real. But British artist David Hockney, one of the most critically acclaimed and universally popular contemporary artists, who has been deeply influenced by Chinese paintings, points out that “most art historians do not know Chinese scrolls, Europeans do not” (BBC 2005). He further asserted, “Chinese paintings do have perspective, but their perspective is memory. While Western painters are sketching according to the landscapes outside the window, the Chinese take a walk outside and then go back home to record what they have seen” (Hockney, in Yang 2003) . The perspective mentioned here is about time, and there are four dimensions rather than three dimensions in space. Thus the perspective in Chinese paintings is not focused on one point. Instead, it is discursive and this makes it possible to contain multiple scenes. Therefore, “no one Chinese landscape painting is about real surroundings and natural objectives. They are all subjectively created and mixed with all the imaginings in an artist’s mind” (Hockney, in Yang 2003). Shi Tao’s (石涛) famous landscape scroll “Searching Great Peaks for Draft Portrait” (搜尽奇峰图卷打草稿, 1691, Qing Dynasty, Figure 6.1) is a typical example. It assembled all the great mountains and bodies of water that he had ever visited in his life. In the process of art creation, nature was the initial blueprint, but the final product was subjectively constructed by the artist.



Figure 6.1 *Searching Great Peaks for Draft Portrait*, Shi Tao (石涛), Qing Dynasty

Although David Hockney has an accurate understanding of the meaning of time in Chinese landscape painting, obviously he does not get the deep sense of the perspectives of landscapes in the high mountains in Chinese paintings. Only those who have seen views from such high mountains can understand that what the Chinese painted actually could not be more 'real'. This unique perspective, a high point of Chinese landscape painting, is proof that the ancient artists did travel in nature and had been on the mountain peaks and rocks. "To be high", "to be elevated" was related to moral elevation in ancient China.

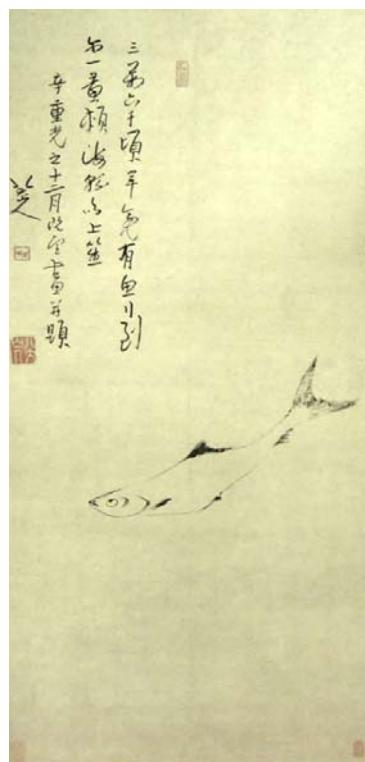


Figure 6.2 *Swimming fish*, Zhu Da (朱耷), Qing Dynasty

In ancient China nature was painted in a new way characterised by vivid expression and bold outlines. The desire for abstract expression emerged and this was much explored in Shi Tao (石涛), Wen Zheng Ming (文征明) and other artists' landscape paintings. Many characteristics of this period could be labelled as "structures of subjectivity and value" and "modernity" (Hay 2001). Of course, as Hay points out, the modernity here was "not as a moment but as a longue-duree condition" and "it is modernity as subjectivity, rather than modernity as socio-economic condition" (Hay 2001,p22). Some Chinese landscape paintings after the Song Dynasty, such as those by Zhu Da (朱耷) and Shi Tao (石涛) were abstract enough to compete with modern Western art (Yang 2003) (Figure 6.2). It has also been suggested that the

development of culture might have occurred in different stages from that of civilisation and that Chinese landscape art, as the most characteristic Chinese culture, had already reached its extreme peak long ago.

When these artistic landscape values and the spirits of scholars chastened by nature were reflected in material landscape constructions, a perceived and touchable new landscape emerged — the highly valued scholars' private landscaped garden. Scholars' landscaped gardens, as the surroundings of their daily life, were filled by their subjective understanding of objective nature. Scholars did not need to copy any part of nature. The gardens were free from the scholars' hearts and had much richer meanings than the original nature. All their efforts were to build extreme harmony in their artistic lives. Landscaping was the scholar's material representation of their subjective harmonious world, nature.

### **6.3 Meanings of Landscapes: Cultural Landscape Perspectives**

One focus of Western 'new cultural geography' is the recognition of the symbolic nature of landscapes and the importance of unpacking symbolic meanings which produce and sustain social meanings, as opposed to a focus on material forms (Cosgrove and Jackson 1987). Meanings of landscape have multiple layers and should be interpreted as text metaphors as well as morphology and social documents (Cosgrove and Jackson 1987). However, the symbolism and metaphor of landscapes, which were theoretically recognised in the early 1970s in the West (Kong 1997), had already been historically developed and theorised in ancient China. Symbolism and metaphor were most frequently used in ancient Chinese landscapes and were their most important characteristic (Wang 1990; Zhang 1986).

Nature, interpreted by Chinese philosophical, moral and aesthetic values, greatly contributed to the aesthetic construction of all aspects of everyday traditional life, from the ideal society to the ideal personality. Life, morals, politics, aesthetics— everything could be interpreted by *Shanshui*, which had totally penetrated human ideology. Nature was spiritually and materially reconstructed by the Chinese when the boundary between human beings and nature disappeared. Chinese *Shanshui* gradually transcended its material meanings, formed its own language and symbolic meanings, expressed with sophistication by symbolic and metaphorical texts in literature, paintings, gardens.

### 6.3.1 The Chinese Ways of Seeing

The ancient Chinese scholars had a deep insight into the meanings of nature through *Shanshui*. *Shanshui* were viewed as text be read and the meaning depended on how the reader saw things, which seems surprisingly similar to contemporary Western cultural landscape theories (Meinig 1979). The famous writer Zhang Chao of the Qing Dynasty (张潮, 1644~1711) concluded that *Shanshui*—as well as drinking, playing chess, the wind, flowers, snow and the moon—embodied spirits and philosophies of life and hence were all text books for reading. Among all these, *Shanshui* was the largest. The most important aspect of travel, in *Shanshui*, was to explore and understand spiritual meanings [for life] instead of forms, and the secret of successful exploration was “ways of seeing” (*You Meng Ying*, Chapter 147, On Being Good at Reading). “Books are *Shanshui* on my table and *Shanshui* are books on the earth”. He further asserted, “Beautiful books always contain endless meanings and with tremendous composition, landscapes are beautiful books of the world and people linger in *Shanshui* and can greatly benefit from nature” (Chapter 97, on Books as *Shanshui*). This was a typical cultural metaphor for landscapes. Here, *Shanshui* was an aesthetic object of philosophy and aesthetics, and all efforts to reveal the meanings of nature were for life purposes. Zhang Zhao asserts that the importance of the meanings of landscape, in a scholar’s mental world, were clearly presented and how landscape was filtered by philosophical and aesthetic lenses was revealed.

Zhang Chao also notes incisively that there were different layers of interpretation of the meanings of nature. He asserts that “there is *Shanshui* on the earth, there is *Shanshui* in paintings, there is *Shanshui* in dreams and there is *Shanshui* in the heart” (Chapter 84, On *Shanshui*). Here he concludes the four stages of Chinese ancient landscape history and four levels of the meanings of landscapes. In the first stage, nature was totally separate from human subjectivity as an objective outside world. In the second stage, nature selectively came into humans subjective consciousness and was presented by human beings. In the third stage, nature and human beings, objective and subjective, deeply interacted with each other, but landscape was not yet able to be totally controlled by the subjective as dreams. Only at the fourth stage had subjectivity been fully developed and landscape could be freely controlled by subjectivity. In this stage, the free use of all natural materials and creative abilities for the deconstruction of nature were shown in landscape gardening and landscape paintings. Along with these four stages of landscape

development, the meaning of landscape moved from the material and objective to the non-material, symbolic, fluid and subjective. Zhang Chao clearly identifies that landscape had both objective and subjective features, but the meanings of landscape could be various and they could only be deepened by social constructions based on epistemological perspectives. The highest level of the meanings of landscape should be from the heart, with both emotion and logic, and have the nature of subjectivity. They can be totally controlled and freely interpreted by individuals. This level symbolised the absolute “Oneness and Harmony with Nature”. Hence, this landscape is a socially constructed second-order landscape (Goldman, Papson 2003).

### **6.3.2 Symbolism and Metaphor**

As examined in chapter 3, Chinese landscape has been strongly characterised by symbolism. *Shanshui*, mountains and water, are the two most important symbols of nature. Natural features, those admired by the ancient Chinese, all had symbolic moral and aesthetic meanings. Symbolic meanings of landscape were continuously constructed throughout Chinese history. From the Middle Tang Dynasty to the Middle Qing Dynasty, the Chinese continuously developed the subjectivity of nature and brought these values into daily life until all its details were developed to an extremely fine degree (Wang 1990). This great period had a great influence on views of nature and brought Chinese landscape painting to its peak time during the Song Dynasty, and Chinese gardens during the Qing Dynasty. During this period, nature was extensively observed, touched and examined, and ways to experience nature were carefully theorised. Also, while “constructing subjectivity”, the Chinese were also attaching cultural meanings to nature and symbolic meanings were fully developed. Metaphor was highly advanced in Chinese arts. Chinese landscape paintings, literature, poems and gardens were never separated and all these forms were usually used at the same time. Chinese paintings always had poems on them, and gardens always contained inscriptions. The expression of symbolic and abstract meanings of landscapes strongly depended on metaphorical texts. This is one of the most important characteristics of Chinese landscape art.

After the Ming Dynasty, landscape forms became more abstract and landscape meanings were expressed more in metaphorical texts. The material landscape gardens that once had the most artistic qualities began to be destroyed. The development of subjectivity and the political pursuit of the scholars' harmonious society were interrupted (Wang 1990). The landscape of the gardens, as material

expressions of the scholars' subjective world, were represented by changes in symbolic meanings related to social changes. The intense conflicts between the scholars and the rulers limited the scholars and their ambitions to contribute to harmonious society declined. Harmonious aesthetic principles were replaced by 'unhealthy' tastes (Wang 1990). Harmony, the most important characteristic of Chinese culture and which had been the ideal of nature and society rather than reality, was destroyed. Great moral pursuits withered. Gardens, paintings, calligraphy and poems—all arts in fact—became aesthetics only for scholars who had failed in their political and social lives. While all the details of life had been developed to an extremely fine degree, aesthetic taste shifted from the classic appreciation of great mountains and great bodies of water to sickness and decay. Scholars hid in small spaces, such as gardens, to escape social reality. "Being lazy and sick became part of scholars' lives and it was the most important characteristic of later ancient Chinese society" (Wang 1990, p600). In politics, to be lazy and sick and immersed in the landscape was an effective way to eliminate social conflict and the best anaesthetic for the scholars. Escaping from society, became the only way to express their extreme dissatisfaction with that society. "Being sick and lazy" was a way to label themselves as spiritual aristocrats who did follow high natural principles without wallowing in the mire of an evil society. More and more scholars were proud to be sick so they could be away from social affairs. The great painter Mi Fei (米芾) of the Song Dynasty called himself a "*Lazy and Stupid Old Man*" (懒拙老人). The great philosopher and poet Zhu Xi (朱熹) of the Southern Song Dynasty called himself "*Cang Zhou Sick Old Man*" (沧州病叟). These are famous examples. Scholars tried to be as lazy as snails, rats, tortoises, or cats. They spent all day in their gardens within limited space and in front of potted landscapes to imagine their whole world through flowers and butterflies. They appreciated twisted trees and even spiders and ants. They tried to be absolutely "natural creatures" by abandoning all human intelligence and social affairs to escape from social conflict.

After the Ming Dynasty, some elegant gardens were replaced by wild grass and rough stones. This period has normally been under-valued because of its lesser aesthetic values. However, this research argues that it was the peak time for symbolic landscape. All landscape creations, such as gardens and paintings, became more *Xie Yi* (写意, expressing a concept), more focused on expressing conceptual meanings rather than forms. The meanings of the gardens were difficult to convey to outsiders without their original social contexts and metaphors. If they

were harshly judged because of their rough material forms, they could be downgraded to the landscapes of primitive societies thousands of years ago. Xu Wei's (徐渭 Ming Dynasty) garden had nothing except a stone and a small square pond, while Yuan Dao Hong's (袁道宏, Ming Dynasty) garden didn't even have water. Their gardens could mean nothing without metaphorical texts in social contexts. However, if these gardens were interpreted through their literature, paintings and social contexts, meanings began to emerge, layer by layer.

Gardens, as symbols of nature, were scholars' spiritual homes where they healed their hearts. From their elegant gardens, it could be perceived that the scholars were still trying their best to patiently wait for the call of their Emperors and were focused on constructing the most harmonious landscapes which symbolised the highest standards of moral cultivation of their personalities. In Xuwei's and later crude gardens, we can see how disappointed they were. In Xuwei's poems, he expressed his extreme indignation against society. In his paintings, he showed how his heart struggled and was without harmony. His bleak and desolate garden was his broken heart. But even then, he did not forget to put a stone engraved with his words "*Zhong Liu Di Zhu*" (中流砥柱, Elite of Middle Stream) in the small square pond to show that he still intended to be a solid member of the elite serving society. Although there was no water in Yuan Dao Hong's (袁道宏) garden, he inscribed there "*Wen Lan Tang*" (文漪堂), which implied that the building was beside water. In fact the water was in his heart. Such symbolic meanings of landscape had been embedded in metaphorical texts since the Ming Dynasty. The '*Potted Landscape*' has the same symbolic meaning, demonstrating that social space for scholars had been getting smaller and smaller, from 'real' natural mountains and waters to small pots. When their gardens were full of wild grass and they were lying on their beds taking 'imaginary tours', or imagining themselves to be turtles, rats and snails (Wang 1990), it was symbolising that the scholars had totally lost their social space and their political ambitions. They began to destroy the world, including their imagined perfect nature and themselves.

