

'Can You See the Difference?' : Producing Ethnic Tourism in Chinese Media

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“Can You See the Difference?”: Producing Ethnic Tourism in Chinese Media

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This chapter examines the ideas and values of media producers who work on ethnic tourism programs in China with a focus on the English-language China Central Television 9 Travelogue series, “Ethnic Odyssey” (2009). Based on interviews with hosts and producers from Travelogue, I explore how these media workers produce ethnic tourism. I compare their reflections to the approaches of Chinese travel magazine photographers and editors. Regardless of the audience (international or domestic), media producers uniformly emphasized the challenges of creating images that were sufficiently “different.” How, then, are these differences manufactured in a travel show? What does it mean, for media producers and the people who live in destination communities, to appear different? To explore these questions, I draw on extended fieldwork conducted in two ethnic tourism villages to argue that a politics of appearances drives social change in rural China, and media practices at the urban, national center.

Introduction

What does it take to make tourism look good for television or print? In conversations with Chinese travel media photographers, editors, publishers, and television producers in Beijing during the summer months of 2007, all of the individuals I interviewed agreed that a good travel story included images that were “different.” Travel magazine and television program visuals needed to be able to represent the variety of differences found across China in an eye-catching, visually stimulating way. After all, as Wang, the features editor of the Chinese language *National Geographic Traveler* magazine, declared, what tourists really want is *chayi xing de lüyou* (差异性的旅游), loosely translatable as tourism that can be different. “The most important aspect of tourism is: can you see difference? If there’s difference, there’s attractiveness,” Wang explained (24 August 2007). This is what travel media productions, such as his magazine, emphasized in their articles and photographs; Wang elaborated further that of all the qualities needed to do a good story about a place, the first was whether or not a place could be photographed well. “Some places,” he said, “photograph well, and some places don’t.”

Of course, finding something different to photograph is a subjective decision-making process, shaped by values based on ideas about the appropriate “repertoire” of ethnic characteristics (following Bunten 2008). In order to be acceptable to and accepted by tourists and the media as attractive tourism destinations, the ability of destinations to be different, or “differentiability,” is limited and structured by certain social expectations and norms. And in ethnic tourism in particular, being different has become a serious concern of tourism planners across China (see Xiao’an Wei 2005, who argues that cultural difference is a prerequisite to success in market competition, and thus differences need to be more carefully strategized and planned). Because ethnic tourism is premised on the idea that the tourist is culturally, socially, and subjectively different from the toured community and

individuals, difference is deployed as a signifying characteristic of ethnic tourism destinations in media portrayals. For media producers, emphasizing differences between the destination community and the tourist is the most important part of their job in promoting and advertising these places. For the destination communities, therefore, finding and regulating difference becomes a primary task of tourism development—starting with the visual. Visual images and representations are the means by which differences can be idealized and standardized into mainstream expectations.

Regardless of the audience (international or domestic), in my research with Chinese media producers, they uniformly emphasized the challenges of creating images that were sufficiently “different.” How, then, are these differences actually produced in travel media? What does it mean, for media producers and the people who live in destination communities, to appear different? To explore these questions, in this chapter I draw on interviews with Chinese travel media producers, a case study of a television travel series on ethnic tourism in China produced in 2007, and extended ethnographic fieldwork conducted in two Chinese ethnic tourism villages to argue that a politics of appearances is driving both tourism development in ethnic minority villages in rural China, and media practices at the urban, national center. After all, as filmmaker David MacDougall has written, “appearance is knowledge, of a kind.... Visual knowledge (as well as other forms of sensory knowledge) provides one of our primary means of comprehending the experience of other people” (2006: 5, original italics). MacDougall’s argument about the knowledge embedded in appearances points towards what I call the politics of appearances, which is a politics that accounts for the misconceptions, incongruities, and self-consciously executed decisions involved in processes of producing visual representations. In other words, appearances matter because they initiate the impetus of understanding, knowing, and comprehending others.

The production of ethnic tourism in Chinese media raises

significant questions not only about the relationship between tourism and image-making practices, but also about how ethnicity and identity, more generally, are visually constituted in contemporary Chinese society. While much research has been conducted on the images that tourists make (see, for example, analysis in Santos 2005), tourism advertisements (such as postcards, e.g. Tegtmeier 2009), and even the impact of fictional, visual representations of place on tourist experiences (or what has been called “film-induced tourism,” see Beeton 2005; Choe 2009; Donald and Gammack 2007), the actual practices and values of media workers who are producing program targeted at potential tourists are under-analyzed. Although the beliefs and perspectives of travel media producers can never be considered fully representative of any one society in total, their work nevertheless is situated at the juncture of making the tourist experience of a place known, desirable, and imaginable. They consciously work with and within certain shared social expectations regarding the appeal of tourism, and to do so, they must harness the power of appearances to make their productions palatable—and commercially successful.

