

# **BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION: STUDIES IN ITS ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT, MAINLY IN YUNNAN, CHINA**

**Working Paper No. 30**

**Tourism in Yunnan Province and the  
Xishuangbanna Prefecture of China:  
Achievements and Prospects.**

**by**

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Research for ACIAR project 40, *Economic impact and rural adjustments to nature conservation (biodiversity) programmes: A case study of Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan, China* is sponsored by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), GPO Box 1571, Canberra, ACT, 2601, Australia. The following is a brief outline of the Project

Rural nature reserves can have negative as well as positive spillovers to the local region and policies need to be implemented to maximise the net economic benefits obtained locally. Thus an 'open' approach to the management and development of nature conservation (biodiversity) programmes is needed. The purpose of this study is to concentrate on these economic interconnections for Xishuangbanna National Nature Reserve and their implications for its management, and for rural economic development in the Xishuangbanna Dai Prefecture but with some comparative analysis for other parts of Yunnan

The Project will involve the following:

1. A relevant review relating to China and developing countries generally.
2. Cost-benefit evaluation of protection of the Reserve and/or assessment by other social evaluation techniques.
3. An examination of the growth and characteristics of tourism in and nearby the Reserve and economic opportunities generated by this will be examined.
4. The economics of pest control involving the Reserve will be considered. This involves the problem of pests straying from and into the Reserve, e.g., elephants.
5. The possibilities for limited commercial or subsistence use of the Reserve will be researched.
6. Financing the management of the Reserve will be examined. This will involve considering current sources of finance and patterns of outlays, by management of the Reserve, economic methods for increasing income from the Reserve and financial problems and issues such as degree of dependence on central funding.
7. Pressure to use the resources of the Reserve comes from nearby populations, and from villagers settled in the Reserve. Ways of coping with this problem will be considered.
8. The political economy of decision-making affecting the Reserve will be outlined.

**Commissioned Organization:** University of Queensland

**Collaborator:** Southwest Forestry College, Kunming, Yunnan, China

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# **TOURISM IN YUNNAN PROVINCE AND THE XISHUANGBANNA PREFECTURE OF CIDNA: ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROSPECTS**

## **ABSTRACT**

Rapid growth in tourism has occurred in Yunnan Province since 1979 with several destinations being popular. Mass tourism in Kunming City and the central area of Yunnan is shifting to other areas such as Xishuangbanna in the south and Dali and Lijiang in the northwest because of growing interest in ecotourism, cultural tourism and ethnic tourism. A comparison of characteristics of tourism in different locations is conducted as are both its direct economic effect and indirect roles in social and environmental changes. The efforts of the State Nature Reserve of Xishuangbanna to promote ecotourism have shown positive results in attracting tourists but further steps are still to be taken to better market and manage ecotourism. The ethnic and cultural magnet of Dali and Lijiang provides a strong attraction for tourism growth in these areas. The economics of tourism operation in Yunnan is analysed using results from surveys of tourism enterprises and tourists. Problems and the future direction of tourism in Yunnan and Xishuangbanna are discussed.

# **TOURISM IN YUNNAN PROVINCE AND THE XISHUANGBANNA PREFECTURE OF CIDNA: ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROSPECTS**

## **1. Introduction**

Situated in southwest China, Yunnan Province is noted as one of the most popular tourism destinations for its pleasant climate, picturesque scenery, abundant flora and fauna, and distinctive minority groups. Its southernmost Prefecture, Xishuangbanna, known as the “gem on the crown of green kingdom”, prides itself as the major attraction of Yunnan Province. Tourism has been targeted as one of the leading industries for both Yunnan and Xishuangbanna with more than 40 per cent of their GDP from tertiary industry being attributed to tourism income (Statistics Bureau of Yunnan Province, 1995; Travel & Tourism Bureau of Yunnan Province, 1995). This report describes tourism development in these two areas with emphasis on ecotourism. Existing problems in tourism operations are discussed and a comparison of major tourist attractions within Yunnan is made. Prospects for further tourism development in Yunnan and Xishuangbanna and related policy issues are considered.

## **2. Yunnan Province and Its Tourism**

Covering an area of 394,000 square kilometres, Yunnan contains 39 million people of 26 nationalities. It shares a border line totalling 4,000 kilometres with Laos, Vietnam and Burma. The average elevation of Yunnan is 2,000 metres with subtropical highland monsoon being the major type of climate. The year-round moderate climate of Kunming, the capital city, brings it the honour of being called “the City of Eternal Spring”. However, the climate within Yunnan can differ greatly due to its diversified topography. It contains 9 major mountain ranges and 6 major water systems, and there is a saying that “four seasons can be found along the same hill slope and different weathers can be witnessed within a distance of 5 kilometres”. From May to October, the monsoon strikes Yunnan bringing most of its annual average rainfall of around 1,100 mm. There are 17 prefectures and municipalities under the jurisdiction of the Yunnan Provincial Government, and 129 cities and counties.

### *2.1 Rich tourism resources in Yunnan*

The first attraction of Yunnan is its diversified minority groups. There are 25 minority

nationalities in Yunnan in addition to the Hans. They are, in descending order of population size, the Yi, Bai, Rani, Zhuang, Dai, Miao, Lisu, Hui, Lahu, Wa, Naxi, Yao, Tibetan, Jingpo, Bulang (Brown), Pumi, Nu, Achang, De'ang, Jinuo, Shui, Buyi, Mongolian, Dulong, and Man. This province has the greatest variety of ethnic groups in China. Yunnan's total population of minorities is 10.85 million, one third of the total population of the province and one sixth of the total minority population of China (Statistics Bureau of Yunnan Province, 1995).

Hinayana, or lesser vehicle Buddhism, is practised by such groups as the De'angs, Achangs, Browns, Jingpos, Bais and Dais in Yunnari Province; Primitive societies and feudal serfdom societies existed in parts of Yunnan before the founding of the People's Republic. The Mosuo people in Ninglang County of Lijing Prefecture retain aspects of a matriarchal society.

There are altogether 56 nationalities in China. The Hans make up around 93 per cent of China's population. The other 55 minorities are scattered around China. In the Common Programme agreed by the First People's Political Consultative Conference in 1949, it was stipulated that all nationalities within the boundaries of the People's Republic of China are equal and a big fraternal and cooperative family comprising all its nationalities is to be achieved. In 1952, the central government adopted a programme of implementing regional national autonomy. Hence by the end of 1958, over 90 per cent of the population in minority areas was given regional autonomy. There were 5 autonomous regions at the provincial level, 31 autonomous prefectures, 96 autonomous counties and banners (shires) by the end of 1987. The brotherhood between the Hans and the ethnic groups was undermined during the ultra-leftist period starting from late 1950s when the "Great Leap Forward" and the "People's Commune" disrupted the smooth progress of production methods, and a campaign calling for assimilation of the minorities which started in the early 1960s tried to eliminate differences between ethnic groups. Dissatisfaction among minorities reached a crescendo during the "Cultural Revolution" (1966 to 1976) with the ruthless shattering of traditional culture and life styles of ethnic groups by leftist policies. But reconstruction and improvement have been witnessed among minorities since the downfall of the "Gang of Four" in October 1979. Rehabilitation of production methods, cultural activities and religious practices of minorities have been encouraged. Consequently, Yunnan's multi-cultured attraction is flourishing again.

Renowned as the kingdom of plants, Yunnan is an ideal place to encounter the world of flora and fauna. Of the 30,000 odd species of higher plants in China, over 18,000 are found in

Yunnan. 2,700 species of trees from 87 families, 300 aromatic plants, 21,000 species of ornamental plants, and 1,000 medicinal plants grow in Yunnan. After Heilongjiang, Tibet and Sichuan, Yunnan is the fourth largest timber producer in China. Yunnan's total timber reserve is one billion cubic metres, amounting to 10 per cent of China's total. Over 1,6000 species of vertebrate animals, 50 per cent of China's total, have been found here. In Yunnan 37 species of animals are listed as first-class animals under state protection and 42 as second-class (Travel & Tourism Bureau of Yunnan Province, 1991. p. 12-14).

Ecological scenery in Yunnan is outstanding with the Stone Forest being highly regarded. The Stone Forest, 120 kilometres southeast of Kunming, is like a petrified forest and is made up of towering, rugged dark grey stones. This region was part of a vast sea more than 300 million years ago. The limestone and rocks which used to be on the ocean floor were uplifted and have been transformed into a typical karst formation after a long period of erosion by wind and rain. The Stone Forest consists of an area of 300 square kilometres of numerous stone peaks, pillars and stalagmites towering into the sky loftily, resembling a forest. The “earth forest” in Yuanmao is another geological attraction.

Cultural relics are abundant in Yunnan. As the cradle of the *homo sapiens* in China, Yunnan's recorded history dates back to 2,000 years ago when Dian Kingdom was established in 286 B.C. Kunming, the “Spring City” with yearly mean temperature of 17 degrees, has been listed as one of the first 40 historical cities in China. Dali and Lijiang are both distinguished cities historically.