Landscapes do not directly tell us their meanings and values simply through their material forms. They have symbolic meanings deeply embedded in social contexts and metaphorical texts. The meanings of landscape are multi-layered and socially constructed. Cosgrove and Jackson argue that landscape is a "particular way of composing, structuring and giving meaning to an external world whose history has

to be understood in relation to the material appropriation of land" (Cosgrove and Jackson 1987,p96). This argument needs to be championed. They also emphasise that "symbolic landscapes" needed more interpretative rather than strictly morphological methods. They suggest studying "represented" landscapes (such as those in literature and art) in addition to studying "real" landscapes, and that two metaphors, landscape as text and landscape as theatre, could be useful (Cosgrove and Jackson 1987). These ways of decoding meanings of landscape can correctly be applied to interpreting traditional Chinese meanings of landscape. However, symbolic and metaphorical meanings need to be further explored from a philosophical point of view. Human beings, as the creators of the landscapes, are landscape contexts too. It is important that 'naturally constructed human beings and society' are also part of socially and culturally constructed products of values of nature in China.

### **6.3.3 Authenticity of Nature**

If we accept that landscape is the core part of human understanding of nature, then authenticity is the soul of landscape. In heritage landscape conservation, landscape authenticity has become a universal concern since the adoption of the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention which defines authenticity as the primary and essential condition of heritage. *The Nara Document on Authenticity* (1994), *the San Antonio Declaration* (1996), *the Burra Charter* (1999) and *the Operational Guidelines* (2005) extend the scope of authenticity of *The Venice Charter* (1964) to its immovable position on cultural diversity. Further, *the Xi'an Declaration* (2005) extended the setting of material heritages to include integrated heritage and moved material focus to social and political contexts. All of the documents declare that authenticity should be grounded within diverse regional, national and international contexts (Mondial 1994). The *Nara Document* is especially regarded as "a tacit acknowledgement of the plurality of approaches to the issue of authenticity and that it does not reside primarily in Western notions of intact fabric". It attempts to explore an ethos that acknowledges local traditions and intangible values which clearly match concerns of international humanity and cultural diversity (Taylor 2006). However, "different cultures have different ideas of what is and is not 'authentic', especially in landscape" (Fowler 2003, p16), so authenticity is a concept related to cultural values. Landscapes are valued by their significance. The concept of authenticity becomes bogged down because beside cultural diversity perspectives,

*'authenticity really involves both the positive and the negative: on the one hand, whether it be a landscape or a building, the presence of much of the*

*original or early fabric's design, materials and perhaps management; and on the other hand the absence of inappropriate intrusions, whether they be in the form of human degradation of a natural resource or poor later workmanship inside a building. Additions in a landscape or to its setting which make the experience of appreciating or using it significantly different from experiences expressed in literature, folklore to art, for example, could be regarded as detrimental to its authenticity* (Fowler 2003, p16).

This raises the question of 'how to value historical and contemporary landscapes'. Linked to traditional Chinese ideologies and today's rapid changes in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas examined in the last chapters, authenticity becomes a very complicated concept in China.

Firstly, as argued, authenticity is linked to ideological positions. The concept of authenticity is linked to the original meanings of the objectives, but meanings are subjectively constructed. Historically, authentic values of nature were culturally constructed by the Chinese. For them, while they were building structures and altering natural landscapes, they believed that they were keeping the authenticity of nature because they were constructing an authentic material nature to fit in with the harmony of nature which existed in their minds. This was the authenticity that they pursued for thousands of years. Paradoxically, from today's perspective, Chinese landscape paintings, gardens and literature are 'staged authenticities' (MacCannell 1973) of nature. Essentially, the authenticities of Chinese landscape were philosophically and culturally constructed in tangible and intangible forms for their subjective values. This was a continuous procedure throughout history. At this point, in China all landscapes are cultural landscapes and people are intrinsically part of these landscapes. This kind of authenticity emphasises dynamic social contexts and values at that time, rather than static historical values. In China we can see that landscapes were rebuilt all the time and human constructions were continually added to nature. All these constructions, or deconstructions, or de-structurings were attempts to meet the cultural changes and values of their time. Thus, for the Chinese, change is normal. No change is strange. Authenticities exist in dynamic social contexts and their material forms should be changeable as well. Therefore, ideologically, for the Chinese to construct in nature, to act with nature, is most authentic.

Second, the significance of authenticity needs to be assessed by tangible or intangible material landscapes and assessment requires a dialogue between ancient

and modern times. However, many Chinese landscapes are hard to assess from the material landscape because of their traditional intangible meanings. Jiuzhaigou's Tibetan culture and Wulingyuan's minority cultures are under-valued because of the lack of understanding of these people's knowledge and emotions about nature, their lands. Also, Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, as representatives of traditional Chinese high cultures, have rich historic tangible and intangible symbolic meanings. To understand these meanings and their significance we need to have a dialogue with the Chinese ancestors, or the meanings will be beyond our understanding. However, the interruption with tradition makes it very hard for contemporary Chinese. Meanwhile, these sites also have to create today's values, which might materially conflict with traditional forms and values. As already examined, mass tourism to contemporary Scenic and Historic Interest Areas is having a huge impact. Popular culture, brought by mass tourism, is shaping the cultures of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas and also the authenticity of these places. Modern or post-modern tourists, as Cohen (2004a; Fowler 2003) found, are consuming historic authenticity while pursuing their own dreams in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas. These values also need to be taken into consideration and this needs a historic perspective. The nature of authenticity cannot be judged by reactions such as "good looking" or 'ugly looking'. Thus to maintain the authenticity of a place should not be the excuse for demolishing a building, or 'aesthetic handicap'.

Research into Western tourism is an interesting framework for examining the Chinese situation. If we try to place Chinese tourists within Cohen's tourist model, we find that contemporary Chinese are typical modern tourists of "the recreational mode". Ancient Chinese were typical 'post-modern' tourists of Ning Wang's "existential mode" because of their persistent pursuit of subjective authenticity of nature and their persistent construction of "staged authenticity" of nature. It is an important finding. From the previous examination, the traditional Chinese epistemological subjective starting point of nature aided by the above analyses, it has been shown that if we take authenticity as a historical- and socially-constructed concept, then the Chinese preference for "staged authenticity" is the result of Chinese cultural philosophy. It also demonstrates that the history of culture is independent from the history of civilization (Xu 1996; Yang and Han 2002). Post-modernism is only a cultural phenomenon. Cultural history does not need to follow modernism through to post-modernism. These are the rich meanings and values of post-modernism (today's term) in traditional Chinese culture. This could help to

explain how today there could be such a notable mixture of modernism and post-modernism in China.

However, this characteristic mixed culture of the Chinese has put authenticity-centred heritage cultural landscape conservation in a very complicated position and has also placed the intrinsic authenticity of nature under threat from human ideologies and activities. Following their ancestors' "staged authenticity" in nature, the Chinese keep constructing to pursue their ideal subjective nature and continue their aesthetic or secular enjoyment. However, without the high aesthetic qualities of their ancestors, contemporary Chinese are creating more and more 'scars' in nature which are not perfectly integrated. Also, today's "staged authenticity" leads eventually to the emergence of a "tourist space", which separates the sphere of tourism from the ordinary flow of local life, and thus prevents the tourist from experiencing its authenticity. But as Cohen (2004c) points out, this does not mean that the tourists are naïve or fooled. Rather, they are reflective and resigned. Because of the pervasive lack of authenticity of the post-modern world, they abandon themselves to the enjoyment of surfaces of attractions, rather than examining them in depth for their genuineness. Tourism tends to become a playful "as if" experience, the enjoyment and fun derived—like in the theatre and other forms of art and leisure—from imagining that the experienced contrivances are "real" (Cohen 2004, p5). The Wudang, Jiazhaigou and Wulingyuan cases all show the existence of these tendencies.

From this perspective, to assess the significance of landscapes it might be better to adopt the concept of 'integrity', which has also been accepted as an essential quality of a World Heritage cultural landscape (Fowler 2003), instead of 'authenticity', because 'integrity' is more understood to mean a more dynamic context of the physical environment than 'authenticity'. The concept of authenticity needs to be more carefully examined in its social and cultural contexts as its meaning dynamically evolved through history. The authentic conservation of Scenic and Historical Interest Areas should be set into these contexts. Today's contemporary heritage tourism values should be integrated with historical values.

#### **6.3.4 Political Nature of Cultural Landscape**

Traditional Chinese landscape culture was strongly based on the high culture of the scholars. Its original hermit culture was matched with the ancient Chinese feudal

political system to help ease social conflicts. Consistent with the high centralisation of feudal power, the values of landscapes were also dominated by and centred on high culture. However, high culture declined and society entered into the industrialisation stage and contemporary values of landscapes were rapidly decentralised. It was hard for the old cultural system to provide a useful framework for examining today's new conflicts concerning landscape because of the lack of appropriate experience of such a social system and corresponding culture. At this point, contemporary Western cultural landscape theories provide valuable perspectives for interpreting today's landscape changes and values in China, because the new themes for China's landscapes are not new for the West, where capitalism has long been experienced and popular culture prevails. Its analysis of the nature of landscapes provides powerful mechanisms for further interpreting China's changing landscapes.

As new cultural geography demonstrates, the nature of culture is politics (Duncan and Duncan 2001). The newly contested landscapes in Scenic and Historic and Interest Areas today reflect the contested social values between different social classes. They have been evolving as a political battle, as mentioned in the Wudang and Jiuzhaigou cases. The changing landscapes are a trial of strength for different political powers. The changes of landscape are changes of social space (Tang 2005).

Firstly, the contested landscapes indicate the rise of local political power. As analysed before, local farmers were historically under-valued as a result of Traditional Chinese culture and politics. From the perspective of cultural mapping, historically high culture had controlled the values of these nature-dominated areas at a national level. Today, democracy has brought about a change in economic and cultural considerations. National power has been decentralised and local powers are fighting for their own rights and benefit. Although the strength and social positions of local villagers are still weak and less than those of local governments or developers, they are still fighting for their own benefit. Local governments fight with the central government for economic benefit and fight with local villagers for economic and political opportunities, while local villagers fight with local governments and developers for their social space, with the support of the central government. All these are social and cultural conflicts between national pursuits and local pursuits. During these conflicts, old balances have been destroyed and new balances have been built, while social resources and spaces have been re-ordered. It is a

procedure of re-construction of politics, culture and the economy as well as material landscape changes. Today, Scenic and Historic Interest Areas are not only nationally, politically and culturally identified, but are also economic and political resources of local governments and living resources of local villagers. None of the voices of the stakeholders can be ignored. According to the latest news, Wudang villagers have obtained much higher compensation from the local government with the support of the Construction Ministry and most of them have been allowed to remain living onsite. It is more a political victory for their social space than an economic or cultural victory.

Secondly, the seemingly innocent pleasure in the aesthetic appreciation of landscapes and the desire to protect nature is acting “as a subtle but highly effective mechanism of social exclusion and the reaffirmation of elite class identities” (Duncan and Duncan 2001) in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas. Social distinctions are created and maintained by preserving, enhancing and constructing the “new wilderness” as Jiuzhaigou and other landscapes become possessions and privileges that play an active role in the creation of elite social identities. Landscapes are strongly dominated by politics and the social elites in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas. In ancient times they were dominated by ‘cultural or spiritual elites’ and today by the ‘economical elites’. Social hierarchy and political prejudice are deeply imbedded. These Chinese landscapes strongly confirm Burgess and Gold’s (1985) assertion that cultural landscapes are still privileged. These is intense conflict between dominant (elite) and subordinate (popular) cultures, or between ‘political’ and ‘vernacular’ landscapes as J. B. Jackson (1984) argued. Thus, landscapes are socially constructed and are full of textual metaphors, but the production of social knowledge is recognised as uneven, with “texts” as well as “silences” and “blanks” (Cosgrove and Jackson 1987,p97). The local culture has only been allowed to be peaceful and silent to become a background for the pursuit of ideal aesthetics. Once this background local culture tries to be a main player, the old balance must be disturbed and many people feel uncomfortable, especially because it is not only a cultural phenomenon, but is also related to economic benefits.

With the economic changes in today’s China, landscape politics are strongly linked to capitalism. Although China is still a socialist country, its market is already capitalist. From Zukin’s sociological perspective, landscape is a “symbolic representation” of “an ensemble of material and social practices” (Zukin 1991,p16). In mass tourism, capital gives shape to material landscapes, framing symbolic

visions of the materiality that surrounds our consumption. This power of capital is clearly present in China's case. In Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, capital has manipulated traditionally valued landscapes to take them out of the ivory tower and transform them into commercial commodities and secular amusement places for popular culture. Capital is involved in pricing the landscape and constructing wilderness to meet the needs of the urban elite and to make a profit. The concept of "ecological restoration" has been used by politicians as an excuse to regain the right to take control of landscape resources from local villagers and seek opportunities to cooperate with capital. Thus, "ecological restoration" becomes a link with "recycle" and "sell", instead of being a serious scientific concern.