By examining the work of travel media makers, I hope to shed light on the knotty intersection of ethnicity, visuality, and mobility that shapes the expectations and experiences of ethnic tourism in China today. Ideas and ideals about what is an appropriate way of being “different” come to shape how and when cultural, ethnic, and social subjectivities are deployed. Furthermore, these shared, social discourses of difference also hold very real consequences for the individuals and communities directly involved in, and dependent upon, the sustainable success of ethnic tourism as an economic pathway out of systemic under-development in contemporary rural China (for a closer analysis of this process, see Chio 2009). As my analysis will attempt to demonstrate, the politics of appearance guide and restrict ethnic tourism development in China today cuts more deeply than questions of representation. Rather, the politics of appearance forces our attention to the immediate and lingering effects of being seen.

This chapter is divided into three sections. First, I briefly recount some key ideas and statements about the need to be able to “see the difference,” as Mr. Wang put it, made by Chinese travel media producers during interviews in Beijing in 2007. The second section then provides a more in-depth case study of one particular travel show production—the “Ethnic Odyssey” series produced by the English-language channel of China Central Television (CCTV9) for broadcast in their long-standing travel show, *Travelogue*, which is shown both in China and overseas. Despite the fact that some of my interviewees worked at publications and programs intended for domestic Chinese audiences and the “Ethnic Odyssey” series on CCTV9 was produced in English for an international viewership, the perspectives and values expressed by media workers at both types of media programming were remarkably similar, thus allowing for an equal consideration of both. Finally, the third section of this chapter situates “Ethnic Odyssey” and the work of media producers in light of the experiences and expectations of ethnic tourism destination inhabitants, based on my ongoing ethnographic fieldwork in two such villages in rural, southwest China.

The Value of Difference

Wang, the features editor for *National Geographic Traveller* (Chinese edition), was blunt about the value of difference in tourism during our interview in August 2007. As the one in charge of creating eye-catching layouts and read-worthy articles about travel opportunities for a Chinese audience, Wang knew not only how to attract readers to an article about travel, but also what potential tourists wanted from their travels—hence his claim that the question “Can you see the difference?” was the single most important aspect of tourism. And for him, as the editor of a glossy, full-color travel magazine, literally being able to see differences was absolutely critical to the success of his publication.

All of the media workers I interviewed that summer echoed, to some degree, Wang’s emphasis on the necessity of being able to see difference in tourism—a claim that consequentially extends in two directions: tourists want to be able to see differences when they are on tour, and media publications and programs have to therefore be able to show differences in order to attract the viewership of audiences who might consider themselves potential tourists. Not only did the content of a story have to differ from the perceived “norm” of a tourist (who, in China, is generally urban, middle-class, and educated), but the manner in which a travel story, whether in print or on television, was created also had to engage with differences. Xu, a photographer and writer who had worked for a number of Chinese travel magazines including *Traveller* (旅行家) and then *Voyage* (新旅行), described the need for difference as an editorial strategy; his work for travel magazines meant that he was constantly searching out “different perspectives, different expressions, different ways of representation” (08/30/2007). To do so, Xu explained, he might consider different ways in which tourists travelled—in a tour group, independently, by car, or on foot, for instance. Space is limited in a magazine spread, however, Xu explained, so “every type of photograph has to communicate a real piece of information”—but, of course, he added, travel magazines need photographs that are “better looking” and so it was his obligation as a photographer to find the places and perspectives that could provide such visual pleasure, more often than not grounded in some sense of difference.

Difference drives tourism; according to a producer and director for The Travel Channel, a satellite television station in China, while tourism for many was just about shopping and “fresh” experiences (消费和新鲜), places far away from the centers of urban, middle-class China are valued because their ability to be different is greater (差异性比较大). Their most popular programs were, first, shows featuring international destinations and, second, shows about the official ethnic minority groups in China, especially those groups living in the border regions of Tibet and Xinjiang who are most culturally and socially different from mainstream, majority Han Chinese. In 2006, following the declaration of the China Tourism Administration of the “Year of Rural Tourism,” The Travel Channel produced a series of programs on rural tourism destinations across China, including in many provinces where ethnic minority communities make up a sizable percentage of the population (such as Sichuan and Yunnan provinces). The problem they encountered,

however, was that many ethnic minorities had what they perceived as too many similarities—in order to do tourism successfully, these communities needed to “construct each ethnic minority’s distinctiveness” (建设各民族的独特性). Otherwise, the differences would go unnoticed by non-ethnic tourists and the places would be less valuable for tourism. Moreover, differences needed to be written on the people—physical landscapes, for television, were more or less the same throughout a region and only the people could be sufficiently different enough to make a destination truly stand out on television.

