

## CHAPTER 5

# THE PROBLEMS AND IMPACTS OF TOURISM IN THAILAND FROM THE CHINESE PERSPECTIVE

### 5.1 The results of qualitative analysis

The researcher has interviewed 8 Chinese tourists in the Peoples' Republic of China after their return trip from Thailand on the topic of opinion on the problems of Thai tourism in order to be the data in finding solutions according to the objective in item no, 2 and No.4 of this research. The interviews can be summed up as follows:

5.1.1 One of the Chinese tourists has opinion on the problems of tourism in Thailand as follows:

a) The confusion on the Chinese New Year in Thailand 'The problem of the charms of the Chinese New Year in Thailand is not much. One informant told that since olden times, the Chinese would lead their ways of life strictly according to old traditions. Everyone in the family would return home or to the family of their parents to celebrate from the last day of the old year according to the Lunar month calendar. However, it's not that the Chinese do not care to preserve their traditions, it's only that there's a change in the way of celebrating with members of their family. That is, they would take a trip to foreign lands to celebrate the Chinese New Year. The family would enjoy it like staying in their homes. Thus many of the Chinese think that Thailand has many Chinese descendants. Taking the trip to Thailand is like going for a tour and celebrating for the New Year at the same time. But it appears that the charms of the Chinese New Year in Thailand have nearly disappeared. Many sites that the tour coaches pass are just displayed in the Thai ways. There is no atmosphere to show that it is celebrating the New Year. Only there's a special activities in Yoawarat Road or China Town which the tour company has not brought tourists to attend. Tourists who can witness the celebration are only those who stay at the hotels on Yoawarat Road. This is only for one or two nights. The chance for attending the Chinese New Year celebration is very limited or even impossible. For example, the one year that the organizer announced that

everyone who wished to attend the celebration if they wore red shirts, they would receive Ungpoa and many prizes (the red envelopes with money inside to give to family's members or acquaintances according to Chinese tradition) . But those who went there would know only after they arrived at the party. Even if they knew beforehand, few would have red shirts to wear on the tour. They then would have to buy red shirts.

Though they did not force anyone to wear them, the advertisement /public announcement had made the people interested. On the day of the party, the organizer then obtained a lot of money from sales of the red shirts they had prepared beforehand. Later on the same day, everyone was waiting for distribution of the Ungpoa or the money given for the tourists. They did not care how much it was because this was only the Chinese tradition. The Ungpoa was given according to status, relationship and suitability. However, the way it was given should be orderly and should not let the crowds turn into confusion, snatching, crowding in which can cause a mishap. Some even had a chance to steal tourists' property, such as money in the tourists' pockets. There would be some pushing or jostling causing difficulty in breathing. The money put in the Unpoa was 2 baht. As for the prizes announced, it was not clear. Later it was known that this was the prize drawing of a house or some other big prize.

Besides Yoawarat Road, no other roads showed any display for the Chinese New Year in Thailand. Even if some Thai friends said there were many big celebrations in the provinces, such as in Pak Nam Pho (Nakorn Sawan Province), it was in only that place, and the tour group which had to depend on the tour company was not taken there. This was just like going to Thailand on an ordinary occasion of the Chinese New Year. Along the streets or shops, there was not even a sign to show that this was the Chinese New Year that was different from ordinary circumstances.

For Yoawarat Road which was said there would be a lion dance, there were other shows that can be seen, such as the mounting of human pyramid. The highest person would be 'a small boy or girl' of about 5-8 years old to be sent up by hands. When it was successful, after coming down, people would clap their hands. If the child fell, there would be someone waiting below to support him. But even if there was someone supporting him, the child would crash onto the head of the supporter which the child would cry in pain. The audience having seen this did not

enjoy the scene because such show as this did not see the importance of the child safety. If the show failed even if it didn't cause death, the child would be injured on the point of being crippled. It is to be informed to the grown-ups who put on the show that all of the Chinese children aerobic shows such as this must pass a long succession of practices.

While the foods sold in the party were rather expensive. The sales were given in large amount beyond the need of one person. The taste of the foods was also not as delicious as one would think. Some desserts were said to be of old traditions, difficult to find, but one can hardly gulp in because it consisted of flour of very tough and sweet nature.

All of Bangkok, there was only one road, Yoawarat that had the Chinese New Year celebration. The space provided for the party was also limited. The crowds were also packed and pushed each other until they almost can't breathe. The Chinese temple also was crowded with people and there was no limit about how many candlestick or incense sticks to be put in the altar. The crowds were so tightly packed that people can not walk only flow along. After they reached less than half-way, they had to back down because there was smoke from the incense sticks floating everywhere. While the weather in the beginning of the new year in Bangkok would be cooler than at other times, the heat coming from burning a lot of paper was hardly bearable. One can hardly survive. The condition was just like people in grief with tears flowing because of the smoke from the incense sticks. Besides they were also pushed and jostled and had to be careful of the incense sticks which people lighted for worship. They held the incense sticks away from them, but they were not very careful of the sticks touching other people.

