

Scandinavian Things and Chinese Taste

Becoming China-ready in the Regional Tourism Industry

2014

A strategic advice report

Written by PhD Sarah Holst Kjær, senior researcher, Agder Research, Kristiansand, Norway



This report is part of the interregional project in the ØKS-region, Chinavia II (2013-2014). It is commissioned by lead partner Visit Sørlandet, Kristiansand, Norway, who is also the lead-partner on work package I: Knowledge and Strategy.

Cover photo: Chinese traveller in Norwegian train reading *Norwegian Wood* (1987) by the Japanese author Haruki Murakami. **Source:** Unknown Chinese social media page.

Please refer to the report like this:

Kjær, Sarah Holst 2014: *Scandinavian Things and Chinese Taste. Becoming China-Ready in the Regional Tourism Industry*. Agder Research. Kristiansand: Report.

Key-words: Tourism and destination-design; Regional developmental strategy; Regional Scandinavia, Chinese outbound visitors; Experience economy; ethnographic method.

TABLE OF CONTENT

BECOMING CHINA READY	Page 4-14
Introduction	
Research objective	
Why work towards the Chinese market?	
Previous research	
Independent travellers	
Who is the Chinese outbound tourist?	
Planning the trip	
Future travel trends	
INTRODUCING THE DATA COLLECTION	Page 15-23
The practice of tourism business development	
Interviewing the regional tourism industry	
Doing focus group interviews	
Total number of informants, qualitative interviews	
Tourism-images	
Conference and workshop	
Places of street-interviews	
ANALYTICAL CONCEPTS	Page 24-32
Realities	
Happiness	
Affinity	
Things we have, that they want	
Storytelling	
REGIONAL POTENTIAL	Page 33-61
Tourism as regional growth	
Wise shoppers or great spenders?	
Cultural tourists	
Experience test-tour	
List of observed attractions in Southern Norway	
From Daisy and Rui's field work diary	
Suggesting three experience products	
Journey to the North	
List over appealing 'raw' products	
Business to business	
Year one	
Value-chain support	
The service-encounter	
Sweet heart	
Food	
Restaurants, self-catering, farm and forest activities	
Destination development: A road less travelled	
Opinions on travelling the countryside	
Chinese views on nature-based tourism	
Regional potential – summing up	
THE REGION AND BEYOND	Page 62-70
Spill-over effects	
The case of H. C. Anderson	
Getting back to the research objective	
Garden of Denmark	
Chinese family segment	
Film-induced tourism	
The region and beyond – summing up	
ATTACHMENTS	Page 71-88

BECOMING CHINA READY

Introduction

This report is part of the interregional project Chinavia II (2013-2014) in the ØKS-region and the result of the work commissioned in work package I: *Knowledge and Strategy* by work-package leader Visit Sørlandet, Norway. Chinavia II also consisted of the Swedish partners Göteborg & Co, Västsvenska Turistrådet, Malmö Turism, Invest in Skåne, Tourism in Skåne and the Danish project-owner Wonderful Copenhagen.

The overall objective of Chinavia II has been to make the ØKS-region China-ready by learning more about the Chinese outbound tourists and travel market; establishing relations and networks across the region and share an interest in improving services and experience-products to the Chinese travel-segment. In the project there have been activities such as training and improving competencies when catering to the needs of the Chinese visitors and furthermore there has been different projects boosting the online communication with Chinese travellers.

The research is partially financed by EU Interreg IVA and the partners in the project. It is the result of work package I *Knowledge and Strategy* which mainly has focussed on the touristic conditions in the Scandinavian countryside – the rural areas outside the larger cities. There is furthermore a focus on Southern Norway, but empirical examples from Western Sweden and an intrinsic case from the island of Funen, Denmark, will also be included.

Research objective

The goal of the research project has been to establish a firm knowledge base of the Chinese travel market and of the Chinese visitors in the region, and identify regional market potential – what kind of Scandinavian experience- and leisure products do the Chinese middle class travel-consumer want?

The research task was to:

- Carry out analysis of regional potential and future trends in the context of Chinese tourism and travel.

- Develop strategic recommendations for future China efforts in the region and beyond (Scandinavia).