When it came to producing a type of tourism that could be seen differently, ethnic tourism was always near the top of the list: the ethnic minority communities were popular with both domestic Chinese viewing audiences and overseas viewers of Chinese travel shows (and of course they are popular with foreign and domestic tourists too). The international, English language channel of the state-run China Central Television group (broadcast as CCTV9¹ within China and as CCTV International outside of China) conducted a survey on its website in 2005–2006, asking viewers what topics they wanted to see in the travel show, *Travelogue*. Overwhelmingly, the response was for shows on the different ethnic minority groups in China. The *Travelogue* team took these results to heart, and in 2007, they began producing a sixteen-part series called “Ethnic Odyssey.”

Making “Ethnic Odyssey” for CCTV9

Travelogue is one of the longest running programs on CCTV9, with its first episodes broadcast in 2002 just two years after the initial launch of channel. The mandate of CCTV9 at the start was simple: to provide a “window on China” for English-language viewers both in China and outside. All programs on CCTV9 are broadcast in English,² and staff members are a mix of Chinese and foreign-nationals. Part of the network’s strategy included deals with major international cable television distribution companies, such as AOL-Time Warner, for inclusion in overseas cable packages in the United States and Europe, with the “carrot” of allowing limited access into the Chinese markets for a select number of programs offered by these international companies (see Jirik 2004 and 2008 for comprehensive histories and analyses of the development of CCTV9). According to one staff director at *Travelogue*, Lily, the program initially was intended to cover domestic Chinese destinations for an international audience, and the first few episodes focused on, perhaps unsurprisingly, ethnic minority communities in Xinjiang and Yunnan, both border regions of China with sizeable ethnic minority populations, in order to, in Lily’s words, “do something different” (8 August 2007). In the program, on-camera hosts present and narrate trips to certain destinations across the country; the hosts for *Travelogue* are all ethnically Chinese, by design, although they represent a mix of Chinese and foreign nationalities. This decision to use ethnic Chinese hosts for *Travelogue* is very deliberate as a visualization of being introduced to China by Chinese people; CCTV9 also produces another travel show, *Rediscovering China*, for which the hosts are all non-ethnic Chinese foreigners.

CCTV9 restructured its programming and focus in 2004 and relaunched as CCTV International in its overseas

markets. But despite internal talk about the possible re-branding of CCTV International as China’s CNN (a 24 hour news station), much of its features programming was retained, including *Travelogue*, which expanded from a fifteen minute program to thirty minutes after the relaunch. CCTV9 was no longer just to be a “window onto China” for foreign viewers, but also a “window on the world” from a Chinese perspective (Jirik 2008: 9). Accordingly, *Travelogue* began producing shows about international destinations in 2005, ostensibly providing a “Chinese” tourism perspective on international travel for an international audience. Destinations included Greece, Jordan, and Jamaica, and each destination had to be linked to current events or cultural significances relevant to China. In this period as well, Lily explained, they came to realize that their audience included more and more Chinese viewers, largely university students who wanted to improve their English language abilities, although no concrete numbers could be obtained regarding overseas viewership (Jirik 2008: 85 reports that according to CCTV9 promotional materials in 2007, the channel “could be seen by 45 million viewers outside of China,” but of course, as he points out, this statement reflected mere potential and not actual viewing numbers).

As mentioned above, an online survey by the program revealed that their audiences (or at least their website viewers) wanted to see more shows about China’s ethnic minorities, followed by shows on China’s ancient towns (古城), and so in 2007, *Travelogue* developed a multi-episode series called “Ethnic Odyssey” that would feature different ethnic minority groups from around the country.³ Sixteen episodes were produced in the end, covering fifteen different ethnic groups. Teams of four people, including a host, cameraman, producer, and editor, traveled together to various destinations, with the costs of travel usually covered by local tourism bureaus and government offices in each destination.⁴ Lily explained the “Ethnic Odyssey” series was a move away from showing destinations and towards presenting knowledge, from sightseeing to content in other words. But the actual content of each program was still structured around what she called “typical differences” between ethnic minorities and the culturally mainstream Han Chinese, including costume, marriage and courtship practices, and song and dance. The places they chose to feature also needed certain qualities of “representativeness” (代表性) and publicity value (宣传的价值)—the fundamental question their crews had to ask themselves before shooting, Lily concluded, was “is this place worth going to take a look at?” (8 August 2007).