#### b) The smell air freshener

In hotel accommodation whether it was the room or hall or in the lift, the hotel personnel would spray a large amount of air freshener. The tourists would choke on smelling this air freshener. Even if its name refers to it as making the air fresh, in reality the sweet smell of this air freshener is not like by everyone. In the tour coaches however big or a van, the driver usually spray this thing in a larger amount as well which the tourists have to endure this.



c) The sneaking of taking photograph without permission

Attraction places in Thailand usually have a group of people who sneak to take photograph of the tourists while walking, standing, getting on a bus or a boat etc. And put it in a plastic dish or a porcelain one to sell to the tourists. However many tourists are not pleased even when the sellers tell them. They do not have to buy it. However, the tourists do not want to see their photographs lying in the garbage can. Even if this sneaking of taking photographs are done in other countries as well, they do not want Thailand to follow in creating annoyance to the tourists.

d) The request for tourist visa to Singapore and Malaysia

The request of visa in the tourist program of many countries in Southeast Asia still has problems in the inability to issue or its expensive cost. The tour company would only ask for visa from only one country, the other two countries would use the form for staying only 24 -48 hours. Applying for visa as listed in many Southeast Asian Tours still has some problems that either it can not be done or the prices of the visas are expensive. The tour company would only apply for only one country. The other two country use border passes which allow only 24-28 hours' stay. For example, for a trip to Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand the tour company would only apply for visa to Thailand. Therefore, the time to stay in Singapore and Malaysia is very short and it might be because the cost of living in these two countries is very much higher than Thailand. Thailand is an important country in Southeast Asia, but does not have the convenience to travel into its many neighboring countries. This kind of convenience to travel into many countries in one trip can help increase more tourists into this region which includes Thailand. Therefore, Thailand should lead or initiate talk with its neighbors to join hand in cooperation with each other to extend the visas without time limit of the stay.

e) The problem of airport bus

The buses at the Bangkok Airport (Don Maung Airport) that is to give service to the tourists are not up to standard. Especially that it is not suitable to the condition in the Bangkok Metropolitan City, a very important city of the world both in the routes, number of buses, and its timetable and other things. Thailand should consider also tourists who do not arrive with the tour companies. These tourists will find ways to come

by themselves. Many facilities of all sides in Thailand should be ready in order to attract more tourists to travel to Thailand. Airport bus is very important. However, Thailand has overlooked this importance. From initially giving information to those who visit Thailand of the sites of airport bus which in truth there is no sign to inform them, not a single one. When the tourists walk over to ask the public relation official, she does not happen to know. They must ask whoever passes by many times before the answer can be found. When they walk over to the service point, they have to ask the officers. With this situation, the TAT/ the airport should put up big poster written in at least two languages, that is Thai-English and should tell in details of the routes the bus passes. They should not wait for the service personnel to help tell the tourists which place they should or must get down and Thailand should have other languages for service, such as Chinese.

- The next problem is the time of setting off of the buses is not frequent enough for the tourists/ the travelers.

- The problem of having only three routes for the buses, the fourth route is available only in the afternoon.

- The place for waiting for the bus is very hot because it is outside of the main building. Moreover, there are several cigarette ushers near the place. The weather is hot enough not to mention someone smoking cigarette around your side. With these problems the travelers do not prefer to ride the airport bus or even if they prefer it, they do not have the convenience because of too much time to spend waiting. The bus do not run to the point near their destination. Or else they must continue much further by taking other transportation. This causes more traffic congestion because a lot of people need to use private cars / hired taxi especially the in-bound into the city from the airport. There is some service spot of the officials to enquire about time, but the out-bound from the city from what's been told from the official there're sites somewhere. After waiting for more than 2 hours which what's been told by the official (who insisted that the bus stop was at that spot because there were a few people waiting (many) who wanted also to go to the airport. And the speaker had taken the said bus from the airport into the city by enquiring both the information service spot at the airport and at the end of the destination from the information given by the driver) The tourists have to wait with no avail and finally had to hire a taxi.

- The bus service is a very important issue because if everybody uses the public bus service, the traffic in Bangkok will be a lot better than this and besides it will make the tourists feel like coming back to visit Thailand again.

f) The problem of hotel restroom

The hotel accommodation usually built a restroom deep inside the building. This may be because they want the lobby to look spacious and beautiful. But one of the causes is believed to be the wish of not wanting the passers-by gaining access to them. Therefore, this is not convenient for the persons who stay there. There are then the problems of urgency or the tourists coming down to wait for the guide/the tour group before the allotted time. They then want to use the restroom again before setting off on their trips. It appears that the trip to the restroom is like walking around the maze. Inquiries must be made, searching must be done, and after walking for some time inquiry must be made again before the restrooms are found.

5.1.2 The second Chinese tourist has the opinions on the problems of Thai tourism as follows:

Mr. Chen was very glad that the Thai side gives importance to developing tourism, solving many problems that arise. The tourism Authority of Thailand is interested to solve the problems. The Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand has visited China and talked about solving problems concerning the tour taking its tour customers to buy things (like compulsory buying the option goods the tour has given) which the Chinese government also gives importance to this matter by announcing of different things to be amended. What to be corrected must have cooperation from both sides. The Chinese and the Thai must cooperate and try further because the cheating of the tour customers will have impact on the economy and development of the country. At present the Chinese have traveled to Thailand a lot for a tour. The country they visit most frequently is Macau, the second is Hong Kong and Thailand is the third country they like to visit the most. The Chinese like to visit Thailand because there are many interesting things. As for the prices compared with visiting Peking, it is much cheaper and besides it is much nearer. If this problem is not corrected, the number of the Chinese traveling to Thailand will decline while at the same time the places of



tourist attraction are increasing. The complaints that the Chinese tourists have are such things as...