## 2.2 *Tourism in Yunnan*

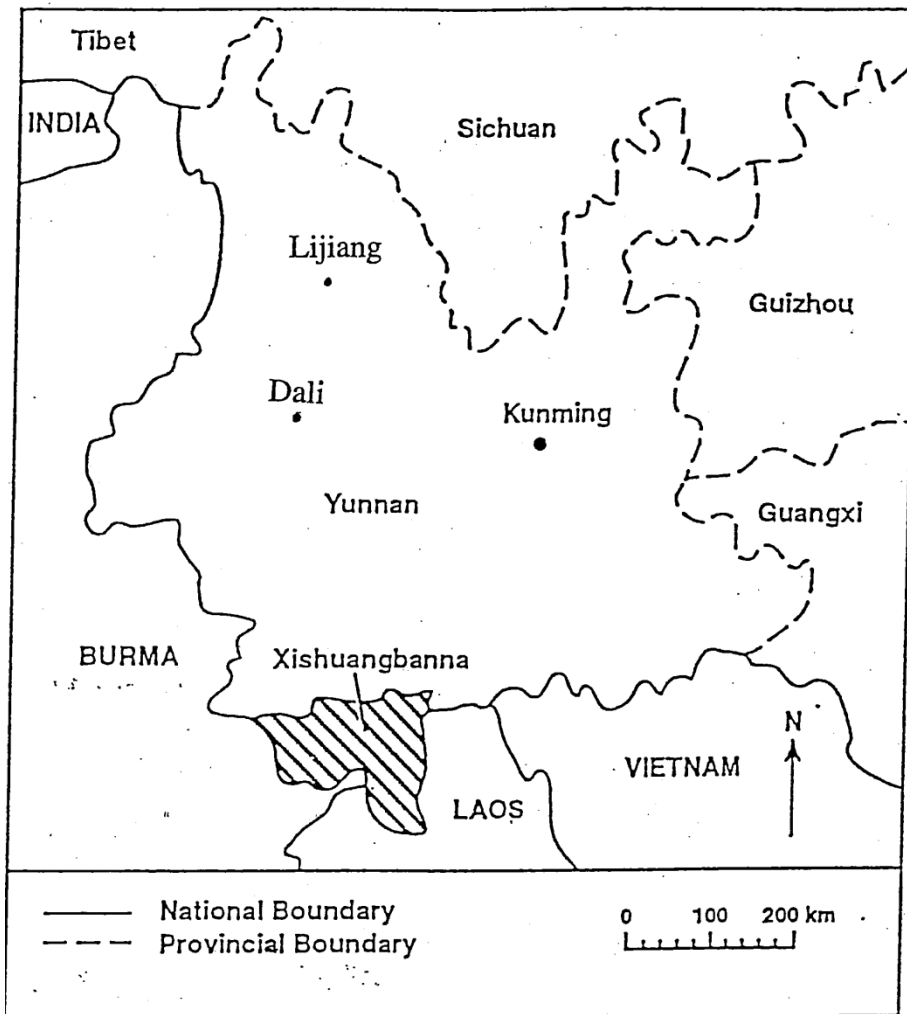
Tourism has been targeted by Yunnan Government as one of the four leading industries together with mineral production, tobacco and forestry. Tourist arrivals in Yunnan have increased on average by 30 per cent annually since 1978. In 1994, overseas arrivals in Yunnan reached 522,059, 39 times the number of arrivals in 1979, and up 29 per cent from 1993. Receipts from international tourism were \$124.4 million in 1993, an increase of 20 per cent over those of 1993. Half of foreign visitors to Yunnan come from Asia, particularly southeast Asia. Thailand was the biggest single source country in 1994, generating one-fifth out of Yunnan's 402,332 foreign visitors (Travel & Tourism Bureau of Yunnan Province, 1995). A road connecting Kunming and Rangoon in Burma is to be finished in 1998, allowing at least one million vehicles to come from southeast Asia to Yunnan and providing expanded opportunities for regional tourism. Note that more than two million cross-border

day visitors to Yunnan annually are excluded from international visitors' statistics.

Yunnan's goal for international tourism is to receive over one million arrivals and to attain receipts of \$US 300 million in the year 2000 (Travel & Tourism Bureau of Yunnan Province, 1993). Yunnan played the leading role in 1995, the tourism year of 'Chinese Folklore', and continuous tourism growth is expected in 1996 as the year of 'Resort Holiday' and 1997, 'Tourism China'.

Major tourist areas in Yunnan can be divided into six groups. The middle area, which attracts half of the tourists to Yunnan, includes Kunming, Chuxiong and Yuxi (homeland of Yunnan tobacco). The northwest area covers Diqing, Nujiang, Dali and Lijiang. Dehong, Lingcang and Baoshan are tourist areas in the west. Simao, a key garrison town in the southern frontier, with forest covering more than 60 per cent of its land, and Xishuangbanna are in the south. The southeast area includes Honghe, Wenshan, and Qujing. Zhaotong and Dongchuan are tourist areas in the northeast. Tourism in Yunnan developed first in the middle area where access is relatively easier and some famous sites, including the Stone Forest, are located. Then from the middle 1980s tourism to the southern area, especially Xishuangbanna, started to boom with the availability of an airline connection and improved road conditions. A little later the ethnic cultures in the northwest became tourist attractions so that Dali and Lijiang became the third popular tourist area. The next step for tourism development in Yunnan is to make the southeast area another attraction. In October 1995, the Tourism Department of Yunnan University finished the report on resource evaluation and tourism development in the southeast. Figure 1 indicates the location of major tourist destinations in Yunnan.





**Figure 1 Location of Kunming, Xishuangbanna, Dali and Lijiang in Yunnan Province, southwest China**

Domestic tourism is also growing quickly in Yunnan. There are 14.6 million arrivals in 1994, providing three billion Yuan in income. (Travel & Tourism Bureau of Yunnan Province, 1995). More than 12,000 Chinese took trips overseas from Yunnan (excluding cross-border trippers), an increase of 14.4 per cent over 1993. Although Chinese government's policy on domestic tourism has alternated between encouraging it to grow quickly (in order to direct individual consumption) and discouraging it in order to curb trips paid by public funds and to reduce pressure on transportation, it has been commonly recognised that expanding domestic tourism is an unavoidable phenomenon with increasing income and leisure time. If there is no channel such as tourism to disperse the strong consumption potential in China, the pressure on commodity market will undermine the progress at inflation control once efforts are made to spend the private deposits in banks of Yuan 2,700 billion. In 1994, total domestic trips

reached half a billion with expenditure of Yuan 102.4 billion (National Tourism Administration of PRC, 1995). Kunming hosted the Domestic Tourism Fair of China in December 1994, at which 161,500 contracts were signed. Market reforms are affecting tourism, for example, price differentials are being introduced for different seasons.

There were more than 1,000 tourist enterprises in Yunnan at the end of 1994, with Yuan three billion fixed assets and 60,000 employees. There were 116 travel agencies and 83 hotels with almost 10,000 rooms.

Transportation has improved greatly in Yunnan, a former remote corner of China where access was extremely- difficult. Kunming is linked by air with 16 major cities in China. There are regular flights from Kunming to Hongkong, and scheduled flights to Rangoon and Bangkok. A charter airline between Kunming and Kuala Lumpur started in July 1994. Within the province, there are flights from Kunming to Simao, Jinghong, Zhaotong, Baoshan, Dehong and Lijiang. The two major railways, from Kunming to Guiyang and Chengdu respectively, and these connect Kunming with other major cities. There is a highway network within Yunnan with Kunming at its centre.

The general economic background for tourism in Yunnan has been improving. With the subtropical highland monsoon climate, Yunnan's major crops are rice, wheat and com. Cash crops include cured tobacco, tea, sugar cane, oil-bearing plants and aromatic plants. Yunnan is also rich in mineral resources. Of the 140 kinds of valuable minerals known to the world, 120 have been found here. The proven reserves of lead, zinc and germanium rank the first in China, and the reserve for lead, zinc, copper and tin makes up 95 per cent of China's total non-ferrous miners (Travel & Tourism Bureau of Yunnan Province, 1991, p16). Yunnan ranks the second among 30 provinces in China in terms of hydro-electric power reserves with an estimated potential of 100 million kilowatts and 77 million practically exploitable (Statistics Bureau of Yunnan Province, 1995). Geothermal energy can also be utilised from 706 hot springs. Yunnan has established a complete industrial system with 13,000 enterprises providing necessary commodities for both locals and tourists. The average price level in Yunnan is among the lowest in China. It is estimated by the Travel & Tourism Bureau of Yunnan Province that it is within the capacity of Yunnan for tourist arrivals to increase at an annual rate of 30 per cent as far as both environment and output level are concerned.