According to one of the show’s hosts, Ray, the “Ethnic Odyssey” series was also a departure from previous shows because as a series, each individual program had to link with the others and the content of each show as more “documentary” than travel, with a greater emphasis on the communication of ethnic minority cultural beliefs, practices, and traditions. Nevertheless, Ray added, “sometimes we want to go deeper into history and background but we can’t; we’re a travel show” (8/8/2007). One consequence of the particular demands of a travel show, Ray noted, was the same problem encountered by The Travel Channel—without being able to go into greater details about ethnic minority customs, many minority groups started to look very similar to one another, thereby devaluing their “worth” from the perspective of the

travel media industry, and by extension, of tourists themselves. While cultural knowledge might hold its own value in terms of heritage and scholarship, it did not necessarily translate well into a suitable response to Lily's abovementioned question of whether or not a place was, simply, worth looking at.

For a travel program, the content of the show needed to include not only cultural information about the people and a region, but also "experiential" information for viewers on the types of activities and experiences they could reasonably expect to have. Finding a balance between these two types of content was the task of the *Travelogue* crew. Ray added that sometimes, local government officials were too eager to promote their regions as tourist destinations without adequate infrastructure; one village in Yunnan province that the team had been invited to visit and shoot, he recalled, involved a steep and dangerous walk on foot to reach "and when we got to the village, it was really nothing ... [it was] beautiful on the outside to see, but when we get in there, it's just a dirty village.... There was no place to take a cup of tea, to sit, and enjoy the view" (8 August 2007). In my own research in a rural village undergoing ethnic tourism development in Guizhou province, this was also a potential problem and concern for village residents, who worried that they were completely unprepared for the arrival of tourists, despite the reassurances of local government bureaus who continued to publicize these places as destinations.

While a village and its surrounding landscape might be visually appealing, from the outside as Ray suggested, a series of shows on ethnic tourism invariably had to focus largely on people and visible, cultural attributes. Yin, another *Travelogue* host who had been working on the "Ethnic Odyssey" series, said simply that "less visible culture makes places less appealing, visually, for TV" (29 August 2007). At the time of our interview, she had recently returned from shooting two episodes for the series in Tibet; a few months earlier, she had traveled to Guizhou province to shoot three episodes, one each on the Miao, Dong, and Tujia ethnic groups. In general, Yin said she found Guizhou to be an attractive destination because of the "combination of ethnic minorities itself and location," referring to the combined visual effect of the people and the landscape. Arguably, from the perspective of media producers and tourists, differences in the environment included expectations of differences in the people, and perhaps, vice versa. But when she and her crew went to the Tujia ethnic minority village, she said, "the entire time we went to film, we didn't see anyone in a local (ethnic) costume. No one's going to go there if they don't see anything different" (29 August 2007). Her task, then, was to create these visible differences, to "find the extremes and to make it a show," in her words. In many cases, she admitted, this involved hiring people to dress in their ethnic costumes for the camera.

Other visual needs also factored into the production of an "Ethnic Odyssey" episode; Yin explained that when filming an ethnic tourism program about a rural village, "(in) this hypothetical village, we're going to make it look all primitive, but it has to be clean ... the tourists, when they come, they want to see the pigs, but they don't want to live with them" (29 August 2007). Television serves the purpose of making a village destination visually attractive in appropriately

differently terms that are acceptable to tourists, such as being able to see the traces of an agricultural existence but without the need to fully immerse oneself in all aspects of rural life. Being able to look different is the crucial task, for both the residents of a potential tourism village destination and the media workers who are producing a show about the place. Indeed, in television, Yin added, "You have to look for the extremes—that's what TV is—you take what looks most abnormal. Nobody wants to see what's in the middle."