- The tour coaches do not open the air-conditioner (in the case the tour customers do not buy the options proposed)

- There was the case of the tour group being asked to leave while they were on the expressway without any apparent reason. The tour guides only consult each other. The tour customers did not understand what they were discussing. They would like to file a complaint but did not know whom to contact. They can not communicate through the phone. Mr. Chen believed that the Thai side must have some rules and information to give to the tourists from the moment they first step on the plane until the time they enter Thailand, such as at the airport and at the hotel. For English and Thai language, most Chinese do not understand them. Even if they were to talk on the phone it would be very difficult to communicate. Therefore, the Thai side must have ready the phone numbers that are easy to contact in fluent Chinese and the important thing is that it must be in Mandarin Chinese (other Chinese languages if available for services will be better. For example, the Chinese who come from Canton and Hong Kong will be more able to speak Cantonese. The Chinese from Shan Tou and other cities in their neighbourhood are more able to speak Chao Zhou. The Chinese who come from Hainan speak Hainan, and Fujians are more able to speak Fujian. As for the new generation, everyone can speak Mandarin.

The tour company itself must sell at its actual price and should not reduce the price to compete with one another. What's in the lists should not be changed below its original standard. For example, accommodation is far from the center of the city, being unable to buy things needed near the accommodation, the places to buy things were arranged according to the wish of the tour company, having to get up early, and having no important attractions, such as the Grand Palace and the Emerald Buddha Temple) Mr. Chen himself has once visited Thailand while en route to Cambodia. He had a Chinese interpreter who can speak English. At that time it was the tour company who rented a room for him. Mr. Chen and the interpreter found food and made an ordinary tour. Mr. Chen hired a taxi by himself outside Don Maung Airport which he thought was cheap. (This fact must be reminded of the tourists to use the taxi inside the airport because the price was fair and also for safety.) Mr. Chen found what to eat by walking along the road he thought was interesting because

it was easy to find food to his liking that way. However, the problem was that the food shop did not accept the dollars or the Chinese Yuan. Therefore, he felt inconvenience on this. Mr. Chen told that when it was dark, he was not afraid. He came out to see the atmosphere at night. (This fact the tourists must be warned to be careful, not to walk along a solitary place.) Another problem which arose was Mr. Chen hired a Samlor for a tour of a Thai temple. It took a long time before he can return from the temple since when he by chance went into a jewelry shop. He wasted a lot of time there because the shop sellers tried to persuade him to buy. However, Mr. Chen (who told this story himself) did not buy the goods at that jewelry shop. He thought that Thai society was a very safe place, but it's a pity that there were no Chinese alphabets along the road. There were only the signs of names of the shops.

5.1.3 The third Chinese tourist has opinions about the problems of tourism in Thailand as follows:

Mr. Wang Xiao Dong, an instructor at Kunming University, traveled to Thailand in the year 2002. He remembered that he had paid 3,000 Yuan (three thousand Yuan) for the trip to three countries- Xin-Ma-Thai. Xin was Singapore, Ma was Malaysia, and Thai was Thailand. The route was Bangkok for two days, Pattaya three and after the return trip from Singapore and Malaysia, he visited Bangkok for another day to wait for a transit flight home on 19 /12/2002 (Bangkok-Kunming). He was impressed with Bangkok because ...

- He can have the service of Thai massage for one hour. The masseuse did a good work because she had true knowledge about it. She was intense on her work. From the look of it, some of the massage techniques use a lot of strength. For example, the techniques of body lifting, and body stretch. Some tourists had heavy and tall body but the masseuse can do it. After the massage, they felt very relaxed, light headed and fresh.

- The guide can speak Chinese because he had made a private tour of China in the town of Seean. It was the old capital which was the seat of eleven dynasties) so he can have a friendly chat with the guide.

- He like the sea at Pattaya very much because in Yunnan there was no sea outlet. Therefore, he likes the sea very much.



Next is a summary of all the rest of stories he told:

- When he went on a tour to the island in Pattaya, one man who had a scooter for hire said the price for renting the scooter was 300 baht per person. However, during the return trip the hirer said it was 300 US dollars or about 12,000 baht) - the guide did not warn him not to rent the scooter. Then an argument ensued. The scooter's owner looked like he didn't want to give in because many of them joined in the argument. It looked like it would be serious and they said the Chinese tourist had cheated. On the Chinese side, some also joined in to help for fear that the argument would become too serious. They tried to settle the argument until the price came down to 800 yuan (or about 4,000 baht).

This made the Chinese tour group unhappy. Even if the argument could be settled, the scooter's owner had made a lot of threats to the group.

- At the same place, the tour group was able to go parachute jumping. This program made them content because it was clearly said that landing on the beach was 450 baht and for a simple parachute jump the cost was 300 baht. Everyone was pleased with the 450 baht charge because they had been feeling down and this gave them a new zest. To conclude the trip to Pattaya at the time was quite pleasant except for...

(1) The cheating over the renting of the scooter.

(2) The taking of photographs without being aware and then being placed for sale. Even if the seller had been told that the tourists did not have to buy them, the guests did not want to leave their photographs behind. It puzzled the tourists to see their photograph on a pretty dish, but after seeing them many times, they felt bored. Therefore, it was not strange that they did not buy such photographs.

- As for additional payments, Archarn Wang said the group did not think much about it as it was advised before the trip and everything was satisfactory all in all. For a little additional payment was the cost of the trip to the back of the island which in truth was on the same island. When they knew this, they were a little angry but did not feel worried.

- What they thought should be corrected was the food. For example, many meals were not perfect. The restaurant did not have air-conditioning and it was a very cheap place. Even on the last day before returning to China, the place was only a shack. The hotel they stayed in was the White Orchid. It was on Yoawarat Road and was very small.

But the seafood, which was to their liking, was on sale along Yoawarat Road. The place where the group stayed was in-town so they could go shopping for things they like by themselves because there were lots of shops and the sellers could speak Chinese.