From an international perspective, it is worth emphasising that worldwide heritage landscape conservation is also rooted in politics. Indigenous cultures, such as the Indian tribes in the United States of America, the African tribes in Africa, and the indigenous people in Australia, have their own values which have been historically under-valued by colonisers. Thus, today's "cultural equity" (Mondial 1994) is rather "political equity" because of the rise of such communities under contemporary democratic procedures which creates inevitable tensions and divisions in heritage landscape endeavours. Heritage conservation of cultural landscapes is political. In today's Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, local culture has traditionally been suppressed by the elite culture, which has been consumed by popular culture (subordinate culture) which, in turn, is dominated by the economic elite culture. So, finally, when all of them leave, what is supposed to be left in nature? And what is the culture of our landscapes? These will be central concerns for the modern Chinese landscape left behind in this research.

#### **6.4 China's New Wilderness: Landscape of Politics and Capital**

As wilderness is such a debated concept and such a symbolic cultural icon in the West, its emergence in China needs further exploration.

##### **6.4.1 China's New Wilderness: Not a Coincidence**

Jiuzhaigou has been named "China's New Wilderness" by Han (2005) because of its core spirit, a 'pristine' environment devoid of humanity, consistent with Western wilderness ideas mixed with Chinese characteristics. It is 'new' because it is the first such constructed landscape in China's history. It is 'Chinese' because even in such a 'wilderness area', tourism is manipulated in a very modern and efficient way to provide the most comfortable service for Chinese needs. Hundreds of modern

luxury coaches and shuttle buses loudly take visitors into the valley to access all scenic spots for a primitive recreational experience—without any doubts about the conflict between the hundreds of coaches and the pristine landscape experience. The Chinese do not have such doubts! Visitors do not complain that the authenticity of the pristine landscape is disturbed or destroyed by these modern vehicles. On the contrary, they enjoy this convenience and comfortable service as they fit the Chinese idea of an ‘enjoyable tour’. The only thing annoying them is that they don’t feel free, always manipulated and pushed by a ‘stealthy hand’, although they find it hard to explain what it is and only say “it is differently managed from other Scenic and Historic Areas” (Han 2005). If it has not been very clear in my research in previous years, now the stealthy hand has revealed its true self. It is capital.

In China, very few people know the Western word “wilderness”, nor is wilderness a Western cultural product. There are no published research papers on this subject in China. But forms like Jiuzhaigou, very similar to those of wilderness of North America, are transforming nature from being humanistic to unworldly pristine nature. It has not only been influenced by external international factors, but is also underpinned by an internal impetus. The emergence of this “New Wilderness” is not a coincidence. It is a result of the interaction of particular traditional Chinese cultures, particular social, economic and cultural changes, and globalisation. The emergence of Chinese wilderness vividly proves that landscapes are culturally and socially constructed, both domestically and internationally. The following are interpretations of the emergence of China’s New Wilderness.

#### **6.4.2 A Product of Capital**

‘China’s Wilderness’ is a product of the urban culture and economy. Generally, Traditional Chinese historical landscape development proceeded from the city to nature and then back to the city. Especially after the Middle Tang Dynasty, landscapes were rapidly moved from natural areas back to the cities. The material natural landscape was confined in small, but elegant spaces in cities and even in pots, where scholars kept observing their cosmic beliefs until they withered, ending their beautiful, romantic and onerous task by the end of the old dynasties. Over the next two hundred years of war, travelling and playing in the mountains and waters were impossible luxuries. Today, when the Chinese are pushed back to nature again by the power of the economy, they do not think they are coming to a “new” place. They feel they are revisiting old places. Memories and feelings are still there, but the motivations are totally changed. This time, their motivations are strongly

similar to how Westerner's recognised nature in the industrial revolution. National parks have the function of mental and physical therapy. The first three parks in North America, Arkansas Hot Springs in 1832, Yellowstone National Park in 1872 and Banff National Park in 1885, were created for such healthy activities (Eagles and McCool 2002) . National parks are seen as a cure to the problems of modern city people, such as being "tired, nervous, half-insane, choked with cares like a disease" (Nelson 2003). Olson, Marshall and Freud have all argued that civilisation represses, frustrates, and often breeds unhappiness and discontent in humans. They state that it can best be alleviated by periodic escapes to what they took to be wilderness (in Nelson 2003,p418).

#### **6.4.3 A Product of Politics**

'Chinese Wilderness' is a product of capital and politics. The need of market is only evidence that people have a need to escape from the city for relaxing recreation. What they are looking for is some place different from the city. Visitors do not have a very clear idea of these places. What they initially require is "fresh air" and places "full of trees". So it is not necessarily a "pristine" area. It could be anywhere in the countryside. Besides the strength of the market, there are two other sources of power. One is economic capital and the other is politics. This huge potential market has been targeted by capital. Capital has perceived the needs of the new urban elites to visit nature to show their privileged position in densely populated China. But to construct and shape historic culturally-constructed landscapes into pristine, beautiful "Fantasy lands" in China is not easy. First, huge financial support is needed and only capital is able to provide that. Second, in its advertisements, capital has chosen World Heritage as its main 'hook' to attract people to nature. Also, constructions must be politically approved. At this time there has been a critical need for cooperation and the country needs an 'advanced management site' to fit World Natural Heritage criteria. Local governments have been eager for financial cooperation and the market has wanted a way to be involved. All these conditions let capital take over Jiuzhaigou, where the most impressive concepts are "eco-restoration" and the "conservation of universal values of world heritage". Everything has been done under the guise of these terms and we have almost lost both reasons and objectives to criticise. Under this seemingly reasonable surface, all social and political conflicts have been perfectly covered up. Social privileges have been tracelessly reconstructed. The power of politics compresses the social space of the local villagers and makes more space for capital investment. In this process, both politics and capital have received high rewards. To some extent, eco-

restoration is a pretence. If Chinese managers really began to be concerned about ecological values, Wulingyuan would not be like an outdoor playground that is totally different from Jiuzhaigou, and Jiuzhaigou would not complain about their losses because their visitors are fewer than Wulingyuan's. At a deeper level, Jiuzhaigou is the same as Wulingyuan. Both of them are parks with different themes manipulated by capital. At this point, Chinese Wilderness is essentially different from North American Wilderness, which symbolises its national identity (Nelson 2003,p424). Of course, as previously shown, Chinese Wilderness does have similarities to North American Wilderness in its exclusion of native culture and its contrast with the urban environment.

#### **6.4.4 A Product of Globalisation**

China's New Wilderness is also the product of international politics and globalisation. It is the product of world heritage conventions. World heritage has profoundly influenced China and its impact on the detachment of culture from nature might need intensive evaluation in the future. The concept of world heritage and its operational guidelines have contributed greatly to conserving world heritages of universal value. However, this concept was born in the West and inevitably was marked by Western values. Of course, the concept itself is also dynamic and developing. Its efforts to bridge the deep detachment of culture from nature can be perceived by the changes in its categories. The set-up of cultural landscape world heritage categories is one of the most important changes. It shows that there has been a tendency to integrate the multiple cultural values of nature. It respects that different cultures have different perspectives and place different values on nature, and that these heritages should be managed in their own ways. But to the Chinese, the concept of world heritage will always be a new and imported idea. The changing international theories and practices are hard for the Chinese to master and follow. The reasons include cross-cultural misunderstandings, language problems and lack of communication. It is also because of the system of world heritage management. China signed the World Heritage Convention in 1985. For the Chinese State Party, this was a serious commitment and responsibility, so it had to follow the spirit of the agreement and implement its management principles and guidelines. However, while doing this, they found that the world heritage categories have already muddled the original Chinese management system. Scenic and Historic Interest Areas that were within the same management system have now been separated and categorised as World Natural Heritage, World Cultural Heritage, World Mixed Heritage and World Cultural Landscape Heritage. Now that they are different, there

must also be different emphases. Jiuzhaigou and Wulingyuan are World Natural Heritage areas, so they need to pay more attention to nature and even sacrifice their cultural values to meet the international criteria for World Natural Heritage management. The problem also exists in the World Heritage organisation. As official advisory bodies, IUCN experts seldom work with ICOMOS experts, which results in great deviations in the heritage value inventory. What IUCN experts focus on is natural scientific values, and cultural understanding of the sites is not deep. Therefore, at the very beginning, site management can be misled and an onsite manager could think that they have followed appropriate international directions. Gradually, Chinese on site managers have gone further with the detachment of culture from nature.

Jiuzhaigou is a typical example. The WCMC database carefully recorded its physical features, climate, vegetation and fauna. They were aware there were 800 local Tibetans maintaining cultural traditions and that their agricultural activities of pasturing and cultivation occurred within the site (WHC 1992). But the recorded value of these villages was only that “the inclusion of a number of Tibetan villages in the buffer zone adds to the cultural interest of the area” (WHC, p52) and the beauty of “colourful Tibetan minorities on horseback, prayer wheels, prayer flags and other ethnic side interests” (WHC, p53). The historical value of this minority’s traditional culture was not mentioned at all. Therefore, although they understood that “a management goal is to progressively transfer local residents from agriculture to scenic area protection employment” (WCMC 1997), they did not give any advice to the Chinese local government to prevent great changes to the cultural landscape. On the contrary, when the locals ceased all their traditional activities and received high compensation from the government, this change was positively commended by the World Heritage Committee (WHC 1998) . Such international power confused the management of China’s Scenic and Historic Interest Areas and finally resulted in the disappearance of the cultural landscape and the emergence of China’s Wilderness.

Wulingyuan also exposes the defects of international management in World Heritage properties. In 1998, to respond to criticisms after the UNESCO experts’ onsite visit, the local government handed in a Periodic Conservation Report for Wulingyuan in 2002 to the Bureau of World Heritage Committee. The report stated that a series of actions would take place as part of ongoing heritage conservation. Among them was “removing the structures in the scenic areas and restoring the heritage to its original appearance” (WSRAD 2002). The local government’s initial

purpose was to “save the heritage from uncontrolled tourism development”. However, in the document it ended up as “we shall demolish all the buildings in the scenic area and move all the residents out of the scenic area.” It emphasised, “We have no choice...by the end of the first half of 2002...we will have moved 377 households and 1162 persons from the area.” Such determination was shown that they stated, “Even with a very tight budget, we have managed to move some of the residents to out-of-the way places, but we still need to keep a close watch on them because if we are not strict in our controls, they will return at any time”. In order to achieve this objective they stated, “After careful planning, we will only keep a few households in the area so as to combine their aesthetic value with cultural values and produce a picture of bucolic life”. “They are allowed to cultivate, but not allowed to host visitors.” All these quoted words clearly indicate the sacrifice of the local culture in the management process. But obviously this report did not attract the attention of the Bureau of World Heritage Committee to be aware of the cultural crises. The silent respond from the Bureau convinced or misled the Chinese leaders that they were doing the “right” thing in heritage management and to support the illusion that they had grasped the mainstream of world thinking. To meet these international standards, China has gone too far. We believe if Jiuzhaigou or Wulingyuan had been designated as cultural landscape heritage areas, things would have gone in a totally different direction.

Globalisation also includes the influence of North America's national parks. For over a century, the U.S. model of nature conservation has been exported worldwide. In Africa, the practice of mass exclusion of indigenous peoples to make way for protected areas intensified in the 1960s and has continued to this day. For over a century, millions of indigenous people around the world have been driven off their land in the name of nature conservation. While local communities are regaining the right to manage these protected areas, their struggle often runs up against deep prejudice. In China most cases do not relate to indigenous people of different cultures, but to locals who have the same cultural origins as the outsiders. In today's western-value dominated China, people believe that what comes from the U.S is good, regardless of the great debates about wilderness elsewhere in the world, or even in the U.S.

In summary, if the emergence of popular culture has destroyed the meaning of traditional Chinese culture, then the emergence of Wilderness has destroyed the meaning of Chinese landscape. It is an important symbolic sign that material cultural

landscapes can be artificially changed back to nature, even in large-scale nature-dominated areas, and onsite history can be as easily erased as nature was once culturally constructed. During this process, material landscapes change from cultural landscapes to natural landscapes, but the core part of culture has never been changed. What has been changed is the taste of culture. The change in China today, the emergence of wilderness, has been in contrast with the traditional under-valuing of wild nature. It shows that today's cultural values have broken with tradition. This indicates that heritage landscape conservation will be extremely difficult in China.

## **6.5 Environmental Ethics, Culture, and Science**

Environmental ethicists argue that human moral attitudes to nature are always viewed through a cultural lens. However, cultural values are not always consistent with scientific values, and human attitudes to nature change with the understanding of scientific values of nature.

### **6.5.1 Perspectives of Environmental Ethics**

Contemporary Western environmental ethics are centred on values of nature and the relationships between nature and human beings (refer to Chapter 2, 2.2). However, values of nature held by human beings vary from country to country and region to region, and have changed markedly over time. Weak anthropology argues that nature is "socially constructed and is inescapably viewed through a cultural lens" and "what is called nature in one culture at one time may be viewed very differently in a different culture influenced by different political, historical, and social factors" (Palmer 2003, p33). Guided by morals, culture is the focus of environmental ethics rather than science. Although it is also concerned with the intrinsic value of nature, it is obviously the value of nature that is being debated and this cannot be proven by a science, such as ecology. If its value could be proven, then there would be no need for moral discipline. In today's environmental policy-making, pragmatic and ecofeminist environmental approaches are, methodologically speaking, acceptable world wide. This means that environmental ethics are plural and contextual, growing out of the complexity of particular situations and in relation to whole webs of needs and desires (Weston 1985; Palmer 2003). This approach opposes abstract, rational and universal ethics and thus works well in seeking ways in which those with different theoretical and practical perspectives can converge in practice with policy making.