When I interviewed Lily, Ray, and Yin, they were all in the middle of editing programs for the "Ethnic Odyssey" series, which would be broadcast on CCTV later that year. On the day of my interview with Ray, he was working out the narrative voice-over and storyline for an episode on the Zhuang minority in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, which had been filmed in and around the city of Baise. Yin, as mentioned, had recently returned from Tibet and earlier that year she had already edited episodes on the Miao, Dong, and Tujia in Guizhou. Hosts on the program were responsible for writing their own voice-over scripts and also contributed to the editorial decisions about what to include and what to cut. The entire series was later distributed as a DVD box set (China Central Television 2008), and the following description of two episodes, one hosted by Ray on the Zhuang minority in Guangxi, and the other hosted by Yin on the Miao minority in Guizhou, is based off my viewings of the DVD versions. I examine these two episodes specifically because of my interviews with Ray and Yin, and because my own long-term ethnographic fieldwork on ethnic tourism in China also happens to take place in a Zhuang minority village in Guangxi and a Miao village in Guizhou. All episodes feature a map of each province, with markers indicating the general regions and cities visited, and conclude with a brief list of the major features of the particular ethnic group portrayed.

The episode on the Zhuang in Guangxi opens with a shot of Ray biking down a narrow, paved road alongside lush rice paddies with karst mountains off in the distance. He introduces the region, and the first segment shows a group of about five people, wearing uniformly, coordinating "ethnic" costumes (i.e., not what one might consider "everyday" clothes in most of China) sitting under a tree, playing traditional instruments and then singing. A young woman sings a few short lines in Mandarin Chinese directed at Ray, asking if he is married. The next segment features the same woman, still in costume, showing Ray the famous "Dehao" mini-horses used by the Zhuang in the region as work animals. The next topic is Zhuang embroidery, and in particular embroidered balls (绣球), which are commonly evoked in public presentations and displays of the Zhuang, the tossing games that are traditionally played with these balls, and the most highly respected craftsperson making them today. The last segments of the episode shows Ray rafting down a creek, getting drenched with other tourists and a few guides, and then concludes with a brief mention of the Detian Waterfall on the China-Vietnam border at the "Friendship Pass." It is clear from this episode that in editing the footage, Ray was careful to integrate both cultural knowledge and tourist activities together—by offering segments on Zhuang musical traditions as well as river rafting, the program suggests the range of possible experiences awaiting a tourist to the

area. Landscape shots are included in-between segments and conversation scenes between Ray and local guides, all of whom are in costume.

Yin, in her episode on the Miao in Guizhou, appears at in the opening sequence to the sound of clanking silver and a slow zoom-out to show her in the middle of a group of fully costumed Miao women (dressed in 盛装, festival costumes involving silver headdresses and silver pieces sewn onto multi-layered, embroidered jackets and skirts). She describes the bright colors of Miao costumes as well as other festival items, such as dyed sticky rice, and the first place featured in the episode is the "Thousand Miao Household" village of Xijiang (studied by Schein 2000). Yin briefly mentions Miao beliefs in spirits and ancestor worship, describing Miao villages and lifestyles as "blending with nature" before moving on to the village of Biasha, famous for its tradition of men shaving off all their hair, except for a topknot, and for their continued, legally sanctioned use of rifles for hunting. Yin fires a rifle herself, while the men look on. She also visits the workshop of reed-pipe craftsmen, taking her hand at playing one of the instruments, which are played at every Miao festival occasion. The final section of the episode travels to the town of Taijiang for the Sister's Festival, which Yin describes as similar to Valentine's Day, and she is shown sitting inside a house at a long table, where women are on one side and men on the other. A traditional courtship ritual of women presenting men with gifts of rice and vegetables, each type of vegetable bearing a particular symbolic meaning ranging from attraction to platonic friendship, takes place amidst much giggling by both the women and the men. Yin describes the entire atmosphere as a "walking cultural show," with the final shots of an embroidery market and then fishing before the episode closes. Throughout, her narration emphasizes colors and sounds—the vibrant hues of the costumes and the clanking silver and breezy tones of a reed-pipe.

Participation by the hosts in various activities, whether strictly touristic such as river rafting or more "cultural" such as playing a reed-pipe, is a structural norm in *Travelogue* programs—the shows are meant to visualize a real sense of what being a tourist might be like in the places featured. But of course, the *Travelogue* hosts are privileged visitors, representatives of the central, state-run television station and usually hosted by local government officials. What they are able to participate in, and what they are able to show, can be quite different from what an average tourist might encounter in the same place. As Yin readily admitted, they often had to request that local village residents get dressed in costume in order to be filmed and the choice of topic to be featured was also dependent on its ability to be visually (and aurally) presented, as a material object like an embroidered ball, or as an activity like courtship and gift-exchanges. The production of ethnic tourism in a travel show necessitated very particular, materially and thus visually oriented perspectives that reflect certain values and ideals about the tourist experience and the "worth" of ethnic minority cultures and traditions in China today. These values inevitably came to structure not only the making of television shows like *Travelogue*, but also the everyday decisions and expectations of those individuals and communities within destination communities in touristed regions of Guangxi and Guizhou.

