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PERFORMING HERITAGE: RETHINKING AUTHENTICITY IN TOURISM

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Abstract: This paper explores how the dongba as the ritual practitioner perceives his authenticity during the marriage ceremony in the Naxi Wedding Courtyard in Lijiang, China. Through the dongba's life story, the paper indicates that, the power of his making judgment is not entirely related to the toured objects, socially constructed reality or the existential feeling, but also has to do with what happens in between. The ritual performance, integrated with the external world, gives rise to the performative experience of the authenticity and offers a deep understanding of the link between memory, habitus and embodied practice. The dynamic process of ''becoming'' authentic weaves the interaction between the individual agency and the reality. **Keywords:** authenticity, performativity, embodied practice, memory, habitus. © 2012 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

INTRODUCTION

''I don't mind if they take it as a performance or just for fun. I can tell that today's ritual is real,'' these are words used by Fuhua after he finished his ritual as a dongba in a Naxi wedding ceremony. This event happened in the Naxi Wedding Courtyard, a place staging Naxi wedding celebrations and arranging traditional marriage rituals for tourists and local people under the auspices of dongba, the ritual practitioner of Dongba religion in Lijiang (McKhann, 2010). Grounded in the tourism development discourse at Lijiang, China, the commoditization of indigenous Dongba religion as a new form of culture and its manifestation in local customs, folk festivals and cultural traditions have developed dramatically in the past two decades. Although staged performance has been regarded as a new trend of consumption, Fuhua seems to have his own understanding of his ritual that relates to the issue of authenticity.

Being one presentation of global cultural change, tourism has been searching for ''authenticity'', a movement from the front to the back of human interaction that reflects the desires of tourists and consumers

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for genuine and credible cultural construction and representation in diverse cultural and heritage contexts. The long term academic discussion on what precisely ''authenticity'' means to tourism has resulted in three major approaches in conceptualizing the term, namely objective authenticity, constructive authenticity and existential authenticity. However, the existing categories seem to imply a dichotomy of objective-subjective orientation. The reaction to ''mediatised, commercialized and socially constructed reality is not a 'thing' to possess or 'a state of mind'" (Knudsen & Waade, 2010, p. 1), but an instrumental embodiment aroused through the dynamic interaction between individual agency and the external world. In this sense, authenticity is neither objective nor subjective, but rather performative.

Different from former studies about authenticity in tourism from the perspective of tourists, this study is mainly based on the view of performers. Taking the life story of a dongba named Fuhua who was born in a Dongba family, trained in the official Dongba Research Institute, and now working as the marriage ritual performer in the Naxi Wedding Courtyard as a case study, this paper aims to explore how this dongba perceives his authenticity of the ritual performance in the marriage ceremony. The notion of performative authenticity here illustrates the dynamic interaction between memory, habitus and embodied practice. The socio-economic and political transition in China, in particular the policy on culture heritage will be used as a window to explore ''complex human and social engagement, relations and negotiation'' (Crouch, 1999) in the process of tourism development.

DISCUSSION ON AUTHENTICITY IN TOURISM

The issue of authenticity is a central point of discussion within the commonsense and anthropological ideas about tourism (Belhassen, Caton, & Stewart, 2008; Kim & Jamal, 2007; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006; Wang, 1999). The global scale of commodities, finance, media, and population has transformed the discourse and raised questions about the continuing relevance of the traditional concepts of authenticity (Hughes, 1995). Authentic and inauthentic are no longer asymmetrical counter-concepts per se (Olsen, 2002). They are fluid concepts that can be negotiated rather than an absolute property of anything (Cohen, 1988; Squire, 1994). Tourism literature has placed authenticity in the context of three approaches: objectivism, constructivism and existentialism.

Objectivism approach of authenticity is mainly based on the museum orientation of objects examined by an expert to determine their true nature (Leite & Graburn, 2009). It implies all that is genuine, unadulterated, without hypocrisy, honest and real (Relph, 1976; Theobald, 1994). When Boorstin (1982) condemns mass tourism as ''pseudo-events'' and MacCannell (1973) criticizes ''staged authenticity'' which is brought about by the commoditization of culture, both of them insist on the objectivist conception of authenticity (Wang, 1999) as a real property of toured objects that can be measured against absolute

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and objective criteria. However, to view authenticity from the etic perspective as the original object seems to be too simplistic to capture its true complexity. It is not a static collection in museums preserved by experts; in fact, it is experienced by mass tourists from an emic view.

The rise of postmodernism is convinced that there is no actual, true, genuine, objective reality, and this notion links to the perspectives of constructive and existential authenticity in tourism research. For the constructivists, things appear authentic not because they are inherently authentic, but because they are an ''invention of tradition'' (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983) or constructed through negotiated meaning making, interpretation and agreement (Bruner, 1994; Hughes, 1995). They emphasize the pluralistic nature of the meaning making process through which authenticity, defined as ''verisimilitude, genuineness, originality and authority'' (Bruner, 1994, p. 401), is established, recognized and projected onto an object by the influence of social discourse (Belhassen et al., 2008). In this sense, authenticity is a projection of tourists' beliefs, expectation, preferences, and stereotyped images onto toured objects (Wang, 1999). These objects, which can initially be ''inauthentic'' or ''artificial'' as judged by experts, may subsequently become ''emergent authenticity'' (Cohen, 1988) with the passage of time. Thus, this becomes a matter of ''power'' of who has the right to authenticate (Appadurai, 1986).