This philosophical turn of attitudes has influenced heritage conservation. The change of attitudes to indigenous people is a remarkable example. As previously mentioned, in many countries indigenous and traditional people have been moved out of their homes in the name of nature conservation and under the influence of western wilderness culture. But today, their cultural and spiritual values are being recognised and protected. Their attitudes to nature have been regarded as special worldviews which link their spirits and knowledge with nature. A culture-based conservation approach was adopted by IUCN at the V<sup>th</sup> world park congress (IUCN 2003). The recommendation was approved that indigenous peoples should have internationally guaranteed rights “to, among others, own and control their sacred places, their archaeological and cultural heritage, ceremonial objects and human remains contained in museums or collections within or adjacent to protected areas” and “gather, collect or harvest flora, fauna and other natural resources used in ceremonies and practices that take place at sacred places or archaeological and cultural heritage places” (p31). With this change in focus from previous heritage management policies, a great change in environmental ethics took place.

Based on this change, every culture should be respected because there is no ‘right culture’ or ‘wrong culture’. Every culture runs like a river in its own way. For ethicists, however, this does not mean “When in Rome do as the Romans do” (Light and Rolston 2003). Ethicists maintain that their roles are different from anthropological surveys of different moral attitudes that different people have around the world. Their task is to “formulate a set of foundational claims under some description/meaning that settles on a fundamental ethical claim”, and “this argument is postulated as true regardless of contexts of time, space, location, or conditions”. Thus “ethics has universal intent” (p5). This perspective requires ethics to self-examine culture. In fact, to justify moral claims against cultural traditions is one goal of ethics (p9). From this point of view, it is necessary to be aware that the extreme position of emphasising environmental moral plurality is as dangerous as denying cultural diversity.

### **6.5.2 Contested Values between Culture and Science**

There are contested values between culture and science and there are cultural threats to nature embedded in culture.

In today’s heritage landscape conservation, special rights have been given to indigenous and traditional peoples. However, it can be said that because this

population is small, these special rights can be called “privileges”. But this presumption cannot be applied in all cases worldwide. China is one example where this is the case. Unlike other ancient civilisations around the world which have been broken up, China has been constantly developing from ancient times without interruption, maintaining almost the same language, the same people and even the same land. So the Chinese, one-fifth of the world’s population, are typical “traditional people” and certainly they hold special traditional culture-based attitudes to nature. But can we give them the internationally granted privilege to “gather, collect or harvest flora, fauna and other natural resources” (IUCN 2003, p13)? If we say ‘no’, it is because we are concerned with something beyond culture. This answer also raises a very challenging question: “Do we still need to conserve our traditions or our cultures?” Obviously this moral pluralism applied to heritage faces the challenge, “How can one make moral decisions when frameworks come into conflict?” (Light and Rolston 2003). This question is extremely challenging for the Chinese.

The conflicts between cultural tradition and scientific management have been identified in Chinese case studies. The lack of scientific spirit in traditional China is causing severe ecological crises in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas. From a historical point of view, China was a country distinguished by art and culture, instead of scientific cognition (Gong 2001; Lin 1937; Lin 2001). This does not mean that the ancient Chinese lacked scientific intelligence, but that they were not interested in theoretical things unless they could be practically used. Good examples include the calculation of circumference using *pi*, and the four inventions of ancient China, the compass, gunpowder, paper making and printing. One consequence is that while culture and art were extremely highly developed, natural sciences were not as fully developed in ancient China as in the West. In the case studies discussed in the previous chapters, it was shown that one result of this is that visitors and managers lack basic ecological knowledge.

Contemporary Western environmental ethics started from concerns about the threats to nature posed by humans and an ethical rethinking of the relationship between nature and human beings (Light and Rolston 2003). Its great contribution is that it has provided a series of possibilities to rethink these relationships. This research maintains that ecofeminism’s “defining relationship” between nature and human beings is essential for contemporary China, while still maintaining particular historic cultural contexts.

### **6.5.3 The Threats of “Oneness with Nature”**

Traditional values need to be very carefully considered before they are applied to practice. If we think about the relationship between traditional Chinese philosophies and cultures of “Oneness with Nature” and the huge deconstruction activities happening in nature in China today, it is very challenging. We have reason to ask how a country which holds beliefs that are thousands of years old — “Oneness with Nature” — can have the most severe ecological crisis in the world. We do not see people in other countries modify nature on such a huge scale as in contemporary China. Nature is being rapidly being taken over by human beings through rapid urbanisation, including mass tourism. Cutting down forests, stealing and hunting wild animals, making big constructions in nature, and especially the use of wild animals for food—all these ‘cruel’ behaviours shock Westerners who do not have the tradition of “Oneness with Nature”. Nature in China not only suffers from the use of resources, but also the ravages of enjoyment of life and even for aesthetic purposes. In order to dig the expensive *Lantian Jade* (蓝田玉) for some people to take pleasure in, tunnels have been left by large excavators across and along the riverbed along hundreds of kilometres of the Yulong Kashi River (喀什玉龙河) in Xiangjiang (新疆). There are still nearly 200,000 people and 2000 excavators working there day and night. The glory and beauty of this famous ancient white jade river has gone forever (XJC 2006). The Southern Chinese are keen on the vegetable *Facai* (发菜) just because the word also means ‘getting rich’ in Chinese. It normally grows in arid areas and the ecological destruction of desert environments to obtain *Facai* (发菜) is shocking. To get 50 grams of *Facai* (发菜) on average will require digging up 3000-6000 square metres land, which strongly aggravates the speed of desertification. Although it is now prohibited, this does not prevent people from digging for it and selling it on the market. The Chinese are very interested in eating wild foods and it was only during the short SARS scare in 2003 that they stopped trying wild food. When the SARS crisis had passed, wild food came back to Chinese tables.

Mostly these situations are interpreted as the Chinese forgetting their tradition of “Oneness with Nature”. However, this research argues strongly, perhaps against the mainstream of research in China, that today’s affronts to nature are the result of the tradition of “Oneness with Nature”. It is also the result of the “naturalized human being”, especially when culture has been vulgarised through popularisation. “Oneness with Nature” has dispelled the epistemological subjective and objective.

The outside natural world becomes an extended individual ego incorporating everything that is. It fails to acknowledge, in any real sense, the “otherness” of what is in the world, since everything is viewed as being part of oneself and there is no space for difference. This fits in with Plumwood's (1993) critiques of deep ecology, because without differentiation, morality loses its reason for being.

Traditional Chinese environmental ethics were essentially deeply anthropocentric. The moral qualities of nature were only refined by human beings and applied to human ethics. Nature's scientific intrinsic values were not taken into Chinese perspectives, except where they could inspire Chinese enjoyment of the ideal life, or for moral cultivation. Hence, nature was a spiritual source for the Chinese and only had instrumental values, instead of intrinsic values. While nature was historically humanised and morally respected by the Chinese, it was not treated ethically. On the contrary, the Chinese only wanted to be natural so they could enjoy sensuous experiences as natural creatures. Thus, the Chinese could eat tigers while admiring their awesome power and could eat dogs while appreciating their loyalty. Aesthetic moral cultivation did not prevent them from them enjoying consuming all natural resources. So “Oneness with Nature” does not directly lead to natural conservation. Westerners should be very careful about Chinese philosophical and aesthetic values when they try to borrow Confucius's virtuous concept of extending the love of human beings to loving external nature.

The heated debate over environmental ethics which erupted in 2005 in China could have been a demonstration of the profound influence of Chinese tradition. The debate ignited by the Indian Ocean Tsunami disaster did stimulate a lot of thinking about disaster science and philosophical ethics in China. A newspaper article in the *South Weekend* (Liu 2005) discussed natural disasters and reminded readers that human beings should be humble and in awe of the power of nature. Not long after, a famous scientist from the China Academy Institute, He Zuoxiu (何祚庥), gave an interview to the weekly magazine GLOBE. He sharply criticised the attitude that human beings should be in awe of nature (He 2005a). He declared that human beings should not doubt their abilities to tame nature and he further asked, “Are there any ethics between human beings and nature? If there are, there should not be disasters like tsunamis” (He 2005a). Today, when environmental philosophy centred on environmental ethics has been developing for nearly half century in the West, this question sounds quite jarring. He demonstrated a very strongly anthropocentric view of environmental ethics. It is very interesting that He is very

familiar with traditional Chinese history and culture. He argues that “Oneness with Nature” still means being centred on human beings. His views have caused heated debates over environmental ethics and there have been big arguments in the media involving scholars, scientists, conservationists and students. These soon fell into two camps, those who supported him and those against. 8445 people voted on the debate and 43.50 per cent supported He, while 52.18 per cent were against him (He 2005b). One of the most noticeable aspects of the debate was that most people who were against He used Western environmental philosophy or ethical perspectives (Liang 2005; Liao 2005), while He’s supporters even more frequently used traditional Chinese thought (Fang 2005; Zhou 2005). This case shows that scientific and moral concerns over the intrinsic values of nature are still far from being accepted by the Chinese.

The Chinese tradition of super cultural consumption of nature needs to be very carefully treated today. While they are offering fascinating cultural experiences, they are also causing critical environmental, scientific and ethical crises. To some extent this is more dangerous than the use of resources for “feeding people” (Rolston 1996) because “feeding people” is related to poverty and involves human ethics and human rights. But cultural consumption, including cultural food consumption, is only for enjoyment and recreation. Here we clearly see the conflicts between culture and science and between different moral attitudes. Traditional Chinese cultures need some boundaries set by contemporary natural sciences and need new moral perspectives on nature adapted from the Western environmental ethics.

The most important way to change Chinese attitudes to nature could be through the sciences. Chinese who are from Confucian homes might disappoint those Western theorists who advocate virtuous ethics such as the ‘benevolence’, ‘piety’, ‘filiality’, and ‘courage’, of Confucian tradition (Brennan and Lo 2002). It has been proven that it is hard to discipline human beings’ behaviour only by appeals to their own moral strength. At this point, modern sciences could help to demonstrate the reasons for appropriate ethical behaviour towards nature. At least in 2003 when the SARS crisis wreaked havoc, there was no one hunting and eating wild animals. For humanity in China, the most important thing to learn from the West is the rational scientific spirit and the importance of distance from nature. Modernism needs science and while this is happening, Chinese cultures and traditions could be reshaped and reborn. Only when people realise the scientific reasons why the temperature in the city of Chongqing (重庆) reached ( $44.5^{\circ}$ ) in the first year (2006) after the Three Gorges

Dam was built, will they stop their arrogant behaviour towards nature and understand their real position (not imaginary position) in nature. Then they can develop appropriate moral ethics for their relationship to nature.

### **6.6 Conclusion**

From interpretation of the above themes and reflective discussion, in extensive national and international theoretical, cultural and social contexts, of values of nature, the following characteristics of Chinese themes and generation of theories have been identified and addressed.

Philosophy, as the origin of values, once again becomes the focus of value studies in this research. It suggests that all value interpretations should be traced back to their philosophical perspectives and purposes. China's traditional subjective construction of nature makes great contributions to revealing the meanings and values of landscape. It can also greatly contribute to contemporary Western landscape research, which is turning its focus from objective interest to subjective social and cultural constructions of the meanings and values of nature and landscape. China's traditional highly developed landscape language, including symbolism and other metaphors, will greatly enhance today's understanding and interpretation of the meanings of landscape and values of nature. It has helped the understanding of authenticity in a dynamic and culturally diverse context. It also suggests that 'integrity' be valued in heritage landscape conservation rather than 'authenticity'. Values of nature should include historic values as well as contemporary values.

Western cultural geography provides powerful theoretical instruments for examining and interpreting the social contests which have emerged in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas regarding the values of nature. It has also helped to reveal the political and economic nature of landscape, which has greatly helped this research to deepen understanding and exploration of contemporary landscape phenomena. Inspired by these theories, it has been found that China's contemporary landscapes tend to be increasingly controlled by politics and manipulated by capital. Under these circumstances, social spaces are being re-shaped.

Traditional Chinese values of nature have been re-examined, questioned and challenged. It has been concluded that traditional Chinese "Oneness with Nature"

has been vulgarised and greatly threatens the scientific values of nature and, finally, will threaten human beings themselves. There is a dilemma between maintaining cultural identity and safeguarding the environment in China. To safeguard our heritage environment, we need to hold on to 'culture' on the one hand, and to hold on to 'science' on the other. The West and China can benefit each other.

# **Chapter 7**

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## **Conclusions, Contributions and Implications**

This section concludes the thesis by summarising the significant findings of the research questions related to the objectives stated in the Introduction. The contribution to knowledge is summarised. The thesis contributes to the recognition of values of nature for theories of environmental philosophy, heritage tourism and cultural landscapes. The implications for heritage landscape conservation have been identified based on the above achievements.

### **7.1 Concluding the Thesis**

The purpose of this thesis has been to examine traditional and contemporary Chinese values of nature. The changes in values and their relationships have been explored and have been interpreted in China's dynamic social contexts. This section is structured around the specific research questions.