The bottleneck for tourism in Yunnan is still transportation. Tourism transportation is often in

short supply, and tickets for planes and trains coming to Yunnan are hardly available in the peak season. Road condition within Yunnan still needs improvement. Better management of Yunnan's tourism market is necessary with bodies from different industries being involved. At the decision-making level of the Provincial Government, a tourism coordination group comprised of representatives from areas closely related to tourism with a higher rank than the Travel and Tourism Bureau of Yunnan Province is needed to better organise tourism operations. The system of Quality Assurance Deposits from travel agencies needs to be completed and enforced.

### **3. Tourism in Xishuangbanna**

Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, set up in 1953, is situated in the southern tip of Yunnan Province, bordering Laos in the southeast and Burma in the southwest, with one third of its 700,000 population being the Dais. Its administration structure is comprised of one city – Jinghong ('the place of dawn' in the Dai language), and two counties – Menghai and Mengla. In the Dai language, the word "Xishtianguanna" means twelve districts of one thousand mu of paddy fields each, a reflection of the old land ownership system that this whole area was distributed among twelve chieftains who were responsible for the general governor of Xishuangbanna in terms of land rent and labor. The ruling strata in Xishuangbanna was composed of chieftains and their agents. Resources belonged to Zhao Pian Ling – the lord of land. Serfs were allowed tiny patches of self-managed plots under communal rules. About 40 per cent of its residents were slaves for chieftains and landlords who was 2 to 3 per cent of the total population before 1949 (Yang, 1988). The Dais have been allocated land according to the size of their families under the Household Responsibility System implemented since 1979, and they can sell what is left after harvest in the free markets. In the 1960 and 70s, Xishuangbanna had to ask for at least Yuan 30 million and 30 million kilograms of grain from the central government every year to sustain the lowest living standard of its people (Yang, 1988). The Chinese government has been investing in the minority areas to help improve their production. From 1950 to 1983, there was a total of RMB Yuan 84 billion of capital investment made from the state to autonomous areas, and RMB Yuan 6.2 billion out of the total Yuan 130 billion was allocated to the autonomous areas in 1983 (Ma, 1989). After the implementation of economic reform from 1979, productivity here has been improving at an annual rate of more than 10 per cent. The GNP for Xishuangbanna in 1994 was 3.5 times of that in 1978, and 19.5 times of 1952 (Yunnan

Statistics Yearbook, 1995).

With tropical and subtropical monsoon climate types, it has an annual mean temperature of 21 degrees centigrade and is frost free all the year round. The year can be divided into a wet season from the end of May to the end of October, which brings 90 per cent of the annual precipitation falls, and a dry season from early November to May. The tropical rain forest provides favourable environments for the growth and propagation of flora and fauna, Xishuangbanna is unique in that natural forest covers 34 per cent of its land area. There are more than 5,000 species of trees, 500 species of medicinal plants and herbs, and 160 species of oil-bearing plants in this area. 50 per cent of China's rare and endangered plants can be found here. Here exist 399 species of birds, and 600 species of terrestrial wildlife (Travel & Tourism Administration of Yunnan Province, 1991). Xishuangbanna has become an "oasis" on the otherwise desert belt of the Tropic of Cancer on account of its multitude of vegetation types and its rich species resources. Major crops include rice, corn, wheat and soybean, most of them yield two crops annually. Xishuangbanna is rich in such mineral resources as rock salt, iron, copper and rare earth ores.

Xishuangbanna came to be known as the "green gem in southern China" in the 1950s when former premier Zhou Enlai took part in the Water Splashing Festival and held functions to host his overseas guests here. The attractiveness of tropical rainforests, flora and fauna in wild state, combined with the multifarious minority life-styles and cultures makes this place a cherished tourist attraction. However, Xishuangbanna did not start to be targeted as a major tourism destination until 1980s for the reasons of both ultra-leftist worry about national security at border areas as well as the difficulty of accessing it. When mass tourism in Kunming, which started in -late 1970s, began to show signs of corigest on in the middle 1980s as a result of the strong demand for visiting Xishuangbanna, Yunnan's government decided to facilitate tourism development in Xishuangbanna. One of its major attractions is the Dai nationality.

### *3.1 The Dai nationality*

The word "Dai" means freedom in Dai language. About one million Dai People live in Yunnan, the majority of them are located in Xishuangbanna Dai Prefecture in the south and in the Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefectures in the west. The Dai calendar begins in 639 A.D., and Water-Splashing Festival takes place in mid April. It is believed that this Dai's tradition of splashing water originated from the legend that seven young women who

killed the evil fire fiend used water to extinguish the fire from the devil's head. Today the Dais hold water-sprinkling festivities to welcome the New Year, and to dispel the diseases and misfortunes of the past year and usher in the New Year, hoping that it will bring them good health, abundant crops and fine cattle. The first day of this festival is spent bidding farewell to the previous year, bathing Buddha images and holding a dragon-boat race, the second day is marked by water sprinkling (the clean fountain water is the symbol of respect and friendly blessing), grand gala parties are held on the second night, at which ethnic songs and dances are performed, while the third day is the New Year's Day, a time for welcoming the new year.

The earliest recorded mention of the Dais in the Chinese language dates back to the first century B.C. (Zhong, 1983, p34). There were three forms of ownership in Xishuangbanna before 1949: the comparatively intact feudal-lord ownership in Xishuangbanna, a transitional form from that of feudal lord to landlord as in the Dehong Prefecture, common landlord owner hip as in Xinping, YuanJiang and Jinggu areas. The religion for the Dais is Lesser Vehicle Buddhism. Dai boys are sent to temples at the age of 8 or so to obtain education. Burmese-style temples are used by the Dais for religious and social activities. Lesser Vehicle Buddhism teaches people to seek harmony with the existing system rather than destroying it. Consequently the Dais usually accept reality passively, even at a low level of material satisfaction, which is according to some researchers one of the reasons why the Dais are a peaceful people with little greed for material things and a lack of entrepreneurship.

Dai people are divided into three groups: Land Dais (Han Dai) live on the fringe of the mountainous region, young women wear trousers and short aprons; water Dais (Shui Dai) usually live near the rivers, and women are dressed in narrow-sleeved tops and ankle-length flower-patterned sarongs; and Floral Belt Dais (Hua Yao Dai) who obtain their name from the floral cloth around their waists. The majority of the Dais inhabit plain areas, with their villages flourishing along rivers and lakes. They usually live in bamboo houses on stilt foundations, which are enclosed by a courtyard of bamboo hedges enclosing exuberant fruit trees. The young people have full freedom of social life before their marriage. Courting exhibits colourful styles and romance.

Some traditions of the Dais help with conservation in Xishuangbanna. They plant fast growing trees called Heixinmu (Black Cord Tree, or *siamense senna*) or Kantaoshu (Top Chopping Tree, or *cassia siamea*) along the roads as fuelwood for domestic needs rather than

chopping down trees from the rainforest. It is estimated that each Dai uses 1.0 to 1.5 cubic metre of fuelwood a year and 0.1 hectare of land is enough to meet the fuelwood needs of one person annually on the average. They reserve some of the hills as Longshan (Dragon Hill) or Shengshan (Holy Hill) to pay their respect to nature and their ancestors. Woodchipping, vegetation removal and hunting are prohibited in those areas.

Although Article 8 of the Marriage Law of China stipulates that “After a marriage has been registered, the woman may become a member of the man’s family, or the man may become a member of the woman’s family, according to the agreed wishes of the two parties”, in most rural areas in China, the bride usually lives with the family of the bridegroom if the new couple do not have a house of their own. Hence under the One Child Policy baby girls are regarded as a tragedy because the parents will be left alone after the daughter is married away, and the situation becomes worse when the parents get old with hardly any pension. However, in the Dai society it has been common for a new couple to live with the bride’s family if necessary, and Dai women are usually well respected. This tradition helps with population control in Xishuangbanna, whereas most other minority families in rural areas try to have at least one boy because a preferential policy of the Chinese government allows the minorities to have at most three children. It is common for the Dai families today to have two children even if both are girls, and Xishuangbanna has been recognised as an area with lower growth rate of population compared with other minority areas.

### *3.2 Tourism as the major industry in Xishuangbanna*

Tourism in Xishuangbanna has been growing at an average annual rate of 20 per cent since late 1980s. The Prefecture received 15,312 overseas tourists plus 1.25 million domestic travellers in 1994 and tourism receipts of \$4.29 million and Yuan 264 million respectively, together accounting for 26 per cent of the total GDP, and 50 per cent of the income from tertiary industries in Xishuangbanna (unpublished data from the Tourism Bureau of Xishuangbanna; Statistics Bureau of Yunnan Province, 1995). The number of travel agencies jumped from 22 in 1992 to 44 in 1993, and to more than 50 in 1994. Besides more than 1,000 rooms provided by around 20 hotels with sufficient quality to cater overseas tourists, many more rooms are supplied by hotels and guest houses operated by non-tourist sectors. Tourist arrivals in Xishuangbanna are expected to reach 50,000 from overseas and 2 million from China till the year 2000. A brief overview of tourism in Xishuangbanna is given in the Table 1.

