

Producing Space, Consuming Culture

Self-making in the Mountains: An Ethnographic Study of Sichuan-Tibet Long Distance Cycling

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Every summer, thousands of young Chinese travel to Chengdu to begin their grand cycling tour, heading to Lhasa, Tibet. The distance is 2160 kilometers and the journey normally lasts one month. Being in the vast Tibetan plateau, cyclists are subject to various environment-induced risks, such as altitude sickness, injuries from geological disasters, etc. These danger-themed descriptions attract cyclists to come to the route, as they are convinced the journey is a once-in-a-lifetime chance in which they are able to challenge and transform themselves to a significant extent. Apart from dangers, the second discourse revolves around beauty; the landscape of Tibet is considered of stunning beauty and purity—"a place where you can clear your soul".

This research explores cyclists' pursuit of a braver self, a purer self, and how these pursuits are interwoven in the natural and social environment of the Sichuan-Tibet route.

Citizens' Feeling on Parks--Taking Various Types of Parks in Linkou City, Taiwan for Example

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This paper aimed to demonstrate urban citizens' imagination and perception of their civil lives through parks in the city. By studying various parks in Linkou, it is found out that the parks are constructed to satisfy citizens' need. Since 1970s, building parks have been one of the top projects for the urban planning of Linkou City. Nowadays, there are types of parks in the new zone of this city such as eco parks, sport parks, historical, memorial parks etc. In the old zone, comparatively, though there is no extra space to build more parks, the government could still change the name from existing spots like temples and plazas into parks. It is likely that a city with parks become a certain habitat where people relieve their bodies and souls, feel the change of time, perceive nature and environment, and get along with living creatures. Not to mention relative activities such as fairs, vendors, and advertisement from real estate, as well as government and interest groups' efforts in building the image of Linkou City by promoting the existence of parks. Moreover, this research shows how citizenship and the sense of community is formed through/in/with the parks, how citizens actually feel the parks, and the real implication of parks in Linkou City.

Dual production of locality: Identity studies in relation to Wu Duo Jin Hua

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This article is based on the movie Wu Duo Jin Hua which has a widespread influence that no other movies can be mentioned in the same breath in Yunnan, specifically in the Bai ethnic group area. Interviews with local elites who occupy a key place in power networks of Jianchuan County reveals the importance of locality in viewing and framing this movie. The argument is that the production of locality could be attributed to a double beautification—both in the movie script and real-life discourses in a manner. On one hand, this movie purifies the splendid scenery as well as local customs and practices in the absence of severe social and political milieu in 1950s; on the other hand, the local elites tend to assume that the movie represents the authenticity of the Bai ethnic group even though there are some modifications in the folk songs and dresses which deviate from the authentic Bai ethnic group. This kind of locality production has basis in reality since elderly people are quite nostalgic for the 1950s. However, the ethnic identity is at risk among younger generation due to globalization and ethnic fusion.

The Social Context of Collective Physical Training among Chinese Elderly: Anthropological Case Study of ZiZhuYuan park in Beijing

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The present study analyzes the social context in China where the elderly participate in collective physical training, a cultural activity specific to the country. To achieve study goals, senior citizens aged 60 or above who participated in collective physical training in Zizhuyuan Park (“Purple Bamboo Park”) in Beijing were observed for approximately five months from September 2014 to February 2015. Research results found that collective physical training enables formation of social networks that meet a variety of needs for the elderly, including relationships providing mutual caring and support as well as relief of stress. On the other hand, the participants who embody the dominant aging discourse conform to the self-disciplined modern discourse to survive the reality of the marginalized elderly. The participants who still recollect the Unit System—the communal living system in the Mao period that adopted a socialistic planned economy—decide to protect themselves by participating in collective physical training. This is due to their social conditions, such as the poorly established welfare system for the aged, severance pay that is too low to cover medical expenses, and distrust of the medical approach.

Although the participants seem to autonomously choose collective physical training based on their own preferences, the context of Chinese society, including hidden government intentions, leads the elderly to participate in training activities.