#### **7.1.1 Values of Nature**

Values of nature include intrinsic and instrumental values. These are determined and assigned by human ontological and epistemological positions. Nature is inescapably viewed through a cultural lens and the View of nature is filtered by a cultural lens. The view of nature is the nature presented in one's subjective consciousness. Values of nature differ between individuals, nations and cultures and are constantly and socially constructed. Contextual sensitivity, open-endedness, moral plurality and cultural diversity of values have been emphasised.

#### **7.1.2 Chinese View of Nature**

*Research question 1: What is the Chinese View of Nature?*

*Sub-questions: What is the traditional Chinese View of Nature?*

*What is the contemporary Chinese View of Nature?*

Chapter 3 examined the traditional Chinese View of nature by looking at traditional Chinese philosophies, landscape achievements and travels in nature. The most important conclusions about the traditional Chinese View of nature were established in section 3.4, as follows:

1. It is humanistic rather than religious;
2. It is aesthetic rather than scientific;
3. It is shaped by high culture;
4. Nature is subjectively constructed rather than objective in origin;
5. Nature is a place for cultivation;
6. Nature is a symbol of great beauty and morality;
7. Nature embeds meaning for the ideal life;

8. Nature is a place for retreat from worldly society;
9. The value of nature is consistent with human personality;
10. Nature is one part of human beings and is an enjoyable and inspiring place;
11. Artistic re-built nature is more beautiful than the original;
12. The eternal value of nature is for a harmonious and artistic human life.

The contemporary Chinese View of nature was explored through three case studies. Chapter 4 focused on site data analysis and exploration of perceptions of nature preferences, motivations of visitors to Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, and perceptions of nature of local governments and local villagers. Contemporary values of nature were thematically generated in Chapter 5 as follows:

1. It is aesthetically orientated;
2. Nature is for the enjoyment of humanity;
3. Nature is a place for living;
4. Constructed nature is better than the original;
5. Nature is not respected in a scientific sense;
6. Nature is a place for escape from city pressures;
7. Nature is an economic resource;
8. Nature has a strong political identity;
9. Nature is a place for historical cultural consumption;
10. Nature is being made into 'pristine' areas;
11. Nature represents the possession of wealth.

### **7.1.3 Relationships between Traditional and Contemporary Chinese View of Nature and Interpretations of Changes**

*Research question 2: What are the relationships, changes and conflicts between traditional views and contemporary views? What are the mechanisms underpinning Chinese View of nature and their changes?*

Chapter 5 explored social, cultural, political and economical contexts and their changes while identifying the continuous and discontinuous themes between the traditional and contemporary Chinese View of nature. It strongly demonstrated that values of nature are socially and culturally constructed, and they change all the time as social contexts change. The changing landscapes are unpinned by these changing values. Many traditional values of nature have been inherited, while many of them have been changed or are new. It was also concluded that contemporary Chinese values are Western-dominated and there is a break between traditional and contemporary Chinese cultures. In today's Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, mass

tourism's popular culture dominates, while traditional high culture has been vulgarised and abused to be used as a commodity for tourism consumption.

Chapter 5 also demonstrated the political nature of contemporary landscape. Landscape is more a political icon than a romantic idea in China. The contemporary competition for values of landscape is much more intense than in ancient China. Politics unites with the economy to manipulate landscape for new contemporary values, which has caused the re-distribution of social space. Social and cultural prejudice still exists and has been even more enhanced by manipulated landscape. The symbolic meanings of landscape are extending. Landscape also generates competing international, national and regional values.

All these relationships to tradition, changes and conflicts of values of nature have put China in a very challenging position regarding heritage landscape conservation, internationally, nationally and regionally.

#### **7.1.4 Theoretical Generation: from Re-examining the Values of the Chinese View of Nature**

*Research question 2: What are the mechanisms underpinning Chinese View of nature and their changes?*

*Research question 3: What are the potential theoretical contributions of Chinese View of nature?*

Chapter 6 continued to answer research question 2 to interpret Chinese values, but moved to a theoretical discussion. Chinese themes that also are international concerns were further explored and interpreted. The theoretical contributions of Chinese values of nature were explored.

The subjectively constructed traditional Chinese View of nature demonstrates the importance of ontological and epistemological positions in environmental philosophy for constructing values of nature. Its holistic perspectives on nature support the positions of environmental weak anthropocentrism, pragmatism, moral pluralism, and ecofeminism that emphasise context-sensitive, open-ended, morally plural and culturally diverse practices of environmental policy-making.

The Chinese View of nature supports Western cultural landscape theory in that meanings of nature and of landscapes are socially constructed, but meanings are conveyed by symbolic landscapes in a complicated way, or hide behind

metaphorical text. China's traditional highly developed landscape languages, such as symbolism and other metaphors, could greatly contribute to enhancing today's understanding and interpretation of the meanings of landscape and values of nature. Chinese contemporary Views of nature also strongly support Western cultural landscape theory that reveals landscape's political nature. The construction of 'China's new wilderness' is powerful evidence.

The Chinese interpretation of authenticity contributes to contemporary cultural tourism research. It has been concluded that "staged authenticity" is based on subjective construction of landscape. In China it has philosophical origins and is a Chinese landscape tradition. According to this Chinese characteristic of the View of nature, it is suggested that 'integration' should be more appropriate for assessing the significance of landscape. Meanwhile, inspired by Western cultural landscape theories, the concept of Chinese landscape needs to be expanded to include more ordinary landscapes, such as contemporary and agricultural landscapes.

Besides these contributions, the values of Chinese View of nature have been critically re-examined. It was argued that Traditional Chinese "Oneness with Nature" is based on ontological and epistemological obliteration of nature and Human Beings. It is subjectively constructed and is anthropocentric for the instrumental aesthetic and spiritual values of nature. It has obliterated the boundary between nature and human beings. Today, it has become more strongly anthropocentric because the contemporary Chinese values of nature have become more physical than spiritual. "Oneness with Nature", with no scientific concerns throughout its historic evolution, resulted in today's arrogant Chinese attitudes to nature. This critical re-thinking not only supports ecofeminism's position of being aware of the distance between nature and human beings, but also reminds theorists not be too confident of the power of human virtues.

In conclusion, the thesis calls for integrated perspectives of culture and science for sustainable heritage conservation. The author believes that "in modernism, China will benefit from the values of the West. In post-modernism, the West will find the values of China" (Feng 1990).

## **7.2 Contributions to knowledge**

The contributions of this research can be outlined as follows:

1. It fills the research gap in the exploration of the contemporary Chinese View of nature.
2. It provides a critical perspective and approach for re-examining and re-interpreting the traditional Chinese View of nature.
3. It reveals the socially constructed process associated with the Chinese View of nature.
4. It identifies and represents Chinese values, and contributes to Western theories of environmental philosophy, park tourism, cultural landscape and heritage landscape conservation.
5. It provides a research platform for a dialogue between China and the West.

### **7.3 Implications for Heritage Landscape Conservation Practice**

Based on the conclusion of this thesis, this research suggests the following implications for heritage landscape conservation practice.

First, landscape conservation is much more than material design and planning. It is a political procedure. Practitioners need to make their political position very clear if they intend to pursue environment justice, which is a big challenge for normal academics. Decision-making not only needs multi-cultural respect and knowledge, but also needs political skills.

Second, an interdisciplinary team, including experts in culture and nature, is especially important to assess the significance of landscape. Landscape values should be always examined in their own setting of special physical, social, cultural, economic and political contexts. Cultural and natural, historic and contemporary values are all important and should be represented. A strategic shift is required to recognise the wider context in which conservation decisions are made and to integrate the notion of sustainability in heritage policies and practices.

Third, although World Heritage is important, it is more important to have our own heritage. World Heritage is a top-down concept, but a sustainable bottom-up strategy is essential for sustainable heritage conservation. Values of stakeholders must be investigated and balanced in conservation decision-making. Local, regional, national and international values should be carefully identified. International values should not always have priority. International frameworks need to be integrated with multiple cultural values and devoted to heritage landscape conservation of cultural

diversity. Understanding and respect for other cultures is most important for promoting the concept of World Heritage. Open exchange and dialogue is the most useful strategy, especially between the East and the West.

Fourth, heritage landscape is a living entity. It is increasingly difficult to continue armed only with the traditional tools of international charters and technical/scientific knowledge of preservation. Heritage landscape conservation always embraces innovation.

#### **7.4 Other Achievements and Future Research**

By finishing the thesis, the Wudang project is approaching its end. It has provided a good opportunity for in-depth investigation of contested contemporary Chinese values of nature. It has also benefited from the theoretical orientation of this thesis. The master planning for Wudang has been very successful. It has been highly commended by local, provincial and central governments based on its multiple values for interpretation and negotiation. The sustainable heritage conservation approach mainly involves:

1. planning is a procedure to propagate World Heritage concepts to the public;
2. identifying stakeholders, their values and desires;
3. identifying the diversity of resource opportunities based on interdisciplinary approaches;
4. the cultural route as an instrument for reviving heritage settings;
5. careful zoning for management purposes; and
6. enhancing local development with heritage themes.

The relationship between this research and practice has been clearly shown and it has been strongly demonstrated that academic research and practice can benefit from and support each other.

As a World Heritage conservation project, Wudang has also been a platform for dialogue with international organisations, especially ICOMOS over the last three years. In this time, two papers have addressed this research and have had an international influence. This first one was *Cross-Cultural Misconception: Application of World Heritage Concepts in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in China* which was initially presented at the 7th US/ICOMOS International Symposium in 2004 in the USA. It has been included in the new book, *The Great New Wilderness Debate, (Volume 2)* (Appendix B), by recognised world leaders in the field, Professor Michael

Nelson and J. Baird Callicott. The book will be published in January 2007 by the University of Georgia Press. This paper presented critical Chinese values of nature and challenged the Western-dominated international concept of World Heritage. The call for the integration of nature and culture, and understanding of the diverse cultural values of nature was received warmly at the conference. This was demonstrated in the subsequent creation of the Natchitoches Declaration (US/ICOMOS 2004). Another research paper, *China's New Wilderness*, was published in Australia's official landscape journal, *Landscape Australia*, in 2004 (Appendix C). This paper explored the new "pristine" landscape phenomenon, which was first titled by the author "China's New Wilderness". However, it was focused more on the international influence on China than the exploration of China's social context. In this thesis the theme of "wilderness" has been explored in much broader social and cultural contexts than in the paper. Both of these papers contributed to international research and conservation practice for heritage landscapes, and attracted international attention. They greatly helped the author to expand connections with international scholars and organisations. The feedbacks from these two papers and subsequent exchanges of ideas have greatly enhanced the importance of understanding cultural diversity in heritage landscape conservation. This research also led to an international nomination to the ICOMOS-IFLA International Committee of Cultural Landscape. In April of 2006, nominated by the UK, US and Australian representatives, and China's ICOMOS, the author was elected as China's representative for the ICOMOS-IFLA committee meeting in Portugal.

However, this dialogue seems just at its beginning. As the Chinese representative to ICOMOS-IFLA, the author will continue representing Chinese values of landscape and contributing to World Heritage Cultural Landscape conservation. The next research will involve an Asia-Pacific regional inventory of cultural landscapes and work with the China State Cultural Heritage Bureau and China's ICOMOS to develop a Chinese system of heritage landscape conservation. The author has also accepted an invitation to join an international research team in Japan in 2007 to study the unique challenges of conserving cultural landscapes that have evolved and are continuing to evolve. It will be a great chance for further research on rapidly changing Chinese landscapes and cross-cultural values, and will greatly benefit from international exchanges.

Two books edited by the author will be published by *China Architectural Industrial Publisher* (中国建筑工业出版社) in the next two years. One is *Environmental Ethics*,

which has been assigned as teaching material for all landscape students in universities in China. The other is *Theories and Practice of International Protected Areas*, which will further explore the international experience of management of protected areas.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A

**Table: A Brief Chinese Chronology**

(Source: A Chinese and English Dictionary 1987)

夏 Xia Dynasty		21 <sup>st</sup> Century -16 <sup>th</sup> Century BCE	
商 Shang Dynasty		16 <sup>th</sup> Century -11 <sup>th</sup> Century BCE	
周 Zhou Dynasty	西周 Western Zhou Dynasty	11 <sup>th</sup> Century - 771BCE	
	东周 Eastern Zhou Dynasty	770- 256BCE	
	春秋 Spring and Autumn Period	770 - 476 BCE	
	战国 Warring States	475 - 221 BCE	
	秦 Qin Dynasty	221 -207 BCE	
汉 Han Dynasty	西汉 Western Han	206 -24CE	
	东汉 Eastern Han	25-220 CE	
三国 Three Kingdoms	魏 Wei	220-265 CE	
	蜀汉 Shu Han	221-263 CE	
	吴 Wu	222-280 CE	
西晋 Western Jin Dynasty		265-316 CE	
东晋 Eastern Jin Dynasty		317-420 CE	
南北朝 Northern and Southern Dynasty	南朝 Southern Dynasty	宋 Song	420-479 CE
		齐 Qi	479-502 CE
		梁 Liang	502-557 CE
		陈 Chen	557-589 CE
	北朝 Northern Dynasty	北魏 Northern Wei	386-534 CE
		东魏 Eastern Wei	534-550 CE
	北齐 Northern Qi		550-577 CE
	西魏 Western Wei		535-556 CE
	北周 Northern Zhou		557-581 CE
	隋 Sui Dynasty		581-618 CE

	唐 Tang Dynasty	618-907 CE
五代 Five Dynasty	后梁 Later Liang	907-923 CE
	后唐 Later Tang	923-936 CE
	后晋 Later Jin	936-946 CE
	后汉 Later Han	947-950 CE
	后周 Later Zhou	951-960 CE
宋 Song Dynasty	北宋 Northern Song Dynasty	960-1127 CE
	南宋 Southern Song Dynasty	1127-1279 CE
	辽 Liao Dynasty	916-1125 CE
	金 Jin Dynasty	1115-1234 CE
	元 Yuan Dynasty	1271-1368 CE
	明 Ming Dynasty	1368-1644 CE
	清 Qing Dynasty	1644-1911 CE
	中华民国 Republic of China	1912-1949 CE
	中华人民共和国 People's Republic of China	1949 CE

## **Appendix B**

### **Cross-Cultural Confusion: Application of World Heritage Concepts in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in China<sup>10</sup>**

HAN Feng

#### **Introduction**

Scenic and Historic Interest Areas form a designated national park system in China. These areas are characterised by outstanding cultural qualities as well as natural qualities and are the most attractive and popular tourism destinations. They are also significant components of the global park system. Fifteen of China's thirty-one World Heritage Sites are also Scenic and Historic Interest Areas or are located in these areas.