- Every room in which they stayed in Thailand had no Chinese television programs. When the group arrived at their destination, they would feel like listening to the news and recommendations about geographical features of the country or in the evening they would like to rest and watch TV, but it was incomprehensible. As for English most of them could also not comprehend it. (It is proposed that television in Thailand should have one Channel which the Chinese tourists can listen to for Thai advice on every subject, such as the daily news or the news from the Royal Household.) But all they could watch was the picture and all else was incomprehensible. They had no knowledge of the people in them even if they were interested and eager to know.

- The ancient remains of different provinces were places for spreading the Thai culture and for persuading them to return again because what the Chinese were only acquainted with was Bangkok, Pattay, Phuket and Chiangmai. Chinese from other cities might be interested in them. But those from Yunnan do not like them. They would prefer to go to the sea. They also could not find maps of Thailand in Chinese.

- For the purchase of items of adornment. Many in the group bought them, but when they returned home they felt that the things they bought were really only slightly genuine. For example, Archarn Wang bought two necklaces. One of them changed to black (rusted) and the other one he felt was good and beautiful. The bad one he did not keep as evidence for the name of the shop in order to make a complaint, but he would not know anyway where make such complaint.

- The Chinese language that the Thai guide spoke was not fluent. He could only speak superficially even if he could chat on whatever subject he chose. For example, when the Thai guide spoke of jokes during the trip, he would speak and laugh by himself. The guests did not feel it was a joke especially when about sex - the guests listened and felt sick.

- The service from the Thai guide was not much when compared with Singapore, indeed the feeling was very different because

Singaporeans use Chinese which made the guests feel like at home in China. Wherever they looked, they would not feel acquainted with anything. There were only the signs on most of the shops on Yoawarat Road. The tour group stayed in Thailand for a total of 5 days - Singapore was only 1 day and Malaysia 2 days. The guests asked if it was possible that they arrive in Thailand first and stay longer than Singapore or Malaysia, but the cost of the trip to Thailand was more than half of Singapore because the guide there could speak Chinese very well like their native tongue even if the accent was different. However, the service given by the Singapore guide was incomparable to the Thai. For example, when the guides in Singapore saw the guests carrying luggage, they would either rush to help or call the hotel workers to give the service. When the guest took out a cigarette, he did not have to look for a cigarette-ashtray. The guide hurried to place it before him and the important thing was that the guide was very pleasant, the accommodation and the food in Singapore was superior. However, the guests stayed in Singapore for only one night.

- During the trip from Singapore to Malaysia by coach, the Singaporean guide was able to persuade the guests to help buy the souvenirs that the driver brought with him for sale because the driver did not earn much salary. Everyone thus helped buy them. Later it was known that the items they bought were much more expensive than in the market. Malaysia was the last country for the trip, thus the guests bought very little

## **Opinions**

1. Thailand should promote souvenirs such as OTOP products. One of the guests saw a Chilly-Salt Container Set and liked it very much, but did not know where to buy it.

2. Thais should study the research outcome of the feelings of the tourists.

## **In Singapore there were many conveniences**

1. The feeling of comforts like being at their own home. Wherever they went, even if they could not remember the way, they could know where it was because they could read.



2. They could use the knowledge from what they had been entertained to know and understand Singapore.

3. They could use the Chinese Yuan without having to exchange the money.

4. The guarantee card for the adornment items was written in Chinese which made the guests feel more assured when they decided to buy the items.

### **Things the Thais should correct and improve**

1. The language of the guide is important because the souvenirs in all of Thailand were much cheaper than Singapore but the guide was not able to persuade the guests to buy (the unskilled use of the language made the guests felt unsure.)

2. The accommodation and Thai food were not very good. The guests were not impressed even if the Thai products were superior to those in Singapore. For example, in buying two Thai necklaces, there was one good one, but as for the two necklaces from Singapore, both were rusted.

3. When the guests had problems about the low quality of accommodation which made the tour group not content, the Thai guide was not interested, and did not correct the problem, saying they had to stay like this and should not complain. Besides this, there was the issue of not being on time. For example, the set time was to set at 8.00 a.m., but this was changed to 10.00 a.m. unreasonably.

4. The story of hoax of the tour group to ride the scooter, this was heard of very often from the tour groups to Thailand.

5. When the tour group came to Thailand, this was a good chance for the TV at the hotel to have the channel for introducing Thailand because the guests would gain some knowledge and would enjoy the trip. If Thailand has a lot of tourist attractions, there is no reason why they would not advertise it. This is especially true in China, where there is never any recommendations about trips to the Northeast or other cities besides Bangkok, Pattaya, Chiangmai, Phuket and Kanchanaburi (by rail).

6. What the group was disappointed with the Thai guide the most was that everyone before they visited Thailand used to listen to other groups which had visited the country that they had watched the special show (a gogo show), however, Archarn Wang's group had a guide who was weak in language and did not know how to arrange the tour. That is, while they were staying in Pattaya, the guide persuaded them while on the bus that 'there is a special show worth ...baht. Everyone was not concerned about the price because they could not see a show such as this in China. They were very eager to see it. Everyone had made up their mind to see it upon arrival. However, it so happened that the guide used such words as "anyone interested could apply and pay for it at the front of the coach' so no one dared to get up to pay which made the group feel that the guide did not do a good job because everyone in the group was a teacher and some were even professors. The guide should use a simple tactic, that is tell the guests that there is a special show along the way and would they all like to see it. The price is .....baht. For the children, the guide could take them to buy some souvenirs in town.