A change in statistical method is partly, the cause of the big jump in international tourism receipts in 1994 when China terminated its Foreign Exchange Certificate (FEC) system. FECs were issued to international tourists in exchange for hard currencies. Tourism income was calculated according to the amount of FEC earned from tourism sector. It was well understood that international tourism income calculated in this method was devalued by 30 per cent or so because one third of the FEC earned by tourism leaked to other sectors before it was included within tourism income. The method endorsed by World Tourism Organisation of surveying departing tourists for their expenditure to calculate tourism income was implemented in China from 1994, leading to an unprecedented increase in China's estimated income from international tourism. This phenomena can be observed also in Xishuangbanna.

**Table 1 Tourism Data for Xishuangbanna Prefecture, Yunnan, 1991-1994**

	International tourism		Domestic tourism	
	Arrivals	Receipts (\$US m)	No. of tourists	Income (Yuan m)
1991	8,460	0.37	600,000	30
1992	13,609	0.8	900,000	100
1993	15,305	1.17	1,000,000	200
1994	18,125	4.29	1,250,000	780

*Source:* Tourism Bureau of Xishuangbanna

Tourism has been targeted as the leading industry in Xishuangbanna with supporting policies for administration bodies as well as related industries. The Tourism Bureau of Xishuangbanna Prefecture (simplified as Bureau in the following text) located in Jinghong is the highest tourism administration body in the Prefecture. There are three Tourism Bureaus of lower level in Jinghong City and the two counties. They are responsible for the macro-control of tourism in Xishuangbanna, coordinating relationship of tourism across administration levels as well as with different industries, planning tourism development, and arranging training programmes. In 1993 and 1994, some major steps were taken to improve tourism in Xishuangbanna. Travel agencies are required to sign insurance contracts regarding the safety of tourists and tourist vehicles. The Prefectural government issued regulations on cross-border tourism management. A joint law enforcement office has been set up by the Tourism Bureau of Xishuangbanna together with the Prefecture's Intermediate People's Court to ensure a favourable legal environment for tourism development. A Tourism Association has been established to promote standardisation of tourism industry. In order to better organise the 300 vehicles engaged in tourism, a standard vehicle symbol and driver card are issued

after a compulsory test arranged jointly .by the Transportation Bureau and the Tourism Bureau for both the vehicle and the driver. As a result, traffic accidents have decreased considerably since September 1994 after unqualified vehicles and drivers were forced to stop operation. It became necessary to better control the quality of more than 20 travel agencies. A certain amount of Quality Assurance Fund has been collected from travel agencies, and the Tourism Bureau has the right to make use of this deposit to compensate tourists for losses in case of any disputes. Reregistration and reaccreditation of tour guides was finished in 1994 in order to improve personnel management. New badges for tour guides were issued after a test. Those who work with no badges, or work without showing their badges, or do not provide quality service, will be punished. A plan for tour guide testing .has been made and training courses have been provided. Delegations have been sent to both domestic and international fairs to promote tourism in Xishuangbanna.

An investigation on Xishuangbanna's tourism resources started in September 1994 with the help of the Chinese Academy of Science and the National Tourism Administration in Beijing. 800 sites distributed in 40 towns have been identified, and resource rating started from three sites, namely the Ethnic Culture Park in Jinghong, the Menglun Botanic Garden, and the Tourist Village in Mandou. Other sites are expected to be rated soon and an overall plan for tourism development in Xishuangbanna will be compiled afterwards. Those who investing in tourism must obtain approval from the Tourism Bureau to comply with the overall tourism plan of Xishuangbanna.

Although Xishuangbanna is known for its forests and wildlife, tourism at this stage in Xishuangbanna concentrates mainly on ethnic cultures. Encounter with nature in a typical tour of three or four days includes two hours' visit to the Menglun Botanical Garden and three hours' trip walking along the tracks in a mountain with an average height of 500 meters in Mandian, a site financed by the Forestry Department and the Planning Committee of Xishuangbanna, to watch two waterfalls. Some plants and 'plant-strangling' flora can be observed on the way.

Four tourist routes are most popular in Xishuangbanna. They usually include going to Xiao Mengla, a small Burmese town across the border from Daluo, a town 150 kilometres west of Jinghong on the Chinese side The east route goes through Ganlanba to the Botanic Garden in Menglun 80 kilometres away from Jinghong, or continues to turn south to visit Laos through Mengla. The south route is a 90 kilometres trip to Da Meng Long to see the White Pagoda at



Manfeilong (Flying Dragon). The north route takes tourists to the Mandian Waterfalls and Dai villages. Visiting villages of other ethnic nationalities and some activities like water-splashing of the Dais are included in these trips. The ferry trip down the Lancang (Mekong) River to the Golden Triangle in Thailand is gaining in popularity at present. Tours within Jinghong include visiting parks and shops, tasting local food in ethnic restaurants accompanied by performances, and taking the three-wheeled carriage or strolling on the street.

There were almost 200 tourist enterprises in Xishuangbanna at the end of 1995 involved in operating travel agencies, hotels, transportation and supplying tourist commodities. Major souvenirs are peacock feathers, wooden elephants and butterfly specimens. It was estimated that the average percentage of total tourism expenditure on shopping was 18.5 by overseas tourists (Tisdell and Zhu, 1995). But generally visitors complain about the limited design, availability and chaotic price for tourist products. Many stalls and shops sell so called "Burmese jade" but the quality and price are obviously suspicious. Because the majority of tourists to Xishuangbanna stay in Kunming where a wide range of reasonably-priced tourist commodities is available, Xishuangbanna needs to expand its supply of tourist goods with distinguished characteristics and sell those at a reasonable price.

Transportation to and within Xishuangbanna has improved a lot during the last 10 years. However, due to its location and complicated topography, transportation is still a bottleneck for tourism in Xishuangbanna. There are usually three or four regular flights from Kunming to Xishuangbanna daily with a total capacity of around 800 people. But the demand normally exceeds the supply resulting in travellers waiting in Kunming for seats.. Another alternative to the 25 minutes flight is an arduous bus service which runs on the zigzag road of the Yungui Plateau for more than 800 kilometres. There are direct flights from Guangzhou, a city in southeast China where one-fourth of overseas visitors land China on top of strong domestic tourism demand from the affluent Pearl River Delta, and from Chongqing, a big industrial centre in southwest China. Xishuangbanna is pressing for more direct flights from other Chinese cities as well as from cities in southeast Asia. But it takes a long time to organise flights and considerable investment is needed for upgrading the Jinghong Airport. Many roads in Xishuangbanna become impassable during the wet season, and there are usually sharp turns along the road.

Economic leakage from tourism in Xishuangbanna is high because a large part of the

consumption goods are imported from other more advanced areas, mainly Kunming. It is estimated by the staff in the Tourism Bureau that 30 to 45 per cent of goods supplied for tourism is purchased from outside of the Prefecture. A majority of the airfare goes to Yunnan Airlines.

It has been estimated that in China tourism income of one dollar brings \$3.12 increment in national economy and \$10.7 extra income in tertiary industry (Luo, 1994, p.27). The multiplier effect of tourism in Xishuangbanna is hard to calculate due to lack of information, but it is believed to be at least 4.8 for GDP and 5.5 for employment (Tourism Bureau of Xishuangbanna). It was found from the author's field trip that in tourist areas like Jinghong and Ganlanba more than one-twentieth of the residents are involved in tourism.

Tourism is distributed unevenly within Xishuangbanna itself. A tourist spends normally 3 nights and four days here with an average daily expenditure of Yuan 200 to 400. An overwhelmingly majority (99 per cent) of tourists make Jinghong their base during their stay and take day trips. Most travel agencies and hotels are also located in Jinghong. Other areas in Xishuangbanna can only obtain tourism income from lunch and entry fees plus small sales of tourist commodities. Shops located on the Chinese - Burmese border where Burmese jade is in abundant supply can make profit from jade products (whether genuine or not).

It is urgent to improve the effectiveness of tourism investment. Some tourism projects in Xishuangbanna are suffering from loss due to improper decision making and mismanagement. A garden for the Dai culture and fairy tales was set up at Ganlanba with an investment of more than half a billion Yuan in 1994, but attracts few visitors due to its distance from the main road. Another failure resulting from location is the Mengbalaxi Miniature Park with an input of Yuan 48,000. The Cultural Village at Mandou was jointly established by Mandou Village and the Bureau in 1992, and it soon became the major tourist site on the Lancang River with typical Dai activities. However, disagreement on the operation of the Cultural Village emerged after the administration body of Mandou changed in 1993. The Cultural Village was handed to an outsider on a contract basis with staff trained under the help of the Bureau leaving rapidly, and it has been excluded from major tourist sites.