There is a consensus that the search for authenticity in tourism is co-constructed by different stakeholders (Cohen, 1988; Hughes, 1995; Jackson & Scott, 1999; Taylor, 2001) depending on the dynamic interconnection of state regulations, the visitors, tourism business and host communities. This insight helps to understand that non-object related tourist experience is labeled authentic by tourists and sold as such by the industry (Olsen, 2002), since their tastes are governed by rules and mediated by the publicity of the object in different contexts (Xie & Lane, 2006). From this perspective, Wang (2007) develops the term ''customized authenticity'' to state that the meaning of home/safe (on the guest end) and the authenticity of toured objects (on the host end) are mutually constructed. Namely, social reality is constructed through the flow of continuous negotiation between imagined tourists expectation and the destination (Hughes, 1995; McCrone, Morris, & Kiely, 1995).

However, the constructive approach of authenticity is not an ontological condition, but a label or perceived status determined according to socially constructed criteria (Leite & Graburn, 2009). Indeed, it is a result of symbols and signs (Culler, 1981) projected by the society. As Wang (1999) quotes, it is more often than not a projection of certain stereotyped images held within the tourist-sending society (Britton, 1979; Silver, 1993). The key point here is that the constructive approach neglects the agency of the actors.

For the existentialism approach, to be oneself existentially means to exist according to one's nature or essence, which transcends day-to-day behavior or activities or thinking about the self (Steiner & Reisinger, 2006). Everybody can only momentarily be authentic or inauthentic in different situations depending on how they project themselves in

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the world of their heritage and destiny. According to Heidegger (1962), people are existentially dynamic, historical, potential and momentary, all reaching into their pasts before them to understand how things stand for them now and what possibilities they have.

By adopting these philosophical concepts, Wang (1999) breaks the conventional thought of toured-objects oriented authenticity and develops ''existential authenticity'' to suggest a strong sense of ''authentic self'' as a real feeling embedded in two categories. The first category of ''intrapersonal authenticity'' relates to the bodily feelings of pleasure, relaxation, spontaneity and self-making, not because the tourists find the toured objects are authentic but simply because they are engaging in non-ordinary activities, free from the constraints of the daily life (Wang, 1999). Indeed, the liminal space of tourism provides tourists license to participate in temporary forms of transgression that enable their secret selves to be displayed while pursuing unrestrained hedonic experiences (Redmon, 2003). The second category lies in the interpersonal orientation of authenticity, in which tourists are driven by a desire for cultural exchange with the ''other'' and intensely authentic, natural and emotional interaction between friends and family members, or touristic communitas (Turner, 1967). Likewise, this approach relates to Trilling's (1972) notion of ''sincerity'' that occurs in the contact zone among participating groups or individuals, rather than appearing as an internal quality of a thing, self or other.

Wang's approach on searching for authenticity makes it possible to accredit agency to the actors (Bloch, 1974; Radcliffe-Brown, 1964). However, in such an existential experience, where tourists and locals meet half way, Wang's notion of existential authenticity focuses on the state of being without referring to the dynamic process of becoming. Besides, for both intrapersonal and interpersonal approach, the external world which integrates the socio-cultural, economic and political environment, as the key component has also been lost to the value judgment of authenticity. It becomes a self-reflectiveness circulated in the mass tourism society without linkage to reality.

To sum up, the object-centered approach on objective authenticity and constructive authenticity, and self-searching approach on existential authenticity seem to imply a dichotomy of objective-subjective orientation in the tourism and authenticity discourse. The power of making value judgment and the search for authenticity is not only related to toured objects, socially constructed reality as a projection or the existential feeling of selfness, but also has to do with what happens in between. By using Benjamin's (1986) notion of aura, Rickly-Boyd (2012) argues that authenticity is established through ritual and tradition and is connected to aura. Although she emphasizes the interaction and exchange between object, site and experience, the approach also neglects the dynamics of ''becoming'' by performing through embodied practice. Hence, the notion of ''performative authenticity'' is put forward in the following section to illustrate the transitional and transformative process inherent in the action of authentication where meanings and feelings are embodied through the ongoing interaction between individual agency and the external world.