Some of the questions we asked were: How is it possible to develop tourism- and experience products in relevant and appealing ways when aimed at the upper middle class, urban, Chinese traveller? Do we have any touristic experiences which will fall in the taste of the Chinese leisure consumer? How is 'the countryside of Scandinavia' perceived and interpreted? How can the regional tourism industry work together?

The starting point was to investigate Chinese outbound travel habits: eventually - after having explored China's neighbouring Western countries, the iconic cultural heritage sights of Europe and the capitals of Scandinavia – the Chinese traveller and his or her family would perhaps want to experience the tranquillity of small villages, coast-, cabin-, and country-life? Based on previous research, the question was whether Scandinavian countryside-sensations such as contemplation, purity, freshness, cleanliness and a health- and activity-based lifestyle would be an affinity – a thing of natural liking - which would appeal to the Chinese, urban, well-educated, experienced, but maybe also busy and overworked, consumer.

Why work towards the Chinese market?

In 2013, Innovation Norway counted in 97.000 Chinese bed-nights in Norway. In 2008 this number was half the size.¹ Similarly, Visit Denmark counted in 2013 151.749 Chinese bed-nights in Denmark² and has furthermore the strategy to – by the year of 2015 – increase the number of bed-nights to 175.000 by extending the stay from 1 to 1.5 nights on the island of Funen. This means, that the Danish national tourism strategy is to move the Chinese tourists away from the capital and into the Danish countryside.³

If a destination can attract a little percentage of the Chinese tourists the impact can be significant, as the market continues to grow. Chinese outbound tourism is well above the

¹ Graff, Sverre Bjørstad 2014: Kinesiske turister i Norge: - Vi elsker å være her, *ABC Nyheter*, July the 26th, 2014 (www.abcnyheter.no/nyheter/2014/07/26/kinesiske-turister-i-norge-vi-elsker-vaere-her).

² www.visitdenmark.dk/da/danmark/kinesiske-boernefamilier-skal-til-fyn

³ Visit Denmark: *Ny strategi skal skabe omsætning på 315 mio. kr. fra de kinesiske turister*, August 8th, 2013 (www.visitdenmark.dk/da/danmark/ny-strategi-skal-skabe-omsaetning-paa-315-mio-kr-fra-de-kinesiske-turister).

general global increase in total tourism. According to the World Tourism Organization, by 2020, there will be over 100 million Chinese outbound tourists. This will account for over six percent of the world's travellers making China an important market to tap into.⁴

Previous research

When designing the interviews we built upon several anticipations including that these well-educated informants already were experienced travellers. In our preparing studies⁵ we knew that the Chinese had a habit of exploring the Western nature-based tourism destinations in Australia and New Zealand. These countries had – besides the climate and cultural heritage – many similarities to the countryside tourism in Scandinavia. When we presented the informants of pictures – we used the principles of association and ‘translated’ elements such as camping, light house visiting, fishing and hiking into a Scandinavian context.

Additionally, we investigated the Chinese research studies in Mandarin language on Scandinavian culture, finding out what interested Chinese scholars. From this we were strengthened in the assumption that Scandinavian cultural heritage is very important.

Literature and writers such as H.C. Anderson, Henrik Ibsen and Astrid Lindgren, folk culture: fairy tales, festivals and tradition, folk costumes and Scandinavian cultural beliefs about animated nature, were all things that were more or less well-known in the Chinese culture. Late-modern approaches to a pure environment, natural carrying capacity and the Nordic welfare model were also Chinese research topics which related to Scandinavia.

This report thus builds on previous – and comparative - research results, amongst others, the interregional Chinavia I project (2012-2013).⁶ It also includes research-results from previous studies on Chinese group- and individual travelers visiting Western countries.

⁴ Petersen, Sanne Leuenhagen 2009:5: *Chinese Tourists' Travel motivations and their resultant preferred travel activities*. Dep. of International Tourism and Leisure Management: SDU Esbjerg. Thesis.

⁵ This section is based on Jørgensen, Mathias Tuen 2014: *Becoming China-Ready in the Scandinavian Tourism Industry. What does 'China' mean? What does 'ready' mean? Scandinavian Things and Chinese Taste. Interregional Chinavia II Conference with workshop, Copenhagen, 13th of June 2014. Presentation.*

⁶Please view the conclusions here:

www.visitcopenhagen.com/sites/default/files/asp/visitcopenhagen/Corporate/PDF-filer/Analyser/Chinavia/chinavia_-_survey_of_chinese_visitors_to_scandinavia_-_final.pdf

There has been a larger focus on Chinese tour groups (such as bus or cruise) and a minor one the individual traveler (such as technical visitors, students, labour migrants, couples, friends and families). In addition, research has often focused on Chinese tourists when being in urban – and not rural - surroundings.