Coordination between travel agencies and other tourist sectors is also crucial for tourism in Xishuangbanna. Unlike domestic tourism in most other parts of China or even in Yunnan where FIT (free independent tourist) dominates the market, more than half of Chinese come

to Xishuangbanna in tourist groups in order to be guaranteed of air tickets. For those who arrive independently it is necessary to join groups organised by local travel agencies because Xishuangbanna's scattered tourist sites cannot be reached by public transportation and car renting is expensive. Consequently the income of a tourist site depends closely on whether travel agencies include it in the itinerary. For such sites away from the major roads as is the Cultural Village at Ganlanba, access problems may be easily solved if the travel agencies agree to drive a little further. Tourists themselves who are not familiar with the tourist attractions in Xishuangbanna are happy to visit wherever they are taken even though they occasionally complain about hygiene at certain sites and rough roads.

There is no guaranteed financial support for tourism development in Xishuangbanna. As a Prefecture with relatively low fiscal income compared with rich areas in China, it is impractical to rely on government financial support. Although the Prefecture agreed to allocate half a million Yuan every year for tourism, this can 'hardly' be accomplished according to the Bureau. Outside investment has been playing an increasingly important role in Xishuangbanna's tourism development. Jinghong Forestry Bureau signed contract with Jinzhou Group of Zhejiang Province in east China in April 1995 to develop a resort with an area of 250 hectares. Menglun Botanical Garden and a Hong Kong company have jointly established a tourism development company with emphasis on ecotourism. A new tourist company named South China Holiday Ltd is to be invested in jointly by Singapore and the Tourism Bureau of Xishuangbanna.

The basic maintenance of tourist sites needs improvement. Litter is visible at most tourist areas, and bins are hard to find. Stalls for selling ethnic food and snacks often surrounded by flies. Toilets are hardly accessible at Mandian and Ganlanba situation may be improved after ten toilets for tourists are finished in 1996 as planned by the Bureau.

To achieve the goal of receiving around 3 million tourists from both China and abroad and increasing tourism income to 20 per cent of the GDP of the Prefecture, Xishuangbanna still needs to improve infrastructure with emphasis on transportation. Staff training, more efficient administration and better coordination of related participants in tourism sector are important for smooth operation of tourism in the future. Quality commodities with unique ethnic and tropical characters at reasonable prices are promising channels for increasing tourist income. Further tourism development must be based on careful planning, taking account of the carrying capacities dependent on social, ethnic and environmental factors in Xishuangbanna.

### 3.3 *The State Nature Reserve of Xishuangbanna and Ecotourism*

The rich ecotourism resources in Xishuangbanna are concentrated mainly in the State Nature Reserve of Xishuangbanna, an area of 240,000 hectares with well- preserved tropical forest and rich biodiversity, including the last remaining Asian Elephants. Forest cover in Xishuangbanna was almost halved in the 1950s and 60s as a result of rapid population growth, slash-and-burn farming and spreading rubber plantations, and China recognised the urgency of protecting this area from environmental degradation which could ultimately lead to human disaster.

Protection efforts for Xishuangbanna started in 1958 when four reserves were established, and in 1981 the unified Reserve of Xishuangbanna was announced with more than 20 per cent of Xishuangbanna under conservation. The State Nature Reserve of Xishuangbanna consists of five patches of rain forest at Mengyang (99,760 hectares), Menglun (11,242 hectares), Mengla (92,932 hectares), Shangyong (30,538 hectares), and Menggao (7,304 hectares). Figure 2 shows the location of these five subreserves along with three major ecotourism sites which will be discussed later (Please note in this figure that subreserves are comprised of both the hatched areas, which are ecotourism sites, and the cross-hatched areas). Some precious animals and birds which are under state protection such as wild Asian elephants (*Elaphas maximus*), wild oxen, gibbons, peacocks can be found here. This nature reserve plays an essential role in the conservation of tropical forests and diverse fragile flora and fauna.

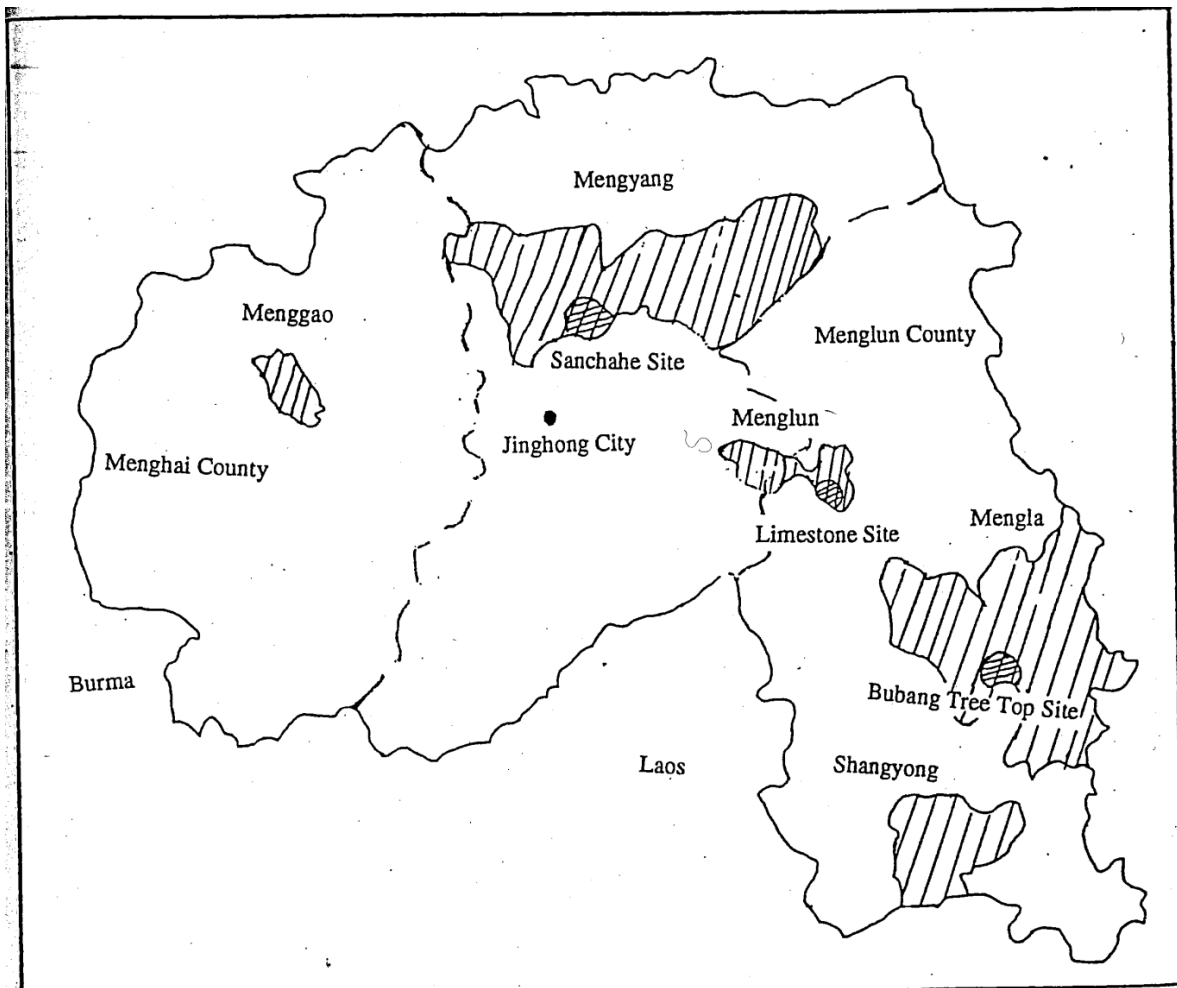
In 1986, China invested Yuan 15 million to finance the basic construction of the Reserve. The WWF , World Bank together with other international organisations have recognised its importance in worldwide campaign of reserving biodiversity by providing soft loans and technology to help with its conservation programme. The World Bank allocated \$1 million to support the Reserve in 1995. The WWF agreed to provide 300,000 SW franc and equipment to assist China in general survey and planning of the Reserve (Zhu and Yang, 1992) and has donated four vehicles.

The Administration Bureau of the Reserve in Jinghong was set up 1985 with 60 staff. There are four administration stations, 6 reserve working stations and 7 forest police stations scattered in sub-reserves under this Bureau with a total of 160 employees. More than 60 local villagers have been employed as part-time reporters for the Reserve in case of any poaching. At present the regular fund the Reserve gets from the Chinese government is hardly enough

to cover its basic expenses such as salaries. Given the already tight state budget, there is little chance of greater financial assistance to the Reserve although there have been efforts from the administrative bodies such as the Forestry Ministry and the State Planning Committee who invested Yuan 15 million from 1988 to 93 in the Reserve for improvement in basic structure. The Reserve has realised the importance of self-sufficiency to ensure its long-term existence and development. Ecotourism has been targeted as a way to alleviate the Reserve's financial situation not at the expense of the Reserve, and to provide an opportunity for both locals and tourists to comprehend the forest and eventually help with conservation actively.