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PERFORMATIVE AUTHENTICITY: A NEW APPROACH

Performativity originates from the discussion in terms of the influence of language on bodily performance. Austin (1975) puts forward the notion of ''performativity'' and indicates that the act of speaking constitutes the object, in other words, accomplishes something instrumentally. Performativity implies a shift away from propositional force towards the prominence of the illocutionary act itself (Bloch, 1986). Tambiah (1981) extends Austin's ideas beyond speech to ritual action. By ''performativity'', he means the particular way in which symbolic forms of expressions simultaneously make assumptions about the way things really are, create the sense of reality, and act on the real world as it, too, is being acted upon. This perspective enables him to analyze the structure and the performative efficacy as the key to the mutual constitution of meaning and function. In such productions, cognitive content and sociological efficacy (meaning and function) are linked via the media of performance which consists of the status claims of the participants, the relations of power, and the social, political and religious contexts (Sax, 2010). Using the term ''practice'' from Bourdieu (1977), Bell (1992) further argues that performative efficacy is embodied through ''ritualized actions'' rather than solely representation and symbolic expression as the ''representational theory'' interprets (Sax, 2010). Thus, the cognitive effects of the ritual are achieved through the practice of unconscious embodiment (Butler, 1993) to change things, their meaning and significance. In other words, the performative sense of authenticity works on the embodied practice.

By this sense of embodiment, the understanding of performative authenticity in tourism can be developed by ''rethinking the relationship between determining social structures and personal agency'' (Nash, 2000, p. 654; Hannam, 2006). Butler (1993) uses the notion of ''performativity'' to identify how gender and sex categories become unconsciously inculcated into individuals. In her argument, norms of identity are not fixed or given but dynamic and subjective to change through unreflexive and embodied practice. Burkitt (1999) states that embodied practice may be important in working social constructionist notions of identity. By performing as doing, the individual can feel, think and rethink (Crouch, 2009), and constitute and refigure their significations, as material or embodied semiotics (Crouch, 2001). Drawing upon these thoughts, Nash (2000, p. 655) further argues that performativity is concerned with practices through which we become ''subjects'' decentered, affective, but embodied, relational, expressive and involved with others and objects in a world continually in progress. In this sense, we live in a performative society, where learning through interactive experience is given more credence than learning through cognition (Tivers, 2002).

Edensor (2009) criticizes Butlerian's accounts that overstress the unreflexivity in social interaction with a lack of agency. Instead, he uses Bourdieu's (1977) notion of habitus that is conceived as a form of practical reflexivity in which embodied know-how modulates unforeseen events. According to Bourdieu (1977), habitus is the mechanism by

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which the objective external world, expressed as a field, becomes incorporated within the subjective and internal experience. It is the embodied materialization of individuals' capitals (Bourdieu, 1977) drawn upon in encounters with the external world, especially in new social fields (Holt, 2008). Although a field is constituted by various social agents, habitus represents the transposition of objective structures of the field into subjective structure of practice of the individuals. Following this notion, Edensor (2009) further argues that tourists and actors tend to move between habitual and self-ware, unreflexive and reflexive states, sometimes self conscious of their practice, sometimes instrumental, and sometimes engaging in unreflexive habits that seem beyond interrogation. In this sense, the performative authenticity presents the interconnection and dynamism between the field (objectivity) and habitus (subjectivity), and the blurred boundaries between purposive and unreflexive individual practice. It concerns with ''both being and becoming, strategically and unreflexively embodied'' (Edensor, 2001, p. 78).

Knudsen and Waade (2010) have introduced the notion of performative authenticity in the discourse of authenticity. Following their ideas, the concept of performative authenticity in this article indicates the ontological sense of the social practice depending on the ongoing interaction between individual agency and the external world and in return, the embodiment from the practice. The approach is a clear separation with the conceptions of objective and constructive authenticity. Through this mutual flow, the meanings of authenticity are neither simply embedded in the objective reality (objective authenticity) nor dependent on the symbolic projection of social construction (constructive authenticity). It focuses on the humans' integration of personal memory, meanings and physical settings (Belhassen et al., 2008). It seems that the notion of performative authenticity is closer to the existential authenticity in that both approaches are based on the ontological statement. Compared to the existential approach that focuses on the ''state'' of being true from inter or intra-personal feeling, the performative approach emphasizes the dynamic process of ''becoming'' authentic through embodied practice. The significance of ''becoming'' tends to be considered in terms of a profound rearrangement of the self (Dewsbury, 2000). The dynamics weaves the interaction between the individual agency and the reality through embodied practice. Practices become performative by transforming from ''doing'' to meaning making. It is intertwined with self-conscious action, unreflexive and embodied practice. Hence, authenticity is neither objective nor subjective, but performative.

LIJIANG AND ITS TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Located in Yunnan Province in southwest China, the old town of Lijiang lies in the center of Lijiang Basin. Lijiang is dominated by the Naxi community, which still maintains a number of traditional cultural activities in their everyday life. The Dongba religion, as the old indigenous

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religion of the Naxi community incorporates Lamaism, Buddhism and Daoism, and bonds Naxi people closely with all important life events like birth, marriage, and death.