5.1.4 The fourth Chinese tourist, who is one of the executives from the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Tourism, has the following opinions on the problems of Thai tourism:

1) Problems about the guides having negative views of Thailand During the sale of additional tour activities, when the tour customers were not willing to buy them, the guides would come across as threatening , that is threatened about the safety linking with the sales of the programs, such as if they did not comply what would be the consequences. This is the dark side being used to threaten and not talk that considers the safety of the tour customers like this "Wherever you stay in whatever part of the world, whatever country, if the host says do not go somewhere alone, that is they are concerned about the individual getting lost, about meeting bad people which is something that could occur anywhere." However, the Thai guide used the negative side of the danger as a threat and compared China and Thailand negatively, such as the go go program / sex show. The tour customers have no chance to watch it in China. They could watch it only in Thailand. Even if it is true, a comparison should not be made to make it seem that Chinese life is not as free as in Thailand.

2) Thai food is not delicious and little in quantity

Food complaint: It's not that coming to only one country – Thailand or how many days you stay or going to Thailand- Malaysia- Singapore and only staying in Thailand for only 4-5 days, the food is all Chinese food. The trip to Thailand should include the real taste of Thai food. But it appears that the tour customers do not know what Thai food is. The food quality is rather low. Staying in Thailand whether there are 10 or 20 meals (with the exception of the breakfast at the hotel) what the tourists have as their main dishes are stir fried mixed vegetables, fried eggs alternated with stir fried eggs, stir fried bean cake and bean sprouts, clear soup - there are few sumptuous dishes. It appears that the food to the Chinese liking is fish sauce and chili which have a taste unlike Chinese food.

There is also the complaint of insufficient quantity on the point of each one on his own because there are many tours going to the restaurant at the same time.

Some of the tour customers think that this is the food that they must eat. Some tour companies do better to provide good food for one meal, that is they take the tour customers to eat at BaiYoke Tower which is rather luxurious. Some tours tell us about the places where they have food all throughout the trip- in a food shop with tents which belong to the tour company. Some tour customers said that they had taken them to food shops that looked as though they were normally used for receiving tour groups. The food there consists of the same dishes, the shops do not look much different, and the foods do not also look much different. The Chinese tour customers have never tasted Thai food in Thailand. The tour customers think that the Thai-Chinese tour company which arranges the tour to Thailand should make it a point that in arranging a tour to Europe, the United States or Australia to note that the Chinese do not like to eat food that contains mixtures of milk or butter. The tour companies must therefore, provide restaurants for their specific customers which consist of mainly Chinese foods with the exception of breakfast, a rather standard meal. But for Thailand, Thai foods are famous in China for containing no mixtures of butter the Chinese refused to eat. In fact,, the Chinese like to taste Thai food, but the tour company never takes them to eat any. Therefore, the request is for the Thai side to correct this issue about food that is lower than it should be in quality and to improve and change the situation so that tour customers get to taste Thai food.



### 3) Obstacles in communicating in Chinese

The problems about the TV programs in the rooms are not understandable for the Chinese tourists. When they arrive in Thailand, they would like to hear some news about Thailand. It appears that the Chinese tourists can not find any Chinese newspapers nearby though there are English and Thai newspapers. The tour program arranged by the tour company is rather tiring and does not finish until night time. They say that they are taken back to their accommodation very late. They are both tired and have no time to watch the news on TV. Even when they do turn on the TV, it is unintelligible. Some tour customers might not think so, but the young ladies who gave the interview thought that one of the reasons the Chinese tourists traveled to Thailand was to learn of news about the environment and some views about Thailand. Even though this was not such a big issue as to impede the tour, the Chinese have arrived from every place in China and many of them are highly educated. There is the curiosity of the tourists who would like to learn of the country they visit to open their eyes and learn more. Even if some maps were given free in some hotels, some tour customers were not given maps of Thailand or Bangkok. Even though they have seen other tourists with maps of Bangkok or the cities they travel to in Chinese, they do not know where to buy them. The tour company should give this some importance, and arrange for the things that the tour customers want, and not only sell option tours for extra money and take them to the places according to the program without considering the needs of the customers.

### 4) The problems of selling options of the special programs at additional cost

As for buying additional activities in the program, the tour customers feel that some programs are repeatedly offered, such as seeing the show from this theatre and then going to the next. The show is about the same thing. The tour customers do not see any differences. For example, the nude dance program, where at the first show they feel surprised, but then at the next one the tour customers feel bored. What a pity it is that many of the tour customers do not go to Phuket which is the last activity on the program, because they think that it will be just like the programs before. However, it appears that the ones who go to see Phuket Fantasia feel sorry for the tour customers who did not see the show because the show there was strange. Besides there are shows that

contain nothing but the guide tells the tourists that they are very good and very surprising, such as the floating nun.

#### 5) The condition of the environment

The lack of comfort in viewing the environment of the city surroundings, such as in Bangkok. When looking out from one place to another, one can see 1) the electric wires everywhere along the roads hanging loosely from each post. 2) The many stalls, and tents put up along the footpath show an uncivilized side of Thailand. In contrast, in Beijing, you cannot see these things as the electric wires are underground, the stalls are only located in designated places arranged for them inside buildings or along small lanes, but are not found encroaching the footpath.

6) Complaints received from the Chinese tourists-For 2005, the issues of complaints were less. In 2006, at the beginning of the year during the Chinese New Year Festival, the complaints increased again.

7) The complaints to the Thai Tourist Agency about buying decoration items- Thai- Chinese. The details about this can be obtained from the Thai Tourist Agency.

5.1.5 The fifth Chinese tourist had the following opinions on problems in Thai tourism:

The problems of safety while traveling, such as the tourists' trip to islands.

1) The case of the small boat, even if it is fast, economical in time, often the waves were strong and the boat went up and down with the waves which made the travelers sick.