Ecotourism is still new to the majority of Chinese tourists who are used to visiting different cities to have their photographs taken. When they visit mountains, they expect such tangible cultural remnants as temple, stone inscriptions from famous people, or steps leading to the top, and they usually regard thick forest and wild animals as dangerous. The average holiday for Chinese is also short. Consequently ecotourism in the Reserve has to provide enough interpretation and activities to make visitors interested in the forest while marketing itself through multiple channels.

Ecotourism in the Reserve is conducted at three major sites – Sanchahe, Bubang and Menglun, and their location can be found in Figure 2. Sanchahe, 45 kilometres north of Jinghong, is a site with stable source of visitors provided by those who take bus trips between Kunming and Jinghong. There is a 4 kilometre-long track of concrete bricks in the forest leading to a pool on which an iron bridge of 100 metres long and 6 metres high costing one million Yuan is being finished. In dry season wild animals often come to the pool for drinking and bathing, and the Reserve's staff sometimes spread salt in the pond to attract animals. Seven tree-top hotels located four to six metres above the ground are scattered along the track, allowing the occupants to watch wild animals which usually appear during evening. Unfortunately the orange coloured roofs of the treetop 'hotels' do not blend in with the green environment. There is a butterfly farm and a snake garden for tourists. A tourist toilet built in the shape of a huge tree always wins positive comments.



**Figure 2 The location of five subreserves of the Xishuangbanna State Nature Reserve and major ecotourism sites.**

Sanchahe contains some of the 250 wild elephants existing in Xishuangbanna, increased from only 100 at the end of the 1970s (There have been disputes on the number of wild elephants in the Reserve, data here were provided by the Administration Bureau of the State Nature Reserve of Xishuangbanna). Although birds and butterflies can be observed, it is hard for daytime visitors to encounter wild animals except that elephant droppings and their damage to vegetation or track can be seen occasionally. This is one of the reasons why travel agencies are not enthusiastic to bring tourists here. Some tourists complain about the lack of activity here. There is hardly any focus event guaranteed for the tourists when butterflies in the farm go dormant from October until April. The possibility of having a zoo built at Sanchahe was discussed, but the idea was not accepted because keeping wild animals in a zoo conflicts the ideal of conserving them under natural habitat. There used to be a domesticated elephant bought from Burma available for photograph taking and a ride in the forest. But it was borrowed by the Forest Ministry to be sent to Shanghai. Road conditions can be dangerous

during wet season, and there are 300 sharp turns along the road of 30 kilometres long from Jinghong to Menghai. To provide more attraction to ecotourism, the Reserve is building Sanchahe Forest Park in this area, which is planned to finish in 1996 with a special investment of four million Yuan from the Governor's Office of Yunnan Province. Some villas of ethnic styles providing 40 guest rooms are under construction plus a peacock garden. This Forest Park is expected to take off from the present annual arrivals of around 30,000 and an income of less than Yuan 100,000 to becoming a holiday resort with at least 100,000 visitors of higher expenditure.

Bubang is the second ecotourism site in Mengla subreserve with dense forest. Wangtianshu (Looking into the Sky Tree, or Chinese Parashorea) grow to a height of 60 to 80 metres. A walking passage of 200 metres long with a height of 8 metres at the lowest point and 35 metres the highest is built on the top of Chinese Parashorea trees, on which tourists can walk in the air, take rests on the ten platforms along the passage and return to where they start by the same passage. The passage is under renovation at present and by April, 1996 an extra return path will be finished. It has been argued that treetop walks for tourists may not be compatible with conservation, and some deterioration of trees can be detected on this site. A joint research effort was conducted by the Kunming Ecology Institute and the American Nature Cooperation on canopy ecology of tropical forest, in which the potential damage of tree top passage was discussed. Careful planning for tourism activities is necessary to avoid potential damage to the environment since this site receives more than 30,000 visitors annually on average. It is difficult to pass the bumpy road of 17 kilometres from Mengla's County site to Bubang, therefore travel agencies are hesitant to send tourists here due to this access problem. At least three million Yuan is required to improve transportation and tourist structure in Bubang according to the Bureau.

The third ecotourism destination in the Reserve is the Limestone Cliffs and Forest at Menglun. An area as large as 2 per cent of the Menglun Subreserve has been planned for tourism development with the Botanical Garden, which attracts half of the tourists to Xishuangbanna, to be the gateway. However, less than 10 per cent of tourists going to Botanical Garden extend their trips to the Limestone Cliff and Forest Curtains due to the inconvenient road transportation. Investment on such basic structure as road was expected to be 13 million Yuan according to the Preliminary Plan for Tourism Development of Menglun Area made by the Forestry Investigation and Planning Institute of Yunnan Province, but no

agreement has been reached as far as loan is concerned. A small guest house of 20 rooms built by the Reserve caters mostly for travellers rather than tourists. The locals are collecting funds to cooperate with the Reserve for some ecotourism projects, but no solid step has been taken.

A Master Plan for Tourism Development in the Reserve was completed in June 1993 outlining tourism projects and their estimated cost as well as forecasted arrivals and future tourism income. Eleven projects have been discussed in this Master Plan, but only three of them as mentioned above have been developed to the level of opening to tourism. Other steps will be taken according to the leaders of the Reserve to renovate or build attractions in Huang-shan-tang, Menglun and Nangong Mountain. The General Plan for Xishuangbanna Forest Park was finished in June 1995 by Tongji Architecture and Design Institute, Shanghai in which the Reserve was targeted as the major attraction for ecotourism with very optimistic forecasting but no detailed investment was given, nor was there an assessment of the impact of ecotourism on the biological environment in the Reserve.

Fire in the broad-leaved forest with high water content is not a danger to the Reserve. There is a fire monitor centre in Simao watching the whole area. But illegal hunting and deforestation threaten the future of the reserve. There was a case in 1994 when 16 wild elephants were killed and another 4 were injured for the tusks. It was found that members from the Security Department of Jinghong County were involved in the poaching by using the military armaments and police vehicles to kill elephants and transport tusks. Although four major participants were executed after a public trial in November 1994, the temptation that a pair of tusks of one adult elephant, weighing around 30 kilograms, can make a profit of at least \$15,000 on the black market, stimulates the poaching of wild elephants.

The Reserve is facing impending encroachment from both inside and outside. More than 10,000 villagers live within the Reserve plus another 300,000 people live around it, and some busy roads, including the No. 213 State Road going from Jinghong to Beijing, pass the Reserve. It has long been the custom for some nationalities to carry some kind of arms when going around. Some young people are seen entering the Reserve with guns, but there is not enough evidence that they are hunting. Jinuo people in Xishuangbanna used to excel at group hunting in which men used knives, bows and guns and women flushed the animals out by making noises. The males still take knives with them today. Education is still necessary for both the locals and tourists to enforce the rule that no hunting is allowed in the Reserve.



The present five patches of sub-reserves are separated from each other and this makes them sensitive to outside disturbances. There have been suggestions of connecting them with corridors to form a unified area of big reserve in order to improve management and to provide passages for wild elephants to travel. Some have also suggested that reserves of the Province and Prefecture be upgraded to the State level to obtain more attention for their management. It would be ideal to have as big an area protected as possible, but it does not look feasible to enlarge the Reserve to a great extent since human and financial resources are limited. As indicated by Menglang Cao, the Director of the Reserve, even if the reserve could be expanded to the entire Xishuangbanna, it would still be surrounded by non-reserved areas. The ultimate solution for the Reserve is to convince people through the process of education and appreciation of the need for nature conservation. Once people understand both the tropical forest and the importance of reservation, they will help with protection out of their own will. Efforts are required to make people in Xishuangbanna realise that nature conservation is vital to ensure the wellbeing not only of elephants and butterflies but of people too. Ecotourism is able to play a leading role in the interpretation of tropical flora and fauna and in conservation education as well. There is a small museum in the Headquarter of the Reserve in Jinghong whose only visitors are the local school students. It is necessary to include this museum (after extension, of course) in the tourist itinerary before the planned Forest Museum in Jinghong is open.

The relationship between the Reserve and the local people is mostly cordial except for complaints about losses from wild elephants destroying crops. In 1995, only Yuan 200,000 was allocated as compensation fund while the loss was far more than Yuan 8 million. There have also been cases of wild animals attacking humans, two died in 1994. According to China's Forest Law, the local government should pay for the local people's loss from reserves in their administration areas. Nevertheless, the local villages or counties have no compensation fund at all, and it is the Reserve who pays for the victim's medical bills and compensation fee. Most of the electrical fences provided by WWF to prevent elephant getting inside ice field are either without working batteries or destroyed. The Reserve is doing research with battery producers in China to substitute local batteries for imported solar batteries for fences in order to save cost.