The globalization process in Lijiang took place when Western scholars and the mass media entered the town at the beginning of the twentieth century. The first image of Lijiang was invented by James Hilton (1944)'s book *Lost Horizon: A Novel*. The book showed the place as a paradise of Shangri-la, in which the area was viewed as a romantic forgotten place frozen in time (Su & Teo, 2009). Later, Joseph Rock and Peter Goullart successively stayed in Lijiang, and by means of their publications and descriptions in the Western world reinforced the image of China's peripheral area as an ancient forgotten Naxi Kingdom of southwest China (Goullart, 1955) and a symbol of oriental paradise. Although local culture and traditions were dramatically damaged during the Cultural Revolution (*Wenhua Dageming*), the town was relatively closed and marginalized in the early 80s because it was far away from the agitated centres of reforms occurring in China's coastal regions. Rock's legacy in terms of his scholarly work in botany, ethnography, and linguistics has often been evoked by the burgeoning ethnic and scenic tourism industry (Yoshinaga, He, Weissich, Harris, & Swain, 2011). Hence, many Western backpackers followed his steps to visit the town and were fascinated by this remote area as ''a magic Kingdom with wealth of scenic beauty, marvellous forest, flowers and friendly tribes'' (Rock, 1947, p. viii).

After Lijiang successfully recovered from an earthquake disaster in 1996 and nominated as a World Heritage site by the UNESCO in 1997, the town became a ''hot spot'' of heritage tourism site in China. Lijiang is becoming an international city, where globalization is directly influencing local people through the incoming flood of tourists and intensified culture exchanges. In 2009, Lijiang attracted 7.6 million visitors with 1.3 billion US Dollar as a total income from tourism (Lijiang Bureau of Statistics, 2010). The influx of tourists has brought dramatic change to Lijiang and the daily life of the Naxi people. The proliferation of commercially-constructed tourism development discourse has increasingly become a challenge to the notions of authenticity and heritage conservation. The government and tourism agencies recognize the commercial value of what they consider as ''the appropriate culture'', and conserve the value with its cultural expression accordingly (Su & Teo, 2009). The Dongba religion, invented as a new form of valued culture and vividly represented in ritual performances, folk festivals, music and dance, has been revitalized and staged in the tourism market as a religious cultural product.

Based on the tourism development of Lijiang and its Dongba religion and traditions, this paper demonstrates the notion of performative authenticity by portraying the life story of a dongba—Fuhua. Dongbas traditionally perform divinations and a variety of rituals, either in home settings for individuals or families or in public spaces for lineages or entire village populations including exorcisms, healing, funerals and annuals sacrifices to heaven (McKhann, 2010). From the story of how Fuhua grew up, was trained and then worked in Lijiang, the issues of

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what authenticity means to him, and how he perceives, interprets and attaches these meanings to his ritual performance will be explored.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the philosophical stance, dependent on ontological assumptions of interpretive and reflexive ethnography research (Okely, 1996), primarily refers to the multiple constructed realities of the social world, the dynamic interactions between the researcher and the informant, and the value-laden nature of the research. As a Han Chinese researcher, and within the context of this research, the author considers him both insider/outsider with an emphasis on being in a marginal position. The position is described as ''between familiarity and strangeness'' and as ''living simultaneously in two worlds, that of participation and that of research'' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1996, p. 112). The author hopes to negotiate the insider/outsider position in a way that allows his own subjectivity and reflexivity to generate knowledge which in essence reflects social reality without disregarding the marginal position.

Nisa: the Life and Words of a! Kung Woman is a reflexive ethnography work by Shostak (1981) based on her anthropological observation and the life story of a ''primitive'' woman told in her own words. Inspired by her work, the author decides to use single case study as an intensive analysis of an individual unit (Baxter & Jack, 2008) (in this case is a dongba) to illustrate the value judgment of his ritual performance and stress the development factors in relation to the socio-spatial context. To serve the research purpose, eight months of fieldwork (Jul-Dec 2010 and Jul-Aug 2011) was conducted for data collection in Lijiang. Participant observation in the Wedding Courtyard was employed as the primary research method. The author attended most of the wedding ceremonies performed during the course of his fieldwork. Unstructured interviews were conducted after a close relation was established between the dongba and the author. Most interviews were carried out in the way of spontaneous exchanges, because the settings for the interviews were chosen at the convenience of the informant, for example, before or after the wedding, sitting for tea or having lunch together. The spontaneity provided a good chance for more in-depth discussion contingent with a personalized tour of life and his understanding of the ritual performance. In order to obtain more detailed and accurate information about the informant, other related actors who might contribute to the understanding of the dongba, and the meaning, specifications and dynamic of authenticity judgments were interviewed. Hence, interviewees also included Fuhua's teacher in the Dongba Culture Research Academy, the manager and other staff in the Wedding Courtyard, government officials in the Lijiang Heritage Conservation and Management Bureau and some experts in the studies of Dongba religion and tourism development in Lijiang.