For the case of the big boat, the big boat could not go to the pier to receive and send customers. Therefore, it had to use a small boat to receive and send the tour customers from the beach and then transfer them to the bigger boat at the place with deep enough waters to dock the big boat. The danger exists because of the large difference in the heights of the small and big boat. The tour customers must climb up and down. Even if there is a strong man on the boat to help in giving them support,

the passengers whether old, adult or child had the experience of being injured from being scratched on the arm or leg, or felt they were in danger, worried about the option that was sold for that trip to the island. The tour customer turned down the tour because of the cost, but asked for better and safer ways than those described above.

2) The problems of advertising- even if Thailand has 76 provinces, the places of tourist attractions which the Thai companies and Chinese cooperate together on only publicize Bangkok to Pattaya, Bangkok to Kanjanaburi, Pattaya to Phuket or Bangkok to Chiangmai to Pattaya

3) The problems of spending money - problems exist regarding the routes of the tour to many countries, such as:

- a. Singapore to Malaysia to Thailand or other routes.
- b. Singapore to Malaysia to Thailand to Hong Kong to Macau

Usually according to the route that is taken, the country reached first will gain most advantages because the tour customers still possess a lot of money. The money will then be spent in that country first, such as if they reach Thailand first, before they arrive at Malaysia and Singapore, the tour customers will have less money to spend after leaving Thailand.

4) The problems of communication in Chinese-the problems of the Thai guides speaking Chinese caused the tour customers not to buy enough quantities of Thai goods. Even if they arrived in Thailand first, because of the inaptitude and limitation of language ability, the tour customers were not persuaded effectively. Even if the tour customers arrived in Malaysia and Singapore afterwards, they had the advantage in that the Malaysians and Singaporeans can speak Chinese fluently: therefore, the money which the tour customers still had with them was spent there in large amounts.

The problems of Chinese signs in the country. In Thailand, the tour customers will sometimes see shop signs in Chinese. However, it is difficult to remember the way around because of the unrecognizable names of the streets and places. Only some of the tour customers can read and understand the names in English. The names of many syllables are difficult to remember for foreigners who travel there temporarily. The tour customers want Thailand to use Chinese letters more or at least for signs for streets making it more convenient and familiar. This is



especially true about the hotel accommodation for Chinese tourists which does not have any Chinese signage.

Besides the description from the guide, they find it difficult to communicate with the hotel officials, not giving explanations. Even if maps are given out at some hotels, they are not given out at every one. The hotels where Chinese tourists stay are three stars or below, not speaking about the maps in Chinese letters which are difficult to find.

5) The problems of daily tour arrangements- Since a lot of options for the tour are given to the customers, the guide will take the tour customers to see this and that show until it is very late at night. When there is a program about Thai massage, the tour customers are asleep because they are very tired. Some mornings they have to rise very early. Some programs, such as buying gems, buying medicine at the snake farm require a lot of time and waste much time for the tourists. Taking the tourists for shopping, must not be repeated too often, such as buying gems taking half a day, skipping one day and then the next taking them again to buy from another gems shop. Each time wastes a lot of time, the goods that are bought are rather expensive and it is not sure that the goods bought are worth the prices. However, many goods are bought because of the beauty of the design of Thai gems. However, the quality should correspond with the price.

The tour guide should also leave the program free for some nights.

5.1.6 The sixth Chinese tourist gave views about the problems as follows:

1) The problems about the bus service-Though there was not many problems, the bad side of the bus service was that the bus driver/ tour company used the following things to threaten the tour customers:

a) When the park the coaches, the air-conditioner is not turned on if the tour customers do not buy the offered option.

b) As for those who do not buy additional programs, the tour driver will not let them get off from the coach giving the reason that it is not safe.

c) Some of the tour companies use two coaches to claim that the customers in the other tour coach agreed to go and there is no reason why the customers in this coach should not go even if the tour customers cannot communicate with the other tour coach.

2) The problems of other countries that are offered in the tour programs- The problems that have occurred, not only in Thailand but in other countries in this region as well are, for example:

a) In Malaysia, the program to see the Musyit Shrine, the double pagoda, and the site of the government house is not worth the price. Each program costs about 250 yuan.

b) There is the keeping of the tour customers on the coaches all the same.

c) In Hong Kong, there are tour customers complaining about the gems not being worth the prices and they would like to have their money back.

d) Buying massage oil that makes the blood hot but when they arrive home the product does nothing.

e) The sale of ginseng which tastes like drinking plain water.

3) The problem of the selling of the program to the tour customers is for the tour guide's benefit. The tour programs that are not worth it include those in Pattaya, such as the European show, the show on the Oriental ship, and the shows with a meal.

If the Thais would like to sell the options but tell tour customers in Only options that are worth the price and the time should be sold and customers should not be taken to see or do the same activities repeatedly.

4) The etiquette of the Thai guides – Even if it is for preservation of natural resources, the tour guides do not treat the guests politely. For example, the tour customers went to pick coral thinking they could take it home as a souvenir without knowing that it was against the law. Most of the Chinese have not had a chance to see the sea, so the guide should not shout angrily at the guests. There was one incident when a guest was hurt on the foot by a sea urchin and could not stand the pain. Instead of helping the guest, the guide shouted angrily at the guest to put down the coral first. The guide had also not warned the guest before he went into the sea about possible dangers.

5.1.7 The seventh Chinese tourist gave the following opinions about Thai tourism :

1) The writing on the Thai bank notes made them unsure whether they were genuine.