Viewed from the perspective of regional tourism development – in the eyes of the industry and from the level of policy-making – there has been time and resources invested in developing all types of ‘rural tourism thematics’ in order for regions to attract tourists. Nature-, farm-, cycling-, skiing-, festival-, spa-, cruise-, heritage- and camping-tourism can be mentioned. All themes have several sub-categories. It would be wise to build upon existing regional tourism strategies in order to get the most out of the efforts. Family-tourism, short-travelled food and literature-based tourism will probably be the most suited genres, when approaching the Chinese outbound travel market.

A general lack of studies which investigate Chinese tourism in Europe is also pointed out in existing literature.⁷ Conversely, quite a lot of studies that deal with Chinese tourism to Australia and New Zealand exist, maybe due to their close geographical proximity to China.⁸ Chinese outbound tourism is experiencing a tremendous growth in the world and in Europe specifically. Despite this growth and despite the fact that Europe is the largest overseas market for Chinese outbound tourists,⁹ still only 9 percent of Chinese outbound tourists went to Europe, while 88 percent of the Chinese tourists in 2011 travelled to other destinations in Asia. About 40 percent of the Chinese tourists who travel to destinations outside Mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau, do it as independent travellers.¹⁰ This

(2014.12.21).

⁷Yang, Xiaoyang, Reeh, Tobias & Kreisel, Werner 2011: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Promoting Festival Tourism—An Examination of Motives and Perceptions of Chinese Visitors Attending the Oktoberfest in Munich (Germany). *Journal of China Tourism Research* 7 (4): 377–95;

Andreu, Rosario, Claver, Enrique & Quer, Diego 2013a: Chinese Outbound Tourism: New Challenges for European Tourism. *Enlightening Tourism. A Pathmaking Journal* 3 (1): 44–58.

⁸Fountain, Joanna, Espiner, Stephen & Xie, Xiaoyan 2010: A Cultural Framing of Nature: Chinese Tourists’ Motivations For, Expectations Of, and Satisfaction With, Their New Zealand Tourist Experience. *Tourism Review International* 14 (2-3): 2–3.

⁹ Xie, Yanjun & Li, Mao 2009: Development of China’s Outbound Tourism and the Characteristics of Its Tourist Flow. *Journal of China Tourism Research* 5 (3): 226–42.

¹⁰ Corigliano, Magda Antonioli 2011: The Outbound Chinese Tourism to Italy: The New Graduates’ Generation. *Journal of China Tourism Research* 7 (4): 396–410.

possibly shows that their next journey as experienced and independent travellers eventually will go to Scandinavia.

In 2014, this travel-activity was of course not present in the empirical data collection: Chinese tourists were not (yet) common to see in regional Scandinavia. Although Chinese tourists were blending in more and more in the Nordic capitals, their preferences when going to Europe was first and foremost to visit the iconic capitals such as Rome, Paris and London.

Independent travellers

Independent travel is growing, especially among younger Chinese travellers.¹¹ Research on motivations and expectations of Chinese outbound tourists, is furthermore dealing with Chinese tourism to Asian destinations¹² such as (short trips to) to e.g. Hong Kong, Macau or Taiwan. Geographically and culturally close to China, these studies are not suited to inform us about how Europe – and more specifically (the rural geography of) Scandinavia is perceived in a Chinese overseas trip context.

Literature on Chinese outbound tourism in general, as well as on Chinese tourism to Europe, shows that the segment relevant to the development of rural destinations, attractions and accommodation-facilities must be targeted the ‘urban, well educated, middleclass Chinese tourist’ or the independent traveller.

Our empirical studies was confirmed by the literature – we mainly found young, urban, well-educated and middle class travellers in the segment (technical travellers) we were able to approach:

¹¹Ong, Chin-Ee & du Cros, Hilary 2012: The Post-Mao Gazes: Chinese Backpackers in Macau. *Annals of Tourism Research* 39 (2): 735–54.