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The autobiographical interview was used during the conversation with the dongba to make a continuous narrative of his life. The process of storytelling had woven the past events and memory into a contemporary narrative. As Crouch (2009, p. 92) states, moments of memory are recalled, reactivated in what is done, and thus, while memory may be drawn upon to signify, it is made a new, drawn through performance, and thus flows in time with the other components of performance. In this sense, memory itself is an active attribute of performativity. Through reconfiguring the memory by being interviewed, the informant moved from the daily practice to a self-conscious and purposive performance. His response to the questions such as ''what do you think about today's ritual'' presented the signifiers of the past identities, linking to and reinterpreting through his practice as a contemporary dongba. Thus, the method of autobiography in the fieldwork itself became performative through transforming dongba's words to an ''illocutionary act'' (Austin, 1975). The past events were woven into a narrative through identity creation and value negotiation. Communication with the author, indeed, built a bridge between the informant's remote or short memory and the contemporary embodied ritual performance. In other words, the informant became a habituated actor during his ritual performance as daily practice in the Wedding Courtyard, and, at the same time, consciously presenting his dongba identity to the author, a non-Naxi Chinese researcher.

FUHUA AND HIS LIFE STORY AS A DONGBA

Growth in Revolutionary Days

Fuhua was born in the 60s at Shuming village, a mountain village 180 kilometers away from Lijiang. He was raised in a celebrated dongba family that was highly respected by the local community, because his father, uncle and grandfather were all dongbas. The ''natural practice'' of the Dongba religion had been performed unself-consciously as a matter of a habit in the small village context (McKhann, 2010), but since the founding of People's Republic of China in 1949, it was discouraged and prohibited. Only a few remote areas of the Naxi homeland still maintained the traditional rituals, and Shuming village was one of them. When Fuhua was a child, his father worked as a dongba in the village and conducted many important rituals for the local community and residents.

The Cultural Revolution began in 1966 as a socio-political movement to further develop communism in the country and impose Maoist orthodoxy in the Party by removing all capitalist and feudalistic elements from the Chinese society. The movement wreaked much havoc on minority cultures nationwide, and was devastating to the Dongba religion. Dongbas, like other indigenous religious practitioners and magical healers such as diviners, shamans, sorcerers, geomancers and witches, have been categorized by the state as ''heterodox'' *(yiduan)* or ''feudal superstition'' (*fengjian mixin*). In most regions of mountain

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villages of the Lijiang Basin, dongbas were pressured to reduce in scope or eliminate altogether many of their rituals, and the training of new dongbas was strictly prohibited (McKhann, 2010). At that time, Fuhua was blocked from taking the training from his father through the traditional inheritance system of the Dongba religion, because his family had experienced terrible suffering during the Cultural Revolution. Fuhua states,

> *"It was a nightmare. My father used to be respected by villagers as representative to our gods but suddenly everything changed. No more rituals and ceremonies. No more friends visiting to our family. All classical documents and instruments inherited from our ancestors have been destroyed."*

The Cultural Revolution ended in 1976 and the whole country slowly recovered from this ten years' of social and political chaos. Dongba ceremonies and rituals for birth, marriage and death started to re-emerge in the villages. In 1983, Fuhua's father attended a dongbas workshop organized by the government, and then started to promote the revival of Dongba rituals in Shuming village. He launched a training project with his brother, another dongba, and taught a number of young people Dongba rituals. The village became one of the first villages in Lijiang to revive Dongba religion. Prof. Yang, an ethnographical scholar familiar with Fuhua's family and village states,

> *"Fuhua's father is a very good dongba. He suffered a lot during the Cultural Revolution but made huge efforts on the revival of Dongba rituals. When his father died in 1992, many dongbas from everywhere in Lijiang Basin came and participated in his death ritual with deep and sincere respect. I talked to him [Fuhua] several times about inheriting his father's work. I am happy that he did it."*

During the communication with Fuhua, he mentioned many times the suffering of his family during the Culture Revolution in his childhood and teenage years. Through the mass movement, the authoritarian state has shown its destructive power to the socio-economic structure and to local culture, traditions, and even religion. Growing up in a family that was formerly respected by villagers and suddenly detested as a feudal superstition, he experienced a tremendous transition due to the change of social, emotional and mental status. This experience reinforced his desire for a life-long pursuit of being recognized by both the state and society, in particular, by the authoritative ideology. This issue made him struggle a long time before he decided to become a dongba, but also led him to later study in the official and authorized Dongba institute in Lijiang.

Training in the Revival Period

In the post-Mao era of China, ethnic and religious diversity has been rediscovered and reaffirmed as a national policy to adjust the ideological mistake made in the Cultural Revolution (when Han chauvinism was imbedded in the period's radical social policies). The state tended to classify religions (*zongjiao*) of China's nationalities and started to tolerate and promote different religious practices including Buddhism,

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Daoism, Islam, Christianity and other indigenous religions for advertisement of social stability and ethnic equality. In Lijiang, the dismantling and restructuring of the Dongba religion occurs in concern with the creation of Naxi ethnic identity in the present. The invention of Dongba culture has been fueled by the Chinese evolutionary discourse that constructs difference in terms of ethnic boundaries and a trajectory of hierarchy by the western anthropological discourse that clings to a notion of ''pristine culture'', and by local agents seeking ethnic empowerment within a hegemonic Chinese social order (Chao, 1995).