Recently, the management of Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, especially in the World Heritage Sites, appears to be caught up in the general pattern of globalisation—which is also Westernisation, or even Americanisation. This has raised hot debates in China (ChinaYouth 2002; Huang and Wu; Wang(b) 2003; Wang(a) 2003). These debates focus on Chinese-national-government policies derived from criteria of the Natural Heritage in the World Heritage Convention: the removal of local inhabitants and the demolition and strict restriction of man-made structures within the properties (Mingxing 2003; CNWH 2004; Guo 2003). These policies are strongly opposed by local communities and local governments, because local people are uprooted and traditional lifeways and subsistence economies are ruined. They are also opposed by urban Chinese interested in visiting Scenic and Historic Interest areas as tourists, because such policies are not consistent with the traditional Chinese attitudes toward and values regarding nature.

#### **The Traditional Chinese View of Nature**

The traditional Chinese View of Nature has its philosophical origins in Confucianism and Taoism and has continued to develop historically. The Chinese have maintained a philosophical, humanist, and holistic attitude to the human-nature relationship which is distinguished from the traditional Western human detachment from nature (Moore 1967; Li 1996; Zhou 1999; Wang 1990). From the Chinese point of view, nature has never excluded human activities; instead, it is a place that always embraces humans. Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, are the places where the natural beauty and cultural artefacts are at “perfect oneness” and present the Chinese ideal of nature as beautiful, peaceful, spiritually charged, and gracefully and proportionately inhabited by human beings.

Historically, wild nature is not within the scope of Chinese appreciation. What traditionally the Chinese valued is nature that has been aesthetically and morally enhanced

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<sup>10</sup> This paper was initially presented in the 7<sup>th</sup> US/ICOMOS International Symposium in 2004 in the USA. This version is edited by Professor J.Baird Callicott and is included the new edited book *The Great New Wilderness Debate*, (Volume 2), Edited by Professor J.Baird Callitcott and professor Micheal Nelson, which will be published in January 2007 by the University of Georgia Press.

by cultural refinement. Indeed one might go so far as to say that historically the Chinese valued the nature that imitates art more than the original one that art imitates. The Chinese developed a unique culture of landscape poems, landscape gardens, and landscape paintings a millennium or more before these artistic traditions emerged in the West. Thus, landscape has evolved its specific meaning over time in China. In Mandarin, it is called *Shanshui* (mountain and water), referring to those ‘great’ or ‘scenic’ mountains and waters expressing equally great moral and aesthetic ideals. Traditionally, landscape is morally and aesthetically centered in China. Loving and traveling in morally and aesthetically idealized nature was the prime virtue of the Good Man ever since the Jin Dynasty<sup>11</sup> (265~420 CE).

Distinguished from the West, the traditional Chinese View of Nature is marked by the following characteristics (Han 2003; Lin 1935; Lin 1937; Yang, Zhang 2001; Yu 2001; Shen 2002; Wang 1998; Zhang 1992) :

1. It is humanistic rather than religious.
2. It is aesthetic rather than scientific.
3. There is great value and beauty expressed by nature.
4. Nature is consistent with human culture.
5. Nature is the extension of home; it is an enjoyable and inspiring place.
6. Artistic representations of nature are more beautiful than their originals.
7. Nature that is managed to imitate art is more beautiful than uncultured nature.
8. Natural aesthetics is highly developed in China.
9. Traveling in nature aims to be companionable and enjoyable, instead of solitary and physically daunting.

### **World Heritage Categories and Cross-cultural Confusion**

Thus, it is not difficult to imagine that the World Heritage classifications of Natural Heritage, Cultural Heritage, Mixed Heritage and Cultural Landscape, are confusing for the Chinese to apply in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas where nature and culture are highly integrated. Typically, many of these sites have associative cultural significance. They are landscapes associated with various artistic, cultural, moral, or ethical values, which are often not obvious to the outsider. Thus Chinese consider it arbitrary to sort them into these different categories. Managers are usually poorly guided by the policies of the Convention because of this cross-cultural confusion. Allowing themselves to be guided by these classifications, managers are liable to a heavy-handed separation of nature from culture on these sites.

There is not one single site that could be considered natural by Western (American) standards. On the contrary, the cultural inventory in the most natural-looking areas is always apparent upon closer inspection. They always manifest either material culture or associative culture. A common natural-looking stone in the deep mountains may have been where Li Bai (one of the greatest poets, Tang Dynasty 701—762 CE) lay drunk and composed his famous landscape poem. A flat platform with a beautiful view could be the place where Bai Juyi (another great poet, Tang Dynasty 772-846 CE) constructed his straw hut and lived spiritually with nature. When we Chinese are traveling in nature, we are not

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<sup>11</sup> It is widely accepted that landscape, as an isolated object without connection to a unified scene, emerged from Jin Dynasty in China.

alone. History and our ancestors are our companions. The Chinese have woven so much emotion and energy into nature through thousands of years that it is impossible to separate nature from culture in such a tightly knit net (Feng 1990; Lin 1937).

### **Cultural Landscape: A Problematic Concept**

Somewhat ironically, even the term “Cultural Landscape” is also problematic for the Chinese. As noted, landscape has its specific meanings in China. The Chinese would take it for granted that landscape is cultural. So it is redundant to put ‘cultural’ in front of ‘landscape’—even as “a useful tautology” (O’Hare 1997,p47). The concept of cultural landscape was coined to broaden the concept of landscape to include human habitation and other investments of humans in nature. But the concept of cultural landscape is difficult for the Chinese to understand because they lack the contrasting contrary concept of a culture-free, purely natural, landscape—that is, the concept of wilderness.

Although economically productive cultural landscapes, such as mountains terraced for rice fields, were not within the mainstream of traditional natural aesthetics, they were still an organic part of nature as “pastoral landscapes.” But now that puts Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in conflict with another ecological movement in China called “return the terraces back to the forest.” What is happening in China is similar to what happened in Australia in the 1970s when National-Parks authorities sought to create "pristine" wilderness areas by erasing the traces of Aboriginal habitation (O’Hare 1997,p29). Battles between social and cultural constructions of nature are by no means unique to China.

### **Cultural Tradition vs. Science and Globalization in China**

The influence of cultural tradition on today’s Chinese is profound and culture is usually inherited unconsciously. For example, Chinese housewives routinely slaughter fresh animals for cooking, as they have for century upon century. Children in kindergartens recite Tang Poems loudly without realizing they are one thousand years old. And the Chinese consider it appropriate to travel in natural areas and build houses there—just to enjoy the beautiful scenery—as did their ancestors. Such cultural traditions are hard for the Chinese to abandon. The Chinese expect three traditional things from Scenic and Historic Interest Areas: first, beautiful scenery; second, cultural enhancement of the scenery; third, convenient access to remote scenic spots; and tourist facilities, such as hotels, to provide comfort and enjoyment. These demands have caused huge environmental impacts in these areas (BRN 2002).

Such impacts are frequently attributed to the great pressure of a large population and growing tourism market instead of to cultural traditions. Certainly mass tourism is a big part of the problem. But the impact of sheer numbers of nature tourists is compounded by cultural expectations of what nature tourism entails. Traditionally, Chinese people gathered in beautiful places, had parties, and composed poems while drinking wine and gazing at beautiful scenery (265-420 CE) (Wang 1990; Kubin 1990). To repair to nature in order to experience solitude taking only pictures and leaving only footprints, as Westerners wish to do, is foreign to the Chinese. Nature is an open-air theater. This perspective, while maintaining the philosophical spirit of the Chinese View of Nature as being in harmony and

unity with humanity, however, has been vulgarized as well as commercialized and democratized, with dire environmental consequences.

The great artistic achievement of natural aesthetics also has a profound influence. The Chinese love humanizing nature more than any other peoples, for they believe that humanized nature is more beautiful than pristine nature. In one survey, 92 per cent responded that they feel that a site lacks spirit if it is purely or wildly natural without any cultural artifacts (Han 2004). This overwhelming preference on the part of Chinese tourists has resulted in today's many (and some tasteless) man-made structures and altered-landscapes in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas.

### **Contemporary Environmental Science and Globalisation**

Since China re-opened to the world in 1978, contemporary environmental-science ideas have spread rapidly in China. Sustainability is one of the most important concepts developed since the mid-1970s in the West. The World Heritage movement encourages the sustainability of the valuable properties that the Chinese have inherited from their rich history.

However, the concept of sustainability is rooted in contemporary Western philosophical foundations. The re-thinking of the relationship of human beings with the natural environment in the West, over the last thirty years, reflected a widespread perception in the 1960s that the late twentieth century faced a serious environmental crisis. This process of re-thinking has engendered lively theoretical debates—everything from challenging traditional Western anthropocentrism and resourcism to challenging the concepts of wilderness and ecological restoration. The set of World Heritage classifications—Natural Heritage, Cultural Heritage, Mixed Heritage, and now Cultural Landscape Heritage—is consistent with current trends in environmental philosophy toward integrating nature and culture, based on the cultural diversity around the world, instead of the old-school dichotomizing of nature and culture. But in China, the practice of World Heritage Sites in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas appears to be having the opposite effect. Nature is beginning to be disentangled from culture. The influence of globalization is obvious, especially in the spread of the concepts of wilderness and “pristine nature”.

### **Conflicts**

However, the global influence is mainly limited to management authorities and governments. It is certainly not manifest in local communities and tourists. Some management policies, which are misapplied from the Convention by management authorities, due to cross-cultural confusion, have resulted in two unfortunate consequences in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas in China. One is the removal of local inhabitants from these areas, which results in the rapid disappearance of the living traditional culture; the other is the restriction of new man-made structures in these areas, which is strongly against the traditional Chinese cultural values. Both of these policies are implemented in the name of Natural Heritage preservation and they are leading to cultural stasis in these sites. They are creating moral and cultural crises while dealing with ecological crises. Battles between government and local communities, management authorities and visitors, are essentially battles between international universal values and traditional Chinese values.

## **Case 1: Demolition in Wulingyuan Scenic and Historic Interest Area**

The case of the Wulingyuan Scenic and Historic Interest Area is a typical example. It is a hotly debated case and calls for deep thought. Wulingyuan is one of the most popular Scenic & Historic Interest Areas in China, with a large annual visitation of more than 5 million (XHN 2003). It was designated as a World Natural Heritage site by UNESCO in 1992. In 1998, it was severely criticized by the Centre/IUCN mission in its State of Conservation Report because it was “overrun with tourist facilities, having a considerable impact on the aesthetic qualities of the site” (UNESCO 1998). The Mission was also sharply critical of increasing indigenous agricultural activity as well as urbanization caused by rapidly developing exogenous tourism (XHN 2003). It seemed Wulingyuan was in danger of being delisted as a World Heritage Site. In order to meet UNESCO’s requirement of World Natural Heritage designation, the Central and Provincial Governments of China decided to demolish 340,000 square metres of recently built tourist facilities and artificial scenic spots to respond to the Committee’s critics. It was to accomplish this restoration over five years beginning in 2001. In addition, from 2001 to 2003, 1791 indigenous people from 546 families were to be resettled also in order to make the site natural, wild, and pristine (XHN 2003).

This multifaceted ecological restoration project is strongly resisted by local governments and communities. Besides its huge financial cost (about 1 billion Yuan), it is also criticised for “erasing history”—albeit, admittedly, recent history. There is also deep confusion among the local farmers that can be seen in their children’s eyes. They cannot understand why they should move off the land where they have lived for generations and why their existence is a deleterious “ecological and visual impact on nature.” They are also worried about how to survive in a strange new world outside their ancestral mountain demesne—with limited financial compensation from the government. But all this is happening in the name of “World Heritage”.

## **Case 2: Jiuzhaigou Valley Scenic and Historic Interest Area: An Artificial Natural "Earthly Fairyland"**

Jiuzhaigou Valley Scenic and Historic Interest Area is another World Natural Heritage Site designated in 1992, which is especially famous for the beautiful colors of its waters. Jiuzhaigou is doing its best to create an “earthly fairyland” or “fairy-tale world” with beautiful natural scenery, which seems never to have been touched by humans. It is a new Chinese interpretation of the Western “wilderness” concept.

Jiuzhaigou was once polluted due to deforestation, exacerbated later by large numbers of tourists (more than 1 million annually). The eco-restoration involved complete removal of tourist accommodations in the valley, to be replaced by new hotels restricted to areas outside of the property. The management effort to restore the ecosystem, and the model of partnership between authorities and the local people was commended by the Bureau of World Heritage Committee (UNESCO 1998). Now this model is strongly recommended by the Central Government of China and all other sites are requested to learn from its experience.