The Politics of Appearance in Ping'an and Upper Jidao Villages

My ethnographic fieldwork on rural, ethnic tourism and development took place in two villages: Ping'an, a Zhuang village in Guangxi and Upper Jidao, a Miao village in Guizhou. While neither of these villages were specifically featured in the "Ethnic Odyssey" series on CCTV9, both were frequently imaged and represented in the Chinese mass media. Images of the terraced fields around Ping'an are frequently used for in-house advertisements on the regional Guangxi Television station as well as various national CCTV stations, as well as in print publications internationally over the past thirty years. Upper Jidao only began its venture into tourism in 2002, as part of the provincial government program for tourism development, but by 2009, the village had been featured on another CCTV9 program, *Culture Express* (broadcast on 21 August 2007), in a Japanese in-flight airline magazine, and in an article on rural tourism development published by Reuters.

Without a doubt, as my research and conversations with village residents in both Ping'an and Upper Jidao confirmed, people in these communities knew that they were being seen and that their images were being seen beyond the temporary limits of tourist visits. In Upper Jidao, Qin, a local woman who was deeply involved in the village's tourism development, and I often joked that it would be "a lie" to keep promoting media images of Miao men and women in their traditional festival clothes because tourists would come to expect to see that when they actually visited the village. This little white lie was amusing for Qin and I to discuss in theory, but it was a very real part of her life in Upper Jidao tourism. The differences desired were also deliberately and self-consciously produced by visitors themselves. In February 2007, a photographer from the international news agency Reuters came to Upper Jidao and grew frustrated at how "uninteresting" his pictures were. No one had expected his arrival, so villagers were wearing their everyday work clothes and no effort had been made on this particular day to "dress up." In the feature story on Upper Jidao broadcast on the CCTV9 program *Culture Express*, however, nearly all the people shown in the segment were dressed in Miao costume—not full festival costumes with silver, as in *Travelogue*, but rather more toned down, yet distinct, embroidered jackets and tops. The women all had their hair pull up into topknots, decorated with fabric flowers, and Teacher Pan, a local elder who was also involved with the village's tourism, was interviewed not in his everyday shirt and jacket but rather in a black, coarse cotton jacket that the men in the village wore during song-and-dance performances for tourists and during village festivals.

Residents of tourist villages like Upper Jidao were expected to mimic and participate in the presentation of an ethnic environment. I once observed a group of people from Kaili who came with a few hired Miao women (not from Upper Jidao) dressed in festival costumes who used Upper Jidao village as the backdrop for photographs for a record album. The production and subsequent circulation of such imagery meant that tourists and other outsiders expected to see people in Miao ethnic costumes as part of the scenery. Conversely, in Ping'an village, the overwhelming

interest of media and photographers on making pictures of the terraced fields had resulted in the people of the village sometimes feeling “left out” of their own publicity. In an interview with a young woman who was a popular guide in the village, I asked her what kind of photograph of the terraces she thought photographers should take, expecting a response about lighting, seasons, or other natural effects; instead, she replied, “photographs with people in them.” When I asked her to elaborate, she explained she held this opinion because with people in the pictures of the terraces, tourists would know that people made these terraces, that terraced fields are not naturally occurring. Some tourists, she continued, even asked if the terraces “had always been there,” ignorant of the constant labor and upkeep required in their maintenance. The touristic desire for beautiful photographs of the terraces meant that tourists often perceived of the terraces as static and natural. But, terraced fields demand continuous human labor. Keeping the people in the picture was this guide’s way of addressing the politics of appearance in Ping’an today.

In framing this discussion of ethnic tourism and media production as a matter of the “politics of appearance,” I am suggesting that the complex of power, visibility, and mobility inherent in tourism needs to be unpacked in order to understand how appearances are fundamentally formative and critical to contemporary Chinese tourism experiences—whether for residents of tourist villages like Ping’an and Upper Jidao, for media workers like Ray and Yin, or for potential tourists, domestic or foreign. How one looks, and how one goes about producing a particular look, is charged with very deliberate values and ideals that reflect upon current cultural, social, and political subjectivities. Writing on Muslim women’s fashion, Emma Tarlo has argued that “far from making women invisible, various forms of covered dress actually make Muslim women more visible when worn in Muslim minority contexts” (2010: 8). Her study of contemporary Muslim women’s fashion in urban, cosmopolitan London demonstrates the falsity of isolating “the veil” as a symbol of a particular type of social politics, and unravels the complexity of fashion and faith for contemporary Muslim women. While the issues at stake for ethnic tourism village residents and media workers in China differ from those faced by the women Tarlo studied in London, and yet it is the same impulse for “heightened” form of visibility, rendered through appearances, that raises certain critical questions about how appearances produce knowledge and the role of the media in these processes.