As a result, the government supported many training projects for the revival of Dongba culture in Lijiang; in particular, Shuming village became one of the pioneers. Fuhua participated in the training project in the village with other young dongba students after his father's death. To be a dongba, students should acquire skills through a long apprenticeship with senior dongbas. However, Fuhua was encouraged to get a more systematic training in Lijiang to become a ''real'' dongba. Hence, he left his village in 2000 and started to get training in the Dongba Culture Research Academy (*Dongba Wenhua Yanjiuyuan*). The institute was established in Lijiang in 1998 and consisted of several educated Naxi scholars and dongbas who were employed for translating Dongba texts, which had been exclusively used by dongbas for ritual purposes, into Chinese for preserving Naxi culture as a representation of scholarly analysis and sources of indigenous knowledge. With the dongbas recast as scholars, and the ritual texts redefined as an informational compendium and a form of scholarly encyclopedia, Naxi officials could easily transform the Dongba religion into a new form of Dongba culture as an ''invention of tradition'' (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983) for the building of the Naxi ethnic identity and prestige. The revitalization of Dongba religion made the scholars a voice of authority to speak for the Naxi past (Chao, 1995). However, it is not the dongbas who speak; rather, it is institutions like the Dongba Culture Research Academy which represent the Dongba culture. By creating such institutions for the study of Dongba culture, the ''Dongba consciousness'' is created from the ''natural practice'' as a matter of unconscious habit in village context.

After the primitive religious practices Fuhua experienced in the remote Shuming village at his early age, he spent five years studying in the Dongba Research Academy. This five-year training institutionalized his learning of Dongba scripts and transformed him to be a ''qualified'' or ''authorized'' dongba. As one of the Dongba scholars Prof. He who used to be Fuhua's teacher in the institute states,

> *"The systematic training in the institute helped them chant and write Dongba scripts and transmit their Dongba knowledge into rituals. Compared to many so-called dongbas in the tourism market who just know how to paint some scripts, they are more qualified."*

Indeed, the systematic training in the institute, as Prof. He indicates, focused on technical aspects of Dongba rituals including textual tradition, but neglected the nuances of the genuine human interactions (McKhann, 2010). However, as a member of a dongba family in the mountain village who was well-trained in the official Dongba training

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institute, Fuhua has met the social requirement as what a ''real'' dongba should be. More importantly, although the institutionalized training is far from the former ''natural practice'' of Dongba religion in his village, the continuous incorporation within the society allows him to constitute his criteria of being a ''real'' dongba that adapts to the authorized and social standard. Thus, the official training experience formulated his perception on authenticity of the Dongba religion and allowed him to work in Lijiang later to speak for Naxi culture in the official representation of Naxi people as both a backward and civilized minority.

Job Hunting in a Commercialized World

Since the early 90s, tourism has been developed as an accelerator for both modernization and internationalization in mainland China. The tourism development, as a national policy on the revival of Chinese nationalism, helped to shift the country from a planned economy to a socialist market economy with the rise of mass consumerism and social stratification (Su & Teo, 2009). The success of inscription in the World Heritage List in 1997 pushed the old town of Lijiang onto the global stage of tourism and practices of heritage production and representation. Transnational cooperation, international organizations and global mass media formulated an asymmetrical relation of encounter with local culture by the mediation through national and local governance on co-constructing the image of ''heritage tourism'' (Chhabra, Healy, & Sills, 2003). Consequently, Dongba culture has become an commercialized object for consumption and tourism attraction.

In 2005, Fuhua graduated from the Dongba Culture Research Academy. At that time, he already settled down in Lijiang and his two daughters studied in local schools. For this reason, he decided to search jobs in this rapidly developing heritage site instead of going back to his home village. At the beginning of Fuhua's job hunting, a number of souvenir shops invited him to design souvenirs with pictographic calligraphy like T-shirt, bags and silver trinkets. Many shop owners collected these new commercial products even if incorrectly written and sold to tourists who did not really care too much about authenticity of the culture. The invented Dongba pictographic language mixed with Han Chinese character as a symbol of an imagined ethnicity that appeared everywhere in the souvenir market and from which retailers profited. However, Fuhua refused these kinds of high salary job offers since he did not want to work as a businessman but instead, be a real dongba. When Prof. He talked about Fuhua, he appreciated his decision to work as a Dongba,

> *''Many students from our institute and even some teachers make huge profits from the tourism industry. Although Fuhua was not the best student in our institute, I am glad that he chose to work as a dongba.''*

The officials' representation of the Naxi past and reinvention of Dongba culture offered a brilliant opportunity for the government to support tourism as the main industry for economic growth. In the

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meantime, Dongba culture became a new form of performance which symbolized ancient and barbarian to amuse and satisfy the curiosity from tourist imaginaries. Actually, Dongba has always been a performance art by creating new alignments in the cosmos and in society, with the aim of improving the lives of their clients through words and acts (McKhann, 2010). However, new genres of Dongba performance were emerging with the reconfiguration of content and context due to the rise of global tourism and new form of consumption.