¹²View e.g. Hsu, Cathy HC, Cai, Liping A. & Li, Mimi 2010: Expectation, Motivation, and Attitude: A Tourist Behavioral Model. *Journal of Travel Research* 49 (3): 282–96.

The segment investigated

Young

'Typical Chinese tourist'

Around 80% of the Chinese travellers are under the age of 40, while the biggest group are between 25 and 45 years of age.¹³

Urban

Are mainly from the bigger cities or the relatively rich east coast of China.¹⁴

Well educated

70% to 80% of Chinese outbound tourists have either a graduate or university degree.¹⁵

Middleclass

Most often from high- to middle-income groups.¹⁶

In many ways, the independent traveller has a level of income which can meet the high-end Scandinavian price level, the travel form is mainly based on thorough preparation of where and when to go and on educational desires – one would like to obtain transformational experiences – getting more experienced, being more skilled, educated, healthier or balanced in spiritual ways. These characteristics are suitable for Scandinavian conditions and should be focussed on.

With an important difference, namely the strong friendship and family-ties, the Chinese traveller can in many ways can be associated with the young European traveller going on the grand tour. The independent traveller also resembles to group traveller in the sense that he or she most often, as a first-time traveller, goes to developed destinations, plans most of the travel and buys most of the travel products in advance.

¹³ Latham, K. 2011: Blue Paper: How the Rise of Chinese Tourism Will Change the Face of the European Travel Industry. University of London for Hilton Hotels and Resorts. Please view: <http://blog.euromonitor.com/2011/11/impact-of-chinese-travellers-in-europe.html>; Andreu, Rosario, Claver, Enrique & Quer, Diego 2013b: Destination Attributes and Chinese Outbound Tourism to Europe. *Journal of China Tourism Research* 2013 (0): 1–17.

¹⁴ Guo, Yingzhi, Kim, Samuel Seongseop & Timothy, Dallen J. 2007: Development Characteristics and Implications of Mainland Chinese Outbound Tourism. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 12 (4): 313–32.

¹⁵ Kim, Samuel Seongseop, Guo, Yingzhi & Agrusa, Jerome 2005: Preference and Positioning Analyses of Overseas Destinations by Mainland Chinese Outbound Pleasure Tourists. *Journal of Travel Research* 44 (2): 212–20.

¹⁶ Becken, Susanne 2003: Chinese Tourism to New Zealand. *Unpublished Discussion Paper*, www.chinatraveltrends.com/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2011/09/Chinese_tourism-to-NZ-2003.pdf; Ryan, Chris, and Mo, Xiaoyan 2002: Chinese Visitors to New Zealand—Demographics and Perceptions. *Journal of Vacation Marketing* 8 (1): 13–27.

Who is the Chinese outbound tourist?

The Chinese outbound tourists are mainly middle to upper middle class families and/or businessmen. Most of them come from the rich east coast and are used to the urban lifestyle. Students also make up an important portion of Chinese technical visitors. Studying abroad is an important part of the Chinese education process. This also creates a 'travel abroad behaviour' which probably will be repeated in the student's future life. As restrictions on travel continue to diminish and the Chinese economy grows the trips abroad will continue to become available to more and more Chinese citizens.¹⁷

Today, the Chinese middle class is the world's largest and almost as big as the entire American population.¹⁸ They are experienced travellers when it comes to China's neighbouring destinations such as Australia and New Zealand, and also America and the European capitals, but in relations to Scandinavia their knowledge is limited to some information on the welfare-society, national poets and maybe the royal families.

They understand the entire Nordic region as one – far away and cold - place: The North. Within a few generations – maybe even now - this is changing: many young travellers are very familiar with Western destinations and ways to come about.

The Chinese have for long seemed to prefer group travel – or, at least, they prefer things to be 'pleasantly busy' – hanging out and enjoying themselves.¹⁹ The Chinese word for having a good time is 'renao' which means warm and noisy. This is as important to Chinese as the 'fika' – drinking afternoon-coffee together – is for the Swedes, or as important as when the Norwegians eat the heart-shaped waffle on social occasions, or, when the Danes engage in 'hygge' – being social amongst family and friends. Like any other nationality though, they are not happy if the place is overcrowded with their own nationality, but they do not want to

¹⁷ Xiang, Yixian. 2013:140-41: The Characteristics of Independent Chinese Outbound Tourists. *Tourism Planning & Development* 10 (2): 134–48.