Many people who gave interviews gave an opinion about some Thais who like to scribble on the bank notes. They said that it is not proper and would make tourists, such as the Chinese who received these notes feel uncomfortable. The interviewees were people who came with the tour group and those who came on their own. The money was obtained by exchanges with the guides and in banks and exchange booths. What made these tourists feel uncomfortable was the scribbling by someone or the stamped seal of a government office( offices that are not responsible for the issuing of the notes). When the guides handed the bank notes in exchange for the Chinese Ren Min Bi, there was a lot of handwriting on the Thai notes both by hand and stamped seals from offices, such as the bank. They did not like to take the bank notes, but the guides told them to ignore it and that they can be used. The problem is before spending them, the tourists felt unsure and wondered why the Thai government let this kind of problem go unnoticed. The bank notes usually were 1,000 baht notes which made the receiver of the notes feel uncomfortable before spending them.

## 2) The environment around Bangkok

From the interviews of the Chinese tourists who came on their own and those who came in groups with the tour companies to Thailand, both kinds gave the opinion that even if Bangkok is the capital of Thailand and considered a leading city of the world, calling it 'the livable city' is barely if not at all deserved. The mixture of the old and the new cultures do not harmonize. There is less purity in the environment, the arrangement of the city is not good, whether outside or inside the limits of the city, and there is no evidence of the old identity remaining. Even though some trees may be seen, most of them are small and cannot filter the pollution. The traffic jams are terrible and don't look pleasing to the eyes. The riding of the motorcycles winding here and there along the road as well as the noise of the cars are very annoying. The conditions of the footpaths look very disorganized - the uneven nature of the footpath, the stalls encroaching it, the view of the motorcycles parking on the footpaths, as well as the narrowness of the



footpaths. There are even some roads with no footpath. Some roads have bell box for the crippled and the blind to walk along conveniently. Hawkers can be seen everywhere in Bangkok. The stall owners gesture to tell the pedestrians to turn away and point for him to go on the other side. Garbage cans are everywhere. There are people sitting around having their meals. Shops like stalls are everywhere along the footpath. The tourists themselves have sat there to eat together with other local people. The tourists try to look at it optimistically that this could help them to find things for eating and use everywhere.

Besides this, the mass transportation system is not convenient for the tourists who do not use the services of the tour company. The bus stop signs do not have any details about the places. Most of them have the numbers written of the bus signs which is difficult for the tourists who are on their own to make use of because they need to ask others about the routes which is sometimes useless. The example of illustrations on the bus stop signs in China have details of the first bus stop to the last one, the bus schedule and the place where you are, and the next stop. This is in order to prevent the passengers from getting on the wrong side of the road.

Also, the terrible traffic jams caused the guide to wake the tour customers up early to avoid them.

5.1.8 The eighth Chinese tourist suggested the following to solve the problems of Thai tourism:

Suggestions to the director and officials of TAT in the Yunan Province

5.1.8.1 The request is for the Thai government to give importance to the Chinese language, and maps in Chinese which are difficult to find and which must go to the hotels that use Chinese language or the hotels situated along Yaowarat Road. Along the roads all signs which are in Thai, besides English should also have Chinese too. There should be telephone numbers for easy contact in case of

emergencies, and the operators should be able to speak Chinese. The telephone numbers should be put around the hotels and public places.

5.1.8.2 The Thai government must cooperate with the Chinese. This should be the work office related, such as the Royal Thai Embassy, in Beijing. The Royal-Consulate General in important Chinese cities upon receiving complaints from the Chinese must not only contact the Foreign Ministry of Thailand. The Chinese work office also knows that there are people complaining with the Thai government office, but they do not have any information on the details and the contact could not be made conveniently.

5.1.8.3 The result of the complaint is to ask the Thai government to notify the complaint and the result of the complaint to the work section of the Chinese government involved or they can ask for advice for cooperation.

- The future of the Thai roads (passing through Burma and Laos) to China (Yunan Province) will be finished and the tour will be more convenient. Thailand and China should cooperate to upkeep and develop the roads.

- For many years there have been many people who travel on waterways such as from Thailand to Yunan, to Canton.

5.1.8.4 The training of the guide to have knowledge of Chinese is good, and they should have knowledge of ancient remains and their country.

5.1.8.5 Knowledge must be given to the Chinese tourists (the Chinese government must be the one to give it). Therefore, at the moment, travelers have little knowledge when compared with Kindergarten children.

5.1.8.6 The tour companies must be trained to charge suitable prices, not to compete for their own customers and cut their own prices and they must give good services.

Though the result of the analysis in chapter 4 suggests that overall Chinese tourists do not have problems with traveling in Thailand, yet they have concerns about the taste of Thai food and drinks. They also suggest that there be souvenirs upon arrivals.

On the other hand, there is another group sample whose members express their opinion about problems with tourism in Thailand in chapter 4 which reflects consumer behavior. When this group sample experienced problems with traveling in Thailand, they said that they would change their traveling habits. For example, changing their destination to other countries, telling their friends about the problems, etc.

Overall, tourism in Thailand from the perspective of Chinese tourists is not positive. Data collected from interviews voice concerns about areas where the problems should be minimized. If the public and private sector, including its citizens, neglect the problems it can have the following impact on Thailand:

## **5.2 Impact on Thailand's tourism reputation**

Poor quality of tour operations, environmental problems and pollution result in a negative impact on tourism in Thailand.

Many tour programs include too few attractions for visitors. At the same time, the tour programs offer too many shopping locations. In addition, many tour operations charge an additional fee if their clients would like to visit other attractions off the program list. Many Chinese visitors were asked to give extra tips, for example.

Another problem faced by Chinese tourists is food. Some program tours provide food of poor quality – too sweet, unhealthy, or in a bad environment.