However, the price of the removal of all tourism facilities and the prohibition of grazing by the local Tibetan population is the disappearance of a unique culture. Traditional local culture, the origins of which go back five thousand years, has been totally changed. Until 1975 there were nine Tibetan villages in the Jiuzhaigou Valley living according to their own customs—grazing their flocks and raising their crops, generation after generation. Then Han Chinese logging operations stripped the vegetation, polluted the waters, and disrupted the traditional Tibetan way of life. Now the local peoples still live in the valley but, since 1984, when the area was opened to Chinese visitors, their existence has revolved around tourism. They have become simulacra—the tourists' image of Tibetan herdsmen. They were forced to abandon their traditional way of living in nature to be replaced by joining the national economy, more particularly the tourist industry. Tourism has eliminated their need to “exploit” the Valley's natural resources on which they formerly depended for their livelihood, but at the price of their culture.

### **Comments and Arguments**

Both cases are driven by the laudable effort to effect ecological restoration in World Natural Heritage Sites. Restoration is mandated when nature is threatened. But if we think of the environmental impacts of tourism just in ecological terms, our interpretation will be too shallow (Naess 1973). There are deep philosophical issues underlying the ecological phenomena. Essentially, the conflict is not between preservers and developers; rather, it is between the different meanings of nature. I am arguing for no one meaning in conflict with others. Rather I am arguing that the issues are complex and that we need to think as we act. We must reflect about why we do what we do before we do what we do.

While the local people are losing their homeland, we are losing our living culture. In its place we are creating ‘dead culture’ (outdoor museums). The poor indigenous people are being dispossessed, possibly because they are regarded as low ‘uncivilized’ people. Their existence interferes with the aesthetic experience that some self-congratulating ‘civilized’ and ‘nature seeking’ tourists want to enjoy. The Wulingyuan indigenes have been removed or resettled to new areas which are “out of the view of tourists”(XHN 2003; Zhang 2003). If the Jiuzhaigou people were not Tibetans protected by special policies, and did not have tourism value, they would probably be removed as well. Compounding the conflict between nature tourism, Chinese style, and the continuation of indigenous lifeways and livelihoods, the western wilderness idea (Callicott 2000) is rapidly enthraling the management of World Heritage Sites in China. Now whenever discussion about the management of these properties comes up, the first reaction of local authorities is clearing the local people out. This is a form of ethnic cleansing and it is tragic.

The restriction on human buildings in natural areas is also against the Chinese traditional cultural activities in nature. Nature is culturally and socially constructed and there is no correct or incorrect way that it is constructed. Culture can be guided but should not be suppressed as such in the process of preserving nature. For example, in Wulingyuan a huge elevator has just been built which breaks three world records—biggest, fastest, and highest—at the same time as the big tourist-facilities-demolition project is moving forward. This elevator rivals The Great Wall as a man-made structure in a natural area. The

contradiction in this situation is as ridiculous as it is mysterious to outsiders, but it is perfectly accepted by common Chinese people.

The existence of World Heritage sites in China is allied with commercial and political change in China. Almost all successful applications for World Heritage designation are accompanied by huge demolition and relocation projects to meet the Convention's criteria. Then the properties are commercially exploited as "golden tourism bait" to make the investment back once the application is approved. While the government actively applies for the World Heritage status, local communities, such as those living in Zhouzhuang near Shanghai, live in fear of being cleared out and sacrificing their way of life—and sometimes their very lives—for the World Heritage status. They claim that "World Heritage application is pursued for political advantage . . . but for us, . . . we just want to live better lives." In response the politicians complained that "we are struggling with the local communities" (China Youth 2002).

Many policies applied in China are against the central spirit of the Convention. Heritage is a living concept as is cultural landscape, in which history and meanings can be read and interpreted as texts (Armstrong 2001; O'Hare 1997). While we pass on "yesterday" to the present generation, we have to think what of "today" can and should be passed on to future generations. When culture and ethics encounter universal science and globalisation, there emerge many difficult issues. We need to be "more sensitive about who counts and why" (Light and Rolston 2003). There is no conclusion in this paper. Rather, it calls urgent attention to the dialectical dynamic generated at the interface of cultural diversity and ecological sustainability. And it makes a plea for thoughtful and cautious action to keep the vitality in sustainable cultural landscapes.

## **Appendix C**

### **China's New Wilderness<sup>12</sup>**

Feng HAN

On a recent visit to Jiuzhaigou a colleague exclaimed "*I feel I am not in China. Its so pure and the management of the landscape is so efficient and well organized...it is very different from other traditional areas. The managers must have learned a lot from the West.*"

In China, as in most countries, Scenic and Historic Interest Areas form a designated national park system. Premier tourist destinations, (some of world heritage status), these areas are characterised by outstanding natural qualities as well as valuable cultural traditions. Chinese identity has always been bound up with landscape and in these sites that connection is amplified. Landscape for the Chinese has never been a pure other, rather it is interwoven with the workings of culture.

Recently however, a new model of planning and management for Scenic and Historic Interest Areas—a model I refer to as “New Wilderness” —is prevailing in China. Under this model particular places are being reconstructed to create images of pure, untrammelled nature. This version of nature is a foreign concept for the Chinese, one consistent with western wilderness rather than traditional Chinese understandings of “Tian Ren He Yi” (Humanity’s oneness with nature).

My PhD, through the landscape program at Queensland University of Technology, is about such changing values and the cultural, ethical, and environmental issues involved in the production and management of wilderness areas. One case study in my PhD is the Jiuzhaigou Valley Scenic and Historic Interest Area, a place I would like to briefly discuss here so as to offer readers an insight into contemporary Chinese landscape values.

The Jiuzhaigou Valley (translated as valley with nine villages) was designated as a Scenic and Historic Interest Area in 1982 and a World Natural Heritage Site in 1992, is a famous tourist destination located in the southwest of China. Advertised now as an ‘earthly fairyland’ or ‘fairy-tale world’ for its beautiful coloured waters and apparently pure natural environment. Indeed it is a fairyland, something almost not of this world, except for the hoards of tourists.

Following strict timetables hundreds of shuttle buses deliver tourists to precise photographic opportunities then whisk them away. There is however, none of the usual Chinese commotion; no scattered venders along the road, no people sitting in kitsch pavilions, no calligraphies (souvenir images) and most importantly, no local people farming. In short, there is almost no evidence of the traditional Chinese interaction with the natural world. In this ‘natural’ landscape there is no accommodation and even the toilets are transportable.

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<sup>12</sup> Published in *Landscape Australia*, 2005, Volume 26 (1), Issue 105, P58-60. Edited by Professor Richard Weller.

The management goal of the local National Park authority is to create and maintain an ‘earthly fairyland’ one never touched by the hand of man. Things such as dead trees which are anathema to Chinese landscape aesthetics, are lying everywhere. The Chinese fondness for feeding wild fish and smoking are both prohibited. The only interaction one can make with Fairy land is through the eyes. What passes as wilderness is in fact a constructed scene created and managed now by humans.

What is being presented to the tourists in the Jiuzhaigou Valley is of course not a real world. Human activities in this area can be traced back four thousand years and human settlement to one thousand. Before the eco-restoration program in 2003 it was home to nine Tibetan minority village communities, a complex cultural and natural landscape. The land and the people that had lived there for generations had achieved a sustainable balance. The people treated the land with respect because they believed that the land is a gift of God.

This landscape had been maintained and managed by its inhabitants for thousands of years until 1966, when both the logging and tourism industries moved in. The recent eco-restoration of the ‘Fairy land’ devoid of human intervention, is a bid to secure the tourist dollar and maintain Jiuzhaigou’s ‘World Natural Heritage’ title. The eco-restoration program in 2003 involved the complete removal of 125 tourist accommodations in the valley (many of them are local B&B) and the prohibition of traditional grazing and farming activities as practiced by the local minorities. This program was strongly opposed by the local village communities. This battle, as elsewhere, in China, was ended by high level government intervention and financial compensation.

Now, the villagers are still allowed to live in certain parts of the landscape but they are reduced from managers and workers of the land to picturesque components and servants of the tourist economy. The price of this change is the disappearance of what was a unique cultural landscape. The price of beautiful nature is the loss of local culture. Of course, I’m not arguing that we should not rehabilitate landscapes but I am arguing that these efforts at pure recreation are exaggerated. The creation of perfect natural enclaves is not only out of step with traditional Chinese landscape values, they are also detrimental to communities who managed the land with an ecological sensibility and balance in the first place. Arguably, the landscape and its history are being miss-interpreted.

Jiuzhaigou villagers are lucky because they got high economic compensation from the government and they are still allowed to live in their land. But the other villagers are not so lucky. They lost their homes, lost the land they lived on, and the compensation normally is very low, not enough to settle a new home in other place. They are struggling at the bottom line of life. These indigenous inhabitants living on the land for hundreds or even thousands of years are being erased from the landscape at an alarming rate in China. While developing master plans for one such scenic landscape, a village we visited, was totally removed one month later. Nature has been ethnically cleansed so as to appear to be God’s pristine, undefiled creation, an image that meets the recreational and spiritual needs of those who can afford to be tourists.

Protestation from local communities is getting stronger and some are regaining the right to manage protected landscapes. Their struggle however, incurs strong prejudice. They are often regarded as 'uncivilized' polluters and exploiters of scenic landscape by the local management authorities and even landscape planners. For the local managers, the landscape is best kept for 'civilized' tourists and their money.

Nature as untrammelled wild at the exclusion of human activities and inhabitants is not a traditional Chinese conception of nature; rather, it is an imported western perspective. The traditional Chinese perception of nature has its deep philosophical origins in Confucianism and Taoism, through which the Chinese have maintained a philosophical, humanist, and holistic attitude to the Culture- Nature relationship. In this paradigm human beings are an organic part of nature and nature as an all-encompassing entity has never excluded human activities; instead, it always embraces humans. This is in contradistinction to the western tendency in its philosophical and theological traditions of separation and antagonism between the natural and the cultural (Moore 1967; Li 1996; Zhou 1999; Wang 1990).

Nature, for most Chinese is an enjoyable place for entertainment Historically, (since the Jin Dynasty 265~420A.D) Scholars began to gather in landscape settings in groups, composing landscape poems and appreciating beautiful scenery while drinking wine. (Wang 1990; Kubin 1990). As well as the subject of the fine arts, nature is a social and domestic space for the Chinese. Hence, although Chinese New Wilderness is borne of western models they differ insofar as the visitor's experience in China is made as comfortable as possible. In contrast, in the west solitude is still considered the authentic mode of wilderness appreciation and creature comforts are kept to a bare minimum.

New Wilderness came into China with globalisation, something China has experienced above all as an American influence. Indeed, for over a century, the U.S. model of nature conservation has been exported worldwide. In Africa, the practice of mass exclusion of indigenous peoples to make way for protected areas intensified in the 1960s and continues to this day. In Australia in the 1970s the National Parks authorities sought to create "pristine" wilderness areas by eradicating the traces of contemporary humans (O'Hare 1997,p29). Millions of indigenous people around the world were driven off their land in the name of nature conservation. Today's China is dominated by western economic values. For better and for worse, this economic emphasis is effecting Chinese social and environmental values. New wilderness is the by-product of economic rather than cultural or ecological concerns.

In both China and the West wilderness is a contested terrain subject to the shifting values of society (Callicott 2000). Landscape architects, engaged in large scale programs in China, are not only dealing with ecological and aesthetic problems, but also dealing with the deep human-nature relationship. Landscape architects need to interpret, question and act upon their readings of the landscape –people's lives depend upon it.

## **Appendix D**

### **Survey Questionnaire for Travellers on the Train to Wudang<sup>13</sup>**

1. Your gender: 1) Male 2) Female
2. Your age: 1) 10-20 2) 20-26 3) 26-40 4) 40-50 5) above 50
3. Your educational background? 1) Primary school or lower 2) Middle school  
3) High school 4) Professional academy 5) University or higher 6) Other
4. What is your income (per month, RBM)?  
1) Less than 1000 2) 1000-3000 3) 3000-5000 4) More than 5000
5. What is your marital status? 1) Single 2) Married 3) Other
8. What is your occupation? 1) Full-time employee 2) Part-time job 3) Freelance worker  
4) Unemployed 5) Retired 6) Student 7) Peasant 8) Immigrant worker 9) Other
9. Where are you from? 1) Jiangsu, Zhejiang & Shanghai 2) the North of China  
3) Yunnan, Guizhou & Sichuan 4) the Northeast of China 5) the South of China  
6) Hong Kong, Macao & Taiwan 7) Overseas 8) Other
10. How often do you travel on average? 1) Every Three months 2) Every half a year  
3) Every year 4) Every two years 5) Other
11. Will you visit a Scenic and Historic Interest Area in the next year? 1) Very possible  
2) Maybe 3) Not very likely 4) Not at all

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12. What was the destination of the first trip you remember? 1) Metropolis 2) Scenic and  
Historic Interest Area 3) Tourism Zone 4) Forest park 5) Other
13. Where do you prefer to travel to currently if possible? 1) Metropolis 2) Scenic and  
Historic Interest Area 3) Tourism Zone 4) Forest park 5) Other
14. What kinds of qualities do you think that a Scenic and Historic Interest Area should have?  
1) Outstanding natural beauty 2) Great cultural interests 3) Excellent ecological  
qualities 4) Obviously different from the city 5) Having recreational activities 6)  
Good food and accommodation 7) Other
15. What do you associate with Scenic and Historic Interest Areas? 1) Landscape paintings  
2) Landscape poems 3) Travel essays 4) Landscape gardens 5) Remoteness 6)  
Danger 7) Other
16. What is your motivation to visit Scenic and Historic Interest Areas? 1) Sightseeing 2)  
Being relaxed in nature 3) For some religious purpose 4) To take risks  
5) For social communication 6) For knowledge of knowledge history 7) For scientific  
knowledge 8) Just a conference tour 9) For its reputation

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<sup>13</sup> This survey was taken on a train from Shanghai to Chengdu during 2-3 August 2004.