For ethnic tourism village residents, appearing different has become part and parcel of how and why they will be successful in the economic opportunities made by tourism development. For media workers at Chinese travel magazines and television programs, finding, creating, and narrating difference becomes their *modus operandi*. The politics of appearances goes a long way in naturalizing this drive for visible difference as a given feature of tourism, and consequently giving value, or de-valuing, other aspects of cultural and social life. What tourists, viewers of television travel shows, and even the people involved in promoting their own villages as destinations come to know (or, at least, to accept as knowledge) about these places thus becomes based on the search for differences. These expectations are

ascribed onto the visible surface of rural ethnic lives and communities thus created a value-laden framework of visibility, a scaffold of good or bad looks, right or wrong costumes, correct or incorrect appearances. The extension of these values beyond the surface of rural, ethnic livelihoods is clear: after all, some places and people might just be better at being different than others.

Notes

1. Throughout this chapter, I will refer to this station as CCTV9 because my research was conducted entirely inside China and most employees I met at *Travelogue* also used this name for the station.
2. More recently, CCTV has also launched French, Spanish, and Arabic language channels.
3. Fifty-five ethnic minority groups in China are officially recognized by the national government, based on a process of ethnic identification and classification that took place in the early years of the Chinese Communist regime (1956–1965). For details on how ethnicity is classified in China, and the socio-political ramifications of this system, see Gladney (2004), Harrell (2001), McCarthy (2009), Mullaney (2004), and Schein (2000) amongst many others.
4. This is not unusual in China, considering that *Travelogue* is a program produced and broadcast on the official state-run China Central Television. However, apparently the relevant local offices in Tibet refused to formally invite, and sponsor, the *Travelogue* program for this series, because, as one *Travelogue* host put it, the officials in Tibet felt they already had enough, or too many, tourists, and did not want to attract any more.

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「違いが見える？」—中国のメディアにおける エスニック・ツーリズムの演出

ジェニー・チョウ

テレビの画面や出版物で観光地を魅力的に見せようと思えば、どうするのがよいだろう？ 中国の旅行メディア業界の人々によれば、それには「差異」のイメージを含んだ物語が必要なのだという。結局のところ、中国語版の『ナショナル・ジオグラフィック・トラヴェラー』で特集号の編集を務めた王氏が述べるように、「観光で最も重要な要素とは、違いが見えるか？ということに尽きる。もしそこに差異があるのなら、それこそが魅力なのだ。」

差異を見つけることはひとつの主體的な意思決定プロセスであるが、そのプロセスでは民族的な特徴について何が適切なカテゴリーであるかという考え方にもとづいた価値観に影響を受ける。観光客やメディアによって魅力的な観光地として認められるには、当の場所自体が他と際だって違うこと、すなわち「区別可能性 (differentiability)」が必要となるが、それらは特定の社会的な期待と規範にもとづいて方向づけられているのである。実際、中国のエスニッ

ク・ツーリズムを計画する時には、他との差異化が特に重要な関心ごとになっている。観光地を宣伝するメディア・プロデューサーの仕事の最も重要な部分は、観光地のコミュニティと観光客のそれとの差異をいかに強調できるかとされている。したがって現地のコミュニティのなかで、差異——なかでも視覚的イメージの差異——を探し出して観光向けに統制することは、観光開発において最重要課題である。視覚的なイメージと表象は、差異を一般の人々の期待に合わせて理想化しつつ、かつ、規格化するために欠かせない手段なのである。

筆者が本稿で議論するのは、中国農村部の少数民族が住む村々と国家の中心都市におけるメディア戦略の双方で行われている、外見のポリティクス (politics of appearance) についてである。結局のところ、映画制作者のDavid MacDougallが述べるように、「外見とはある種の知識に他ならない。… (他の感覚的な知識と同様に) 視覚的な知識は、他者の経験を理解するための主要な手段の一つなのだ」 (MacDougall, 2006)。中国メディアにおけるエスニック・ツーリズムは、観光とイメージ生産という実践の間にある関係性についての問いだけではなく、現代中国社会においてエスニシティやアイデンティティがいかに視覚的に構成されるのかという、意義深い問いを提起する。外見のポリティクスは、今日の中国におけるエスニック・ツーリズムの展開を方向づけつつ制限しており、表象についての問いよりも影響力が大きい。外見のポリティクスにより、我々の関心は、直接的でいつまでも心に残るといった見られることの効果そのものに向くのである。