As a result, many theme parks or cultural projects in the name of ''Dongba culture'' were set up in Lijiang. Fuhua got three job offers from cultural projects named Dongba Palace, Jade Water Village and Naxi Wedding Courtyard. Both Dongba Palace and Jade Water Village have been run by private companies since the early 2000. They hired dongbas to perform religious dance, write Dongba texts or conduct some rituals on specific days. Both of them insisted that they presented ''authentic'' Dongba culture. In recent years, however, Dongba Palace has transformed into a bar and Jade Water Valley has become a commercialized theme park.

Differently, Naxi Wedding Courtyard belongs to the project called ''Walking into Naxi Family'' (*zoujin Naxi renjia*) that was co-launched in 2005 by a local private enterprise and the Lijiang Heritage Conservation and Management Bureau (*Lijiang Shijie Yichan Gucheng Baohu Guanliju*), a local government department in charge of heritage conservation and development. This project chose ten traditional courtyards in the old town of Lijiang as a platform for cultural presentation and exhibition with different themes of Naxi culture, such as handicrafts, clothing, music, religion, and wedding. Most of the courtyards are free to the public and some profits are made from services such as handicrafts production and the wedding ceremony. As a government official states, this project aims to develop cultural tourism and inherit local culture for education and presentation.

In the end, Fuhua chose to work for the Wedding Courtyard. He said,

> *"I don't like the investors of Dongba Palace and Jade Water Village. Although they proclaim themselves as real Dongba cultural lovers, dongbas are forced to dance and perform by the investors' wishes to amuse tourists. Obviously, they are still profit-driven businessmen. On the contrary, the manager of the Wedding Courtyard seems more authentic because he respects me and asks me to do Dongba rituals as the way I like."*

The process of Fuhua's job hunting reflects his self-identity pursuit in the socio-economic transition. Tourism develops a ''new meaning'' for continuity of local identity (Cohen, 1988) from the invented tradition of the commercialized Dongba culture. For living and supporting his family, Fuhua searched jobs in the tourism industry. However, his decision to work for the Wedding Courtyard is based on his understanding of what a ''real'' dongba is. Fuhua seems to prefer the work that can be officially supported and recognized. This decision, to some extent, illustrates his continuous pursuing the identity of a ''real'' dongba after his authorized training. Indeed, the manager of the Wedding

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Courtyard mentioned that he hired Fuhua and respected him mainly because Fuhua came from a dongba family in the remote village, and was training in the Dongba Culture Research Academy. Thus, Fuhua's understanding of ''what is real or fake'' in the tourism market is embedded in his ongoing interaction with reality.

Working in the Wedding Courtyard

Naxi Wedding Courtyard presents Naxi traditional wedding celebration and arranges Dongba marriages as paid services to tourists and locals. After the long term Hanization, the form of Naxi traditional wedding ceremony acculturated Han culture as well as Confucian practice. Building upon the ethnic culture and religion, the Wedding Courtyard tries to attract tourists and local residents to get married by presenting a complete traditional Naxi marriage package including Dongba wedding rituals, performance, dinner and shows.

Fuhua has worked in the Wedding Courtyard since 2008, mainly conducting the Dongba *Siku* ritual as the main part of the wedding ceremony. Unlike other parts of the ceremony with the form of show and dinner, the *Siku* ritual is primarily concerned with establishing the new household—consisting of the bride and groom—as a separate entity and, drawing boundaries between the new household and the bride's old household (Chao, 1995). *Siku* involves God associated with the health and the wealth of household. By offerings, readings of the Dongba scripts, burning incense and blessings with yak butter, the entire ritual places importance of the marriage on inviting the bride's *Si* (life force) to join the groom's family, and on inviting the house God and making an offering to him to secure a blessing for the couple (Chao, 1995).

Due to the limitation of the time and space, the text of the *Siku* ritual during the performance in the Wedding Courtyard has been shortened and simplified by Fuhua. The original three- day ritual has been cut into a five-minute performance. The ritual scriptures are sacred and can only be interpreted by dongbas as an important instrument for cosmological evocation through their performances. After comparing this to the original scriptures Fuhua used for the marriage ritual in his village, the author found that the scriptures used in the Wedding Courtyard is much simpler but all important proceedings exist such as offerings, readings, the God invitation and blessings. Fuhua's teacher, Prof. He, once commented after watching the performance made by Fuhua,

> *"The performance of Fuhua in the Wedding Courtyard is fine since he keeps the main elements such as burning scared lamp and incense, blessing with butter and arranging Si basket etc. Although Dongba ritual has always been a performative art, the wedding ritual is still different from the one in the villages because the relationship between participants — actors and audiences changes."*

However, Fuhua has his own idea of the ritual efficacy. According to Fuhua, he can tell if the power exists or not during the performance. Through offering, chanting and blessing, Fuhua's embodied practice

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enables him to judge whether the integration of two life forces into a new household works, although he cannot tell the reason exactly. If Prof. He's notion of ''authenticity'' is a more objective oriented with the criteria of form and the relationship between actors and audiences, it seems that Fuhua's identification of ''what is real or not real'' as the judgment of the ritual efficacy relies on the interaction between his bodily practice and his unreflexive habitus.