Both problems with the program tour and food have negative effects on Thailand's tourism. If Chinese tourists feel they are being



ripped off and tell their friends at home, Thailand's reputation will suffer.

Traffic jams slow down traveling time and cause some cancellations. The traffic problem forces some site-seeing programs on the tour program list to be cancelled. When a tour program has to be cancelled due to traffic, it can be mistaken for a technique to cancel the program. The traffic jam is negative to the country's reputation. It also reflects the orderliness of people and behavior.

Other problems such as a limited number of public toilets, poor customer service, and taxis avoiding using meters all have negative impacts on tourism.

With regard to language usage, most Thai nationals cannot speak Chinese which is an obstacle for communication. Many Chinese tourists do not speak other languages. Also Thailand does not have signs written in Chinese whereas Singapore provides assistance in Chinese in comparison. When Thais do not understand the language and turn away when asked for help, it can be misinterpreted as unfriendly behaviour.

Tour leaders' lack of manners is a major problem faced by Chinese tourists. Many Chinese speaking tour leaders do not understand the Chinese language thoroughly, and when they make jokes, the jokes are interpreted as dirty jokes which give a bad name to Thailand. Chinese tourists can, as a result, see Thai people as rude and dirty.

### **5.3 Negative impact on relations between countries**

When a Thai tour leader speaks about China in a negative way, Chinese tourists feel that they are being looked down upon. Also, when Chinese tourists are not treated the same way as European visitors are being treated, it causes a feeling of resent among the Chinese which can have a negative impact on relations between countries, like a domino effect.

An example of a negative expression in Chinese is - "You are prohibited from watching a nude performance in China" – which can cause a misunderstanding between Chinese visitors and Thais. The statement could suggest China as a communist country with cruelty,

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH**

#### **6.1 Summary of the research**

##### **6.1.1 General information of the respondents**

The sampling population consisted of Chinese men and Chinese women at 42.5 percent and 57.5 percent respectively. About 54.8 percent was between 30 and 50 years old. The sample population with a bachelor's degree the most. The sample population are private officials, government officials and officials of state enterprises, farmers, fishermen, housewives and retired persons. Those who earn from 2,001-10,000 Yuan per month.

##### **6.1.2 The tourist behavior of the Chinese tourist in Thailand**

Most of the Chinese tourists came to Thailand by plane, at 96.3 percent. However, 20.5 percent came by motor car and 6.8 percent by ship.

Of the sample group, the tourists who came to Thailand for the first time was 76.8 percent. About 23.2 percent had been to Thailand more than once. This shows that this group has a good impression of Thailand. Tourists who came with a group or with a tourist firm the most.

Most of the tourists stayed at a hotel, bungalow or guest house respectively. Some tourists stayed at other places such as a dormitory, a relative's house, an acquaintance's house or camped.

The tourist who ate Thai food and other international food, were 72.8%. About 32% ate international foods shops, 26.8% ate at food centers, and approximately 6.8% ate at Chinese restaurants respectively.

The places very popular among the tourists and often visited by them, were historic places (temples, ancient remains, museums, monuments etc.). This stood at 86.5%. This was followed by natural places (mountains, waterfalls, the sea etc.) at 69.8%. Moreover, cultural

in a much weaker state. Then, in turn, investment in Thailand's tourism industry will inevitably decrease.

At this point, the economic impacts could manifest themselves into societal ones as well. As we know, all areas of society benefit economically from tourism, whether it be in the services sector, the agricultural sector, or the manufacturing sector. Due to the extremely large portion of Thai GDP that comes from tourism (in fact, it produces the largest income in Thailand's economy), jobs are continuously created in these industries to cope with the growing demands. If investment in Thai tourism were to decrease as a result of less tourists visiting, these jobs would have to be dissolved, causing large problems in Thai society, potentially leading to higher levels of poverty and illiteracy.

Although tourism in Thailand continues to blossom, there are potential problems related to incomes for local people and land prices, which could, eventually, lead to decreased investment. As an example, if inflation rises in Thailand (as an indirect or direct result of tourism) farmers may be it difficult to be able to afford to grow the crops such as fruit that tourists demand. Thus, these goods would have to be imported from elsewhere. If this were to happen, the prices would be higher than locally grown produce and may leave tourists dissatisfied. In turn, this dissatisfaction may cause a decrease in tourist numbers and hence, investment in the industry in Thailand may follow suit and see a decrease.

While the abovementioned issues pertain mostly to possible decreases in investment in tourism, there are also problems that arise from increased government investment in the industry. Tourism is of incredible importance to the Thai government due to the fact that, as previously mentioned, it is the highest income generator in the Thai economy. Hence, the government must invest relatively heavily in the industry to allow it keep up with increasing demand and popularity of Thailand as a tourist destination.

The negative effects stem from the fact that if the government increases heavily in tourism, and continues to increase the level of investment, other areas of Thai society and the economy such as education or health. These are important issues that must be considered when considering investment in the tourism industry.



A further impact that is worth mentioning is the fact that the burgeoning tourism industry in Thailand, and the increasing levels of investment in it, draws many Thai people from rural areas to the larger cities, in particular Bangkok and Chiang Mai, and this creates a problem in that there are not enough people in the country to sustain the agricultural industry, along with the fact that it adds to the pollution and over-crowdedness of those cities.

There are inevitably going to be other issues concerning the Thai economy and society that warrant careful consideration in the future as the tourism industry in Thailand continues to rapidly grow. Hence, it is most important that the Thai government and the Thai people develop a system which allows them to maintain the levels of investment in the industry at the same time as ensuring the welfare of the economy and the society do not suffer as a result.