¹⁸ *Værtskab på kinesisk 2.0: Fyn gennem kinesiske briller*. Oplevelsernes Academy, 2014, page 7. Report. Please view:

www.udviklingfyn.dk/sites/default/files/billeder/Turisme/den_generelle_rapport_oa_er_fyn_klar_til_kina.pdf

¹⁹ Ooi, Can-Seng 2014: Understanding Chinese Tourists. Examples of Scandinavian things. *Scandinavian Things and Chinese Taste*. Interregional Chinavia II Conference with workshop, Copenhagen, 13th of June 2014. Presentation.

stand out from the crowd as well.²⁰ This makes festivals and events in a quiet countryside important to package and market in the right Chinese travel-season and by bridging the cultural content with the taste and preference of the Chinese – it could be food, literature, sport or cultural history themes.²¹

The Chinese tourist wants a full schedule and do not like to waste precious time. They do not mind spending transportation-time reading, sleeping or eating, but a busy activity plan is very important. The income- and educational level has nevertheless an effect, especially concerning the factors of relaxation: the higher income and educational level, the more important relaxation is when travelling.²² Relaxation probably needs to be organised in a contemplative scheme fusing landscape with spiritual activities, still remembering that Asian health-related practices and services (beauty, body, spiritual) are of a very high quality.

Planning the trip²³

In 2011, 11 percent of all outbound travel in China was sold over the internet. In 2014, 53 percent of the international Chinese travellers said they booked their hotel over the internet or via mobile apps. 81 percent of the individual travellers state that they prefer to plan the journey themselves.

Chinese outbound tourists enjoy starting the journey at home. They plan and consult at least five different sources of information, word of mouth, web-sites, editorials, travel guides, tour-company commercials, social media, etc. before making their choice, trusting the most friends' and families' advice and recommendations. In a Norwegian survey from 2010, 74 Chinese technical travellers responded that the most common way to inform oneself was in one's home, using blogs on e.g. Weibo, search engines e.g. Google and Baidu, but also media

²⁰ Anne-Marie Westerby 2013: *Huan-ying. Få nøglen til et godt værtskab på kinesisk. Fakta. Gode råd. Inspiration.* Oplevelsernes Academy. December, 2013. Report.

²¹ For inspiration, please view: Hjemdahl, Kirsti Mathiesen, Hauge, Elisabet Sørfjorddal & Lind, Emma 2007: *Festivaler på Sørlandet. Kultur i kraftformat.* Agderforskning: Fou-rapport 4/2007.

²² Petersen, Sanne Leuenhagen (2009:9).

²³ *Værtskab på kinesisk 2.0: Fyn gennem kinesiske briller.* Oplevelsernes Academy, 2014, page 14-15.

Report. Please view:

www.udviklingfyn.dk/sites/default/files/billeder/Turisme/den_generelle_rapport_oa_er_fyn_klar_til_kina.pdf

coverage (TV, radio, newspaper and magazine) were almost as popular as ‘word of mouth’ from family, friends and colleges.²⁴

They prefer feeling safe. As mentioned, they like to have all activities organised and scheduled before leaving, making sure that no time is wasted. It is considered as great hospitality if the travel-agency, attraction, destination, or accommodation, have information in Chinese on their website. The travellers’ book late and four out of five have never been to Scandinavia before, although some studies claim that they have Scandinavia as their first priority when visiting Europe.²⁵

Visa procedures can be difficult to obtain, but it is easy to plan and reserve accommodation and activities from home. In Western countries also bargains are obtained through for example online discounts, as opposed to face to face bargaining. As one of tourism researcher Yixian Xian’s respondent’s puts it: “In destinations of a similar culture to China, tourists are less afraid of ‘getting lost in a total different society, without any idea where to sleep over and where to eat’”. The fact that most of the trip is planned from home gives the independent tourists less freedom, but according to Xiang, this is not a problem, since freedom seems to come from the power to make decisions in the first place, rather than having an on-going flexibility. Another respondent explains: “I need at least three months for preparation when I travel to another country. I try to understand every aspect of destination from local