17. Should a Scenic and Historic Interest Area be a primitive natural area or with villagers living inside? 1) Primitive area only with visitors 2) with villagers living inside
18. Where did you get information about the destinations? 1) Staff there 2) Internet 3) Interpretation system 4) TV & radio 5) Magazines & periodicals 6) Travel agency 7) Families & friends 8) Novels & movies 9) Other
19. What kind of recreation do you prefer in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas? 1) Sightseeing 2) Boating 3) Walking 4) Camping 5) Monument and relics 6) Riding 7) Hunting 8) Shopping 9) Hiking 10) Photographing 11) Risky exploration
20. What kind of transportation do you prefer in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas? 1) Shuttle bus 2) Small scenic van 3) Bicycle 4) Walking 5) Featured transportation 6) Cable car
21. Which accommodation do you prefer during your trip? 1) Hotels inside Scenic site 2) Hostels inside Scenic site 3) Camping ground 4) Villagers' homes 5) Hotels in towns outside the scenic area 6) Other
22. Whom do you travel with? 1) Alone 2) With family 3) with friend 4) with other members of travel group 5) Conference tours 6) Other
23. What do you think is the biggest problem scenic areas are facing? 1) Unreasonably high entrance fee 2) Unreasonably expensive food and lodging 3) Overcrowding 4) Poor service 5) Not safe enough 6) Poor facilities 7) Monotonous recreational program 8) Others
24. Which kind of entrance fee will you choose? 1) One ticket 2) Multiple ticket 3) Don't care
25. Do you think it necessary to encourage public participation in the management decisions of scenic area? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Don't care
26. Will you be interested in public participation in the management of Scenic and Interest area? 1) Very interested 2) Somewhat interested 3) Not very interested 4) Not interested at all
27. Do you think it is necessary to control the number of tourists in scenic areas? 1) Very necessary because crowding makes me feel uncomfortable when travelling 2) Very necessary because crowding may have negative effects on natural resources 3) Not necessary because I like company when travelling 4) Don't care

## **Appendix E**

### **Survey Questionnaire for Onsite Visitors to Wudang**

1. Your gender: 1) Male 2) Female
  2. Your age: 1) 10-20 2) 20-26 3) 26-40 4) 40-50 5) above 50
  3. Your educational background? 1) Primary school or lower 2) Middle school  
3) High school 4) Professional academy 5) University or higher 6) Other
  5. What is your income (per month, RBM)?  
1) Less than 1000 2) 1000-3000 3) 3000-5000 4) More than 5000
  6. What is your marital status? 1) Single 2) Married 3) Other
  7. What is your occupation? 1) Full time employee 2) Part-time job 3) Free lance worker  
4) Unemployed 5) Retired 6) Student 7) Peasant 8) Immigrant worker 9) Other
  8. How often do you travel on average? 1) Every Three months 2) Every half a year  
3) Every year 4) Every two years 5) Other
  9. Will you visit a Scenic and Historic Interest Area in the next year? 1) Very possible  
2) Maybe 3) Not very likely 4) Not at all
  10. Why do you not travel so often? 1) Too far to travel 2) Too busy to travel  
3) Too expensive to travel 4) Lack of information 5) Not interested 6) Not safe  
7) Other
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11. What was the destination of your first trip you remember? 1) Metropolis 2) Scenic and  
Historic Interest Area 3) Tourism Zone 4) Forest park 5) Other
12. Where do you currently prefer to travel to, if possible? 1) Metropolis 2) Scenic and  
Historic Interest Area 3) Tourism Zone 4) Forest park 5) Other
13. What kinds of qualities do you think that a Scenic and Historic Interest Area should have?  
1) Outstanding natural beauty 2) Great cultural interests 3) Excellent ecological  
qualities 4) Obviously different from city 5) Recreational activities 6) Good food  
and accommodation 7) Other
14. What do you associate with Scenic and Historic Interest Areas? 1) Landscape paintings  
2) Landscape poems 3) Travel essays 4) Landscape gardens 5) Remoteness 6)  
Danger 7) Other
15. What is your motivation for visiting Wudang Scenic and Historic Interest Areas? 1)  
Being relaxed in nature 2) Appreciate cultural heritage 3) On vacation with friends  
4) Pilgrimage 5) for its reputation 6) for its religious culture 7) Other
16. Should a Scenic and Historic Interest Area be primitive natural area or have villagers  
living inside? 1) Primitive area only with visitors 2) with villagers living inside
17. Where did you get information about the destinations? 1) Staff there 2) Internet  
3) Interpretation system 4) TV & radio 5) Magazines & periodicals 6) Travel  
agency 7) Families & friends 8) Novels & movies 9) Other

18. What kind of recreation do you prefer? 1) Sightseeing 2) Boating 3) Walking  
4) Camping 5) Monuments and relics 6) Riding 7) Hunting 8) Shopping  
9) Hiking 10) Photographing 11) Risk exploration
19. What kind of transportation do you prefer in Scenic and Historic Interest Areas?  
1) Shuttle bus 2) Small scenic van 3) Bicycle 4) Walk 5) Featured transportation
20. Which accommodation do you prefer during your trip?  
1) Hotels inside Scenic site 2) Hostels inside Scenic site 3) Camping ground  
4) Villagers' homes 5) Hotels in town out of the scenic area 6) Other
21. Whom do you travel with? 1) Alone 2) With family 3) with friends 4) with other visitors in travel group 5) Conference tour 6) Other
22. Which of the following do you consider the most important during a trip?  
1) Food 2) Accommodation 3) Transportation 4) Tour Programs 5) Shopping 6)  
Entertainment 7) Other
23. What kind of food do you prefer during your trip?  
1)Banquet 2) Local food 3) Wild food 4) Fast food 5) Don't care 6) Other
24. What kind of transportation do you prefer within your destination?  
1) Shuttle bus 2) Small scenic van 3) Bicycle 4) Walk 5) Featured transportation  
6) Cable car
25. Which kind of entrance fee do you choose? 1) Single ticket 2) Multiple ticket  
3) Don't care
26. How will you record or remember your trip? 1) Take photos 2) Take videos 3) Write diary  
4) Purchase souvenir 5) Don't care 6) Others
27. What kind of souvenir do you prefer? 1) Local food 2) Local handicraft 3) Special plant or animal 5) Other
28. Do you mind crowds in scenic areas? 1) Very much 2) A little 3) Not much 4) Not at all
29. What is the largest expense of your trip?  
1) Food 2) Lodging 3) Transport 4) Tour 5) Shopping 6) Entertainment
30. How much did you spend this time (RBM)? 1) below 200 2) 201-500 3) 501-1000  
4)1001-2000 5) Other
31. Does this place match the information you had before you came? 1) Pretty well  
2) Somewhat 3) Not much 4) Not at all
32. Did you communicate with the local villagers? 1) a lot 2) A little 3) Not much  
4) Not at all
33. How did you communicate with the local residents? 1) Talking 2) Inquiring  
3) Eating at their homes 4) Living in their houses 5) Other
34. What is your impression of the local residents? 1) Hospitable 2) Aloof 3) simple and sincere  
4) Commercial 5) Dishonest 6) Poor 7) Not well educated 8) Other
35. What do you think the relationship between this place and the villagers is?  
1) They live on the land 2) They are destroying natural resources 3) They are part of the pastoral landscape 4) Other

36. What is your attitude towards removing all the residents out of this area? 1) Totally agree with it 2) Somewhat agree with it 3) Indifferent 4) Somewhat oppose it 5) Absolutely oppose it

## Appendix F

### Survey Questionnaire for Onsite Local Villagers in Wudang

1. Your gender: 1) Male 2) Female
2. Your age: 1) 10-20 2) 20-26 3) 26-40 4) 40-50 5) above 50
3. What's your Nationality or minority people? 1) Han Nationality 2) Minority \_\_\_\_\_
4. Your educational background? 1) Primary school or lower 2) Middle school  
3) High school 4) Professional Academy or higher
5. What about your income (per year, RBM)?  
1) Less than 1000 2) 1000-3000 3) 3000-5000 4) More than 5000 5) above 5000
6. Whom do you live with?  
1) Alone 2) with my spouse 3) Spouse and children 4) Parents or elders 5) Others
7. How many people are there in your family? 1) One 2) Two to Three 3) Four to five  
4) Above five
8. Are you local people or not? 1) Local people living for generations 2) Non-local people
9. What does your family live on? 1) Peasant 2) Small tourism business 3) Other business 4) Work for government 5) Other

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	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Moderate	Unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied
10. Are you satisfied with your current living conditions?	1	2	3	4	5
11. Are you satisfied with your housing?	1	2	3	4	5
12. Do you think your house and village is beautiful? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Not sure					
13. Do you plan to build new houses? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Not sure					
14. Do you think that will have a negative impact on the land? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Not sure					
15. Do you think your village is a part of the Scenic and Historic Area? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Not sure					
16. If the living conditions improve, will you still want to live here? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Not sure					
17. If the conditions cannot be improved, will you still want to live here? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Not sure					
18. Are you willing to move off this land? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Not sure					

19. If you get some compensation, will you move? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Not sure

20. Do you think your daily life causes impact on the natural resources?

1) Yes 2) No 3) Not sure

21. Do you think it's necessary to move all the village residents out?

1) Yes 2) No 3) Not sure

22. Do you think it will be a big sacrifice for you if you have to move out?

1) Yes 2) No 3) Not sure

23. Do you think your village has changed since it opened to tourists?

1) Yes 2) No 3) Not sure

24. Do you think your lifestyle has changed since it opened to tourists?

1) Yes 2) No 3) Not sure

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25. What about the housing are you unsatisfied with? 1) Inconvenient transportation 2)

Disturbances from Tourists 3) Not flourishing 4) Other

26. What kind of house do you prefer? 1) Traditional 2) Modern 3) Rebuilt one on the same land 4) Other

27. What is your current house? 1) Traditional old house 2) Refurbished traditional house 3) Newly-built traditional house 4) Newly-built modern house 5) Other

28. Why are you satisfied with your current house? 1) Already got used to it 2) Convenience of daily life 3) It's beautiful and has a good environment 4) Harmonious neighbourhood 5) Other

29. What kind of lifestyle do you prefer? 1) Move to city 2) Modern city life in the old place 3) Satisfied with peasant life 4) Haven't considered yet 5) Other

30. Why do you insist on staying in the original place? 1) Our lives do not destroy the area 2) We have been living here for generations 3) Because of the limitations of policies 4) Other

31. What problems will you have if you move out? 1) Lose living income 2) Lose spiritual attachment 3) Lose pleasant environment 4) Lose good neighbourhood 5) Lose home 7) Other

32. Why does the village look quite different than before? 1) More newly-built constructions 2) The houses are too old and deteriorating 3) The layout of the village has changed 4) The Facilities make it modernised 5) Other

33. Why has the lifestyle become different? 1) Stopped farming 2) Pay less attention to tradition 3) Life has been improved 4) Learn from city life

	Yes	No	Not sure
34. Do you think the current policy is reasonable?	1	2	3
35. Do you think tourism is influential on your life?	1	2	3
36. Do you expect more tourists to come?	1	2	3

37. Why do you think the current policy is unreasonable? 1) Limitations of land use  
2) Limitations of tourism business 3) local residents' needs not considered 4) Other
38. What kind of influence does tourism have upon your life? 1) Income 2) Management policies 3) Life interruption 4) Change lifestyle 5) No influence 6) Other
39. Why do you expect more tourists to come? 1) Entail economic development 2) Broaden my tourism business 3) Make Wudang more famous 4) Other

## **Appendix G**

### **Explanation of Design of Questionnaires, Data Collection and Analysis**

All survey questionnaires were designed by the author. Survey questionnaires are not only for this research purpose, but also from the master planning of Wudang Scenic and Historic Interest Areas. Questionnaire data collection from visitors and villagers was done by postgraduate students and undergraduate students of the Department of Landscape Studies, Tongji University, Shanghai, led by the author. Students were instructed to focus on visitors' social backgrounds, motivations and preferences, images of nature and Scenic and Historic Interest Areas, and their attitudes to the villagers. Also, they were instructed to focus on villagers' social backgrounds, perceptions of nature, the main difficulties of their lives, and their conflicts with the local government and tourists. During the survey, any information provided by the visitors and villagers were recorded as field notes. The survey data was coded by the students into SPSS software.

All interviews and focus groups were hosted by the author, and participated in by other planning team experts and the author's post-graduate students in Tongji.

All data analysis related to this research was done by the author.

The list of students who gave questionnaires and coded survey data:

Zijia MA, Xinyi BIAN, Xiaohui WU, Yin WANG, Yingjie XU, Ying LIU, Zhihao LIU, Xiaoli LI, Rui LIU.