The tight financial situation restricts further ecotourism development in the Reserve, and the Administration Bureau has been seeking funds from other channels than the upper

administration bodies for tourist projects. Its income of less than half million Yuan a year from ecotourism is hardly enough to cover the interest of loans for the Reserve. The Reserve itself set up two companies dealing with interior design and bamboo products in an effort to obtain supplementary income to sustain the Reserve. Plantations for tea, rubber and fruits have been developed by the Reserve. Butterfly breeding and handicraft selling can also earn some income. Talks with Thailand for joint operation of domesticated elephants have shown good prospects.

#### **4. Dali and Lijiang as Xishuangbanna's Competitors**

The image of Xishuangbanna is a green kingdom with tropical forests and minority groups – an ideal place for nature-based tourism. However, Dali and Lijiang in northwest Yunnan as places with richer cultural content and easier access from Kunming are competing with Xishuangbanna for tourist arrivals. It is sensible for Xishuangbanna to understand other tourist destinations and to develop appropriate strategies to expand its tourism market.

##### *4.1 Dali - home of the Bais*

About 400 kilometres northwest of Kunming, Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture accommodates 80 per cent of the 1.4 million Bai people living in Yunnan Province. Inhabited from as early as the Neolithic Age, Dali Culture was created commencing 4000 years ago by both Bai and Yi nationalities. It was the political, economic and cultural centre of Yunnan for 500 years not only as the capital for the Nanzhao and Dali Kingdoms, but also as a gateway for the ancient Southern Silk Way and for communication between China and southeast Asia as well. Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture was established in 1956 with Dali City being the capital city of this prefecture, along with other 11 counties.

Cangshan Mountain, rising 3,500 metres above the sea, together with Erhai Lake, the second largest lake in Yunnan with an area of about 300 square kilometres, forms the basic framework for tourism in Dali. There are unique tourist places in Dali, including the Ancient City of Dali, Butterfly's Fountain, Nanzhao Stele, Three Pagodas on the ruins of Chongshengsi Monastery, which used to be the largest monastery in Dali area. The Qinghuadong State Forest Park provides ecotourism activities including forest walking and bird watching. Above all, the indispensable attraction of Dali is its major ethnic group, the Bais.

The Bai nationality has been living in this area for thousands of years. “Bai” means “white” in Chinese, and the Bai people worship the colour of white, which is noble to them. Famous Dali Stone is white with veins of red, light blue, green and yellow, which is widely recognised as a top-quality building material throughout China. Their major crops are rice, wheat, cotton, sugar-cane and tobacco. They are noted for their white costumes, celebrations, and the distinctive art of architecture. Their spoken language is related to the Yi branch of the Tibetan-Burmese group of the Chinese-Tibetan language family, but Chinese is used as their written language.

The Bais are born with talent for music and with love for trees as well. Their songs are usually sung in dialogue form, with one person questioning and the other replying extemporaneously. Their festivals include “Rao Shan Lin” (going around the forest), an occasion held in Spring when people singing and dancing around the forest; “Cha Liu Jie” (Willow planting Festival) in Spring is a time for the Bais to dance along the river with willow twigs in their hands and plant them to the music; “Zhui Cai Jie” (Colour Festival) is also an opportunity in Spring to plant trees; and the Third Month Festival, which is the biggest annual occasion for Bais. The Bais have learned to protect forest resources by holding “Mountain-sealing Festival” in early winter at which respect is paid to the mountains and a monument with instructions of banning tree-cutting in winter is set up. Only after the ceremony of “opening the mountain” is held in next spring can the Bais enter the forest again.

Third Month Festival, with a history of over 1,300 years, takes place from the 15th to 21st of the third month of the lunar calendar, is not only an occasion for businesses to prosper when normally one million visitors are expected in the course of the seven festive days, but also a fair for different nationalities, especially the Bais; to perform songs and dances, to hold athletic and acrobatic feats, along with for the young to look for their beloved ones. This festival time of the year witnesses tourists sharing the joy with the Bais.

Transportation will be improved significantly after construction of the Guangzhou-Dali Railway and the Dali Airport finishes in the near future. There are regular buses from Kunming, and a day trip from Kunming can be conveniently arranged.

#### *4.2 Naxi culture and matriarchal society in Lijiang*

Lijiang's history dates back to the 5th Century B.C. when it became part of the Qin Kingdom of China. There are four counties in Lijiang Area. As the confluence of the cultural exchange

for the Han, Tibetan, Bai and Naxi nationalities, Lijiang prides itself on the amazing cultural heritage, of which the Naxi culture is most distinctive.

Naxi culture has been created by the Naxi nationality over years of assimilating different cultures. With a population of 277,600, most Naxi live in the Lijiang Naxi Autonomous County, which was set up in 1961 with an area of 7,425 square kilometres. As the descendants of the Di-Qing people, an ancient nomadic tribe in China, they created the Dongba culture which includes thousands of volumes of the "Dongba Scriptures" written in a pictographic language invented 1,000 years ago, folk arts, sports and religious activities. Lijiang Naxi Autonomous County, lying on the upper reaches of the Jinshajiang (Golden Sand) River, was set up in 1961 with an area of 7,425 square kilometres. The Naxi people were fetishists and Dongba was the name of their faith. Dongba Scripture consists of polyphonic and poly-functional characters resembling people or animals. Conjunctions; adjectives, prefixes or suffixes are added impromptu when spoken. Quite a few foreigners stay in Lijiang for many years studying the local culture, some have married the local people. An American- Australian, Dr. Lock, wrote two books after staying in Lijiang for 26 years. It is an opportunity to understand this culture to watch the dignified Dongba Masters performing religious ceremonies, or Lamaists walking in lines to "Rounding Mountains Festival" with chanting crowds.

Lijiang is noted for its snow-capped Jade Dragon Snow Mountain with its thirteen peaks flying like a dragon of glittering jade. The highest point of this region is Mount Fan (Shanzifeng), the summit of the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain, soars to an elevation of 5,596 metres. The Jinshajiang (Gold Sand) River drops 300 metres at the Hutiaoxia (Tiger Leaping Gorge), one of the world's biggest gorges, supplying a hydro-electric plant. The 500-year-old camellia tree in the Yufengsi Lamasery which gives forth over 20,000 flowers a year, the Black Dragon Pool, and the grandiose Phoenix Tower are all outstanding attractions. The ancient town of Dayanzhen, applying to be listed in the UN's World Heritage, is remarkable for its layout which directs a stream with willows alongside to the gate of every household.

The remnants of matrilineal family structure at the Lugu Lake area also amazes visitors. The Lugu Lake lies in northern Lijiang City close to the border with Sichuan Province, covering over 777 hectares with abundant fishery resources. It is in this area, specifically in Yongning Township, that the last existing matriarchal society in China can be found among the Mosuo people, a section of Pumi nationality with a population of around 10,000. More than 60 per

cent of Mosuo people perform “Walking Marriage” or Azhu in the local language, in which women are at the top of family hierarchy and inherit property. Adult men live and work with their mothers or grandmothers at day time, but spend the night with their Azhu, which means lover or partner in their language, and return at daybreak. Adult females have their own separate rooms. The offspring belongs to the female who is responsible for their bringing up. It is also acceptable for the Mosuos to have more than one partner, and the partners are free to unite or separate. In the local language, there is no special name or title for a male, and symbols for power, such as the Sun, mountain, and wind, are in the local language female. The matriarchal family system represents a stage in the development of human society, and it survives in this area as a result of isolation and dominance of women in both agriculture and domestic matters.

## **5. Analysis of Tourism in Yunnan**

Yunnan has become a major tourist destination in China specialising in tourism based on nature and ethnic cultures. Tourism in Yunnan is more scattered spatially, shows less seasonality and attracts more diversified clients.

### *5.1 Spatial distribution of tourism in Yunnan*

Yunnan is endowed with diversified tourism resources, and their spatial distribution is relatively more scattered comparing with other major tourist destinations in China. Table 2 on the following page compares both economic and tourist indicators for four major tourist areas in Yunnan in 1994. Kunming is the economic and political centre in Yunnan and the first popular tourist destination of this province. Nonetheless, Dali, Lijiang and Xishuangbanna exhibit outstanding attractions for both overseas and Chinese tourists with longer average length of stay than Kunming, and there is great potential for further tourism growth in these three areas with improvement in transportation given the increasing demand for ecotourism. It is the unique character of Yunnan to be able to present three tourism centres with different attractiveness at Kunming, Dali, Lijiang, and Xishuangbanna.