ここで、CCTV9 (China Central Television 9) の「民族の探究 (Ethnic of Odyssey)」の制作過程に注目してみたい。

『トラヴェローグ』は、中国国営テレビ局の英語放送チャンネルのCCTV9のなかでも、最も古くからある番組の一つである。番組では、ホストが中国国内の特定の土地から旅行の様子をレポートする。2007年、『トラヴェローグ』では、国内の少数民族の差異に焦点を当て、多数のエピソードを収録した「民族の探究」というシリーズを開始した。このショーでは特に視覚的な文化的特徴に焦点が当てられている。「民族の探究」を担当する『トラヴェローグ』のホスト、尹氏は、「目に見えにくい文化になればなるほど、視覚的に、そしてテレビ用としても魅力的でなくなる」と話した (2007年8月29日のインタビュー)。筆者らがインタビューを行う数ヶ月前、尹氏は3つのエピソードを撮影するため貴州省を訪れていた。彼女は、貴州を「少数民族と彼らの住む場所の絶妙な組み合わせ」を見いだせる魅力的な場所ととらえていた。しかし、彼女と撮影班がトゥチャ族のある村に行った時、「撮影のための滞在期間中、地域の (民族的な) 衣装を着ていた者は、誰もいなかった」。尹氏はこの事実に言及したうえで、「違いがなければ誰も彼らを見に行こうとは思わないというのに」と付け加えた (2007年8月29日)。そのため尹氏の任務は、「極端な何かを見つけ出し、それを番組用に仕立て上げる」ことで、目に見える形の差異を作り出すことになった。他とは違って見えるようになることは、観光地候補の村の住民と、その村を番組にしようとするメディアの人々の両方にとって、極めて重要な任務なのである。そして、尹氏は以下のように付け加えた。テレビでは「人々は極端を求めずにはいられない。それこそがテレビなのです。人々は最もアブノーマルなものに魅せられる。誰も普通のものなど見たくはありません」。

観光とメディアによる演出を「外見のポリティクス」というフレームワークの中で議論することで、筆者が示唆しようとするのは、権力、視覚性、移動性という、観光に特

有の複雑な関係性を解きほぐすことの必要性である。その作業によって、現代中国の観光の経験には外見がいかにかに基礎的で決定的な構成要素であるかが理解できるであろう。ある物がどのように見えるか、そしてそれをいかに固有の物として見せるかは、文化的、社会的、政治的な主体の価値観や理念が反映した、入念に考え抜かれたものである。外見のポリティクスは、観光に不可欠な視覚的差異を自然に見せかけることに、そしてその結果、その他多くの文化・社会的生活の側面に価値を付与する（もしくは価値を低下させる）ことに、大いに役立つ。このように、観光客とテレビ番組の視聴者、そして自分たちの村を観光地として宣伝してもらう村人が、当の土地について知るようになる（あるいは知識として受け入れる）事柄は、差異の探求に基づいたものとなり始めるのである。

プロフィール

人類学者のジェニー・チョウ氏（博士、カリフォルニア大学バークレイ校）は、シドニー工科大学中国研究センターの博士研究員で、現在は、現代中国におけるメディアの商業化とエスニシティについての研究を行っている。チョウ氏の現在のプロジェクトは、中国のメディア環境の変化という大きな文脈から、貴州省と雲南省の村々の儀礼をビデオ撮影することである。チョウ氏の*Landscape of Travel: Tourism, Media and Identity in Southwest China*と題された博士論文は、広西壮族自治区と貴州省にある、エスニック・ツーリズムに深く関わる2つの村での23ヶ月におよぶフィールドワークにもとづいた民族誌である。そのなかで、移動と視覚性という2つの互いに絡まりあった概念を利用して、農村の少数民族コミュニティにおいて、観光がいかにかに日常実践および社会経済的な変化として経験されているのかについて考察した。チョウ氏はまた、*Nongjiale: Peasant Family Happiness*と題する、ツーリズム産業に従事する村の住民の多くの問題を掘り下げた民族誌映画を完成させつつある。