The rituals require that the dance and songs be performed in conjunction with the sequential reaction of passages from the text which varies according to the space and the ritual performed. The space Fuhua creates in the marriage ritual in the Wedding Courtyard allows him to shorten the text, but he believes that he can still identify if some of his ritual in the wedding ceremony is as instrumentally powerful as the ones he made in the village. His presentation of the efficacy in the ritual performance clarifies his understanding of what the authenticity is. It is not a statement based on the toured objects neither solely from his mind, but instrumentally embodied through his ''ritualized actions'' (Bell, 1992). For Fuhua, the ritual performance is not only a job for living, but a continuity of performing his identity. The interview conducted by the author and Fuhua's response create the stage for performance, and links his daily practice to a conscious identity presenting. Thus, his perception of authenticity becomes performative by transforming his practice to meaning making.

RETHINKING AUTHENTICITY IN PERFORMATIVITY

The story of Fuhua is not yet finished. Having experienced the suffering in his childhood and trained as an authorized Dongba culture practitioner, Fuhua has started a career in the commercialized Lijiang to chase his dream of being a ''real'' dongba. He belongs to the group significantly cultivated as popular by the state conceptualization through attributes such as ''uncivilized'', ''backward'' and more recently ''authentic'' (Chao, 1995). Dongba intellectuals are creating the civilized space of gloriousness of Dongba culture, but Fuhua is more representative to his own religion because of his background. His decision to get trained in the Dongba Culture Research Academy and work as a ''real'' dongba in the tourism industry is reinforced by the life-long pursuit of his understanding of authenticity. Fuhua does not live outside the space of state hegemony; indeed, his identity is constructed through his consistent interaction and negotiation with the real world.

When Fuhua works in the Wedding Courtyard to perform the *Siku* ritual in the marriage ceremony, he is drawn into an experience of heritage through his life history. The ritual Fuhua conducts not only creates a magic space of liminality that offers spiritual and aesthetic nourishment for tourism (Wang, 1999), but also transcends an embodied meaning for himself, which may contribute to both a sense of identity and an enhancement of his understanding of the society, past and present (Tivers, 2002). As the story of Fuhua suggests, in terms of

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authenticity, the Dongba marriage ritual packaged as a cultural tourism product in the Wedding Courtyard presents a move away from a hermeneutical perspective towards a more corporeal and interrelated perspective (Knudsen & Waade, 2010). Even though the ritual performance by Fuhua may be regarded by tourists and Dongba scholars as a commercial product like other performances in Lijiang, Fuhua's own interpretation of the ritual is framed through his embodied practice. The performative judgment of ''becoming'' authentic does not only lie in the ritual on the front stage (MacCannell, 1973) with tourists, but is habituated through Fuhua's memory and experience in the home village, the training in the institute and his daily life in the Wedding Courtyard.

As Crouch (2009, p. 92) addresses, individuals do not simply remember by picking the memory up momentarily, they return to it through performance and reform it. Indeed, Fuhua is willing to talk about his story to the author to present his pride in being a dongba, discussing the suffering of his dongba family during the Cultural Revolution, and his work on promoting the glorious Dongba culture nowadays. However, these issues are seldom mentioned to his collogues and tourists. Fuhua's active presentation moves from the daily practice to a conscious action for identity performing. His responses to author's questions, such as ''I can tell that today's ritual is real'' become performative through transforming his speech to a powerful act of meaning making. This shift provides an arena for the theoretical exercise of reflexive choice, embodied practice, modes of representation, rationalization and justification (Tilley, 1997).

Although this study is based on a life story of a single person, the theories of performativity are possibly the starting point for analyzing how certain types of authenticity are achieved by other actors in the specific socio-spatial context. The tourists in the Wedding Courtyard may regard the ritual as staged performance or sacred experience or merely as entertainment. However, judgment and the process of becoming authentic or inauthentic also depends on personal memory, the constructed identity and the complexity of the contemporary by participating in the ritual performance as embodied practice. When tourists mention their experience to friends or write about it in a dairy or blog, their ontological judgment also becomes performative through the presentation of meaning making.

The notion of ''performative authenticity'' does not aim to make an antithetical argument but an additional supplement to the existing discourse on authenticity. It is not universally applied, but this approach can be applied for future studies as an integrative conceptual tool that stimulates more attention to the interconnections between the individuals and embodied practices. It helps to examine the conceptualization of authenticity not only for toured objects determined by an expert (objective authenticity) or for symbolic projections by the social constructed criteria (constructive authenticity). It makes it possible to give agency back to the actors, which is embodied in the dialogue between practice and individual engagement and understanding. Instead of focusing on the state of ''being'' true to oneself as the existential

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authenticity indicates, the performative approach emphasizes the dynamism of ''becoming'' authentic through the embodied practice. The ontological sense of practice is in touch with both the world and selves. The ritual performance, integrated with the external world that is the socio-cultural and political environment, offers a deep understanding of the link between memory, habitus and embodied practice, which act together to produce the complex notion of authenticity.

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