**Table 2 Economic and tourist indicators for Yunnan Province and its major tourist areas, 1994.**

	<b>GDP (Yuan 000000)</b>	<b>GDP from tertiary industries (000000)</b>	<b>Area (sq. km)</b>	<b>Population (000000)</b>	<b>No of hotels</b>	<b>No of travel agencies</b>	<b>No of overseas tourists</b>	<b>Average length of stay</b>	<b>Tourism receipts (\$000000)</b>	<b>No of domestic tourists (000000)</b>	<b>Domestic tourism income (Yuan 000000)</b>
Total	97397	30680	394,139	39.39	171	258	522,059	1.59	124.397	14.58	3077.98
Kunming	26913.32	10554.77	15,942	3.71	42	119	378,672	1.61	74.0961	4.83	1019.66
Dali	5342.35	1675.03	29,459	3.13	19	14	34,579	1.91	8.034	2.49	525.66
Lijiang	1479.97	493.29	21,219	1.5	5	3	16,885	2.29	4.705	0.2	42.22
Xishuangbanna	2283.66	775.77	19,700	0.81	14	47	15,312	2.30	4.289	1.25	263.89

This multi-centred distribution of tourism makes it easier to extend the average stay of tourists and to decentralise tourism operation. But the fact that tourists with restricted time find it impossible to visit all the attractions within this Province requires better travel arrangement on the basis of more efficient transportation. Given the scarcity of available funds for investment in tourism, tourism projects need to be carefully planned in an effort to concentrate on sites with unique character. Close contacts between tourists and local people raise the issue on conservation of both natural environment and ethnic communities, which have been exposed to large volumes of tourist flow with no enough preparation. Personnel training in the tourism sector is still insufficient in Yunnan. Macro-control over both hard and software in tourism is also essential to ensure the satisfaction of tourists.

### *5.2 Seasonality of tourism*

Seasonality in Yunnan does not affect tourism as much as it does in northern China mainly due to its mild climate throughout the whole year. Slight difference on the number of monthly tourist arrivals is, nonetheless, still observed. Higher monthly arrivals occur in December, January and February in Yunnan when it is dry season with holidays including the Chinese New Year and winter vacation for schools. Some special occasions also influence the number of tourists in a particular month to a great extent. In Dali City, March is the month with the highest tourist arrivals when the March Street Fair is held, amounting to 4902 out of its annual arrivals of 25,662 tourists in 1994 (Travel & Tourism Bureau of Yunnan Province, 1995). The highest daily arrivals in Xishuangbanna occur in April during the Water Splashing Festival.

An investigation on the operation of tourism businesses was conducted in Yunnan. Data on domestic travellers were hardly available and only numbers of international arrivals were obtained. A comparison of the number of overseas travellers received monthly in 1994 by major travel agencies is listed in Table 3 with ITS standing for International Travel Service:

**Table 3. Comparison of overseas tourists received by some travel agencies in Yunnan**

	Dali Overseas Travel Service	Xishuangbanna ITS	Yunnan ITS	Kunming ITS
Total	3279	4845	3438	29371
1	79	282	NA	748
2	189	663	318	2277
3	1908	508	560	1946
4	107	800	255	3213
5	NA	395	371	2660
6	235	186	845	1870
7	31	NA	121	1474
8.	144	592	113	2740
9	NA	251	137	3173
10	197	633	423	3477
11	194	338	158	2499
12	195	197	127	3294

*Source:* The author's field trip

None of these travel agencies regarded seasonality as a serious problem for their operation because domestic travellers compensate for the monthly change of overseas tourists. They complained about the unreliable quota of air tickets allocated by the airlines which is frequently subject to reduction in number or even cancellation. They all agreed that transportation is the major restriction for tourism in Yunnan and unsatisfactory service often results from the shortage of experienced staff with reasonable education.

### 5.3 *Difference in destination choice*

Destination choice of tourists from overseas differs from that of Chinese tourists in Yunnan. Yuxi and Honghe in southeast of Kunming received 2.97 million domestic tourists in 1994, making 20 per cent of the Province's total domestic arrivals, but they made only 6.5 per cent of the overseas arrivals to Yunnan Province (Travel & Tourism Bureau of Yunnan Province, 1995). Lijiang and Xishuangbanna received almost the same number of overseas tourists in 1994, but the number for domestic tourists to Xishuangbanna was six fold of that for Lijiang. The overall pattern for tourists in Xishuangbanna is that Chinese hardly miss the cross-border trips, whereas Japanese are interested in Lesser Vehicle Buddhism but Europeans and Americans seek more adventure in the forest. More careful analysis on tourism market segmentation in Yunnan is suggested for better-orientated marketing and for further development of tourist sites.

The prospects for domestic tourism in Yunnan are promising due to its image as an



affordable holiday destination with diverse features. 11.12 million Chinese visited Yunnan in 1992, accruing Yuan 1.1 billion as income from domestic tourism. Cross-border tourism in Yunnan is attractive to Chinese. In 1992 as the first travel agencies in Yunnan permitted to organise tours to the Laos, Mengla Travel Agency in Xishuangbanna arranged more than 32,000 Chinese to visit Laos from 1991 to 1993 (Travel & Tourism Bureau of Yunnan Province, 1993). Visiting Burma from the southwest of Xishuangbanna is also an essential part of travel itinerary for Chinese. The simple procedure to go abroad as cross-border travellers in Yunnan provides undoubtedly a good chance for Chinese who usually face tedious process when applying to go overseas.

**Table 4 Demographic Information for Departing Travellers at Kunming and Jinghong**

	Gender		Age				Profession				Purpose of visit			
	Male	Female	Less than 30	31-45	46-60	Older than 61	Student or academic	Professional	Business man	Retired	Business	Holiday	Business and holiday combined	VFR
Kunming	57	43	28	50	18	4	22	59	14	5	33	19	44	4
Xishuangbanna	63	37	32	53	14	1	25	68	5	2	22	31	47	0

*Source:* Survey questionnaires collected at Kunming and Jinghong Airport by the author

## 6. Airport Survey Results

Surveys were conducted at Kunming Airport and at Jinghong Airport on the 4th and the 20th of November 1995 respectively. A sample of 100 Chinese was selected randomly from the departing travellers in the waiting areas of each airport. The following table generalises the survey results.

42 per cent of the surveyed at Kunming Airport had been to Xishuangbanna, and the reasons for those who had not taken the trip to Xishuangbanna concentrated on lack of time (33%) and difficult access (31%), some (18%) mentioned high expense of visiting there. Only one ticked “no interest”.

From the survey at Jinghong Airport of those leaving Xishuangbanna a rating for the attractions of Xishuangbanna is indicated in Table 5.

**Table 5** Tourists’ rating for the attractiveness of Xishuangbanna

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Disappointing</b>
Natural scenery	22	37	33	8
Ethnic culture	33	45	20	2
Flora and fauna	28	45	21	6
Transportation	0	21	54	25
Climate	32	61	4	3
Tourist facility	0	23	49	28

*Source:* Survey questionnaires collected at Jinghong Airport

More than half of the surveyed rated the ethnic culture, flora and fauna, and natural scenery as either excellent or good, but complained about the road condition within the Prefecture. Dissatisfaction on tourist facility focused on hotel rooms with insects, limited shopping choices, chaotic prices, unhygienic food stalls and so forth.

Majority of the surveyed stayed in Xishuangbanna for three to four days (76%), and 97 out of the 100 surveyed had their accommodation in Jinghong during their stay. Average expenditure was Yuan 320 daily, higher than the average daily expenditure of Yuan 211.11 for domestic tourists in Yunnan according to the survey held in 1994 by the Travel and Tourism Bureau of Yunnan Province. The average daily expenditure of overseas travellers

was \$121.8 for those who stayed overnight and \$26.1 for daytrip makers in Yunnan, but there were no dependable data available for the daily expenditure of overseas travellers in Xishuangbanna.

The future of international tourism in Xishuangbanna lies in expanding its market in southeast China. A tourism cooperation conference for China, Burma, Thailand, and Laos was held in 1993 in Thailand to plan for the regional tourism development. Burma established a special zone in Mengla area mainly for tourism development to promote cross border to tourism from Daluo Town in southwest Xishuangbanna.

To expand the average length of stay is an efficient way to increase tourism income. With the rich tourist resource in Xishuangbanna, it is practical to provide more activities to extend the stay to 6 to 8 days. Ecotourism has great potential in exploring new tourist routes and adding the content of education and adventure on top of recreation.

## **7. Conclusion**

Tourism has been growing extensively in Yunnan for more than 15 years, with the international tourist arrivals ranking seventh among all the 30 localities in China and receipts from international tourism the 8th in 1994. The future for tourism in Yunnan lies in intensive development rather than expanding the present scale. Efforts are required to complete the existing tourist sites and to improve the quality of tourist service. Average stay of international tourists in Yunnan was only 1.59 day in 1994, less the nationwide average stay for overseas travellers of 2.39 (National Tourism Administration of PRC, 1995). Extending the stay of both international and domestic tourists and increasing the average expenditure of tourists are more promising in incrementing tourism income than simply trying to raise the tourist volume. Factors such as transportation, staff training, coordination among industries and regions within Yunnan Province are all essential for further tourism development in Yunnan. Ecotourism in Xishuangbanna has just begun to develop and scope for further growth exists. Ethnic and cultural aspects in Dali and Lijiang are promising attractions for tourists with better education and higher budget. The fragility of tropical environment and minority culture requires careful planning of tourism in Yunnan to achieve sustainability in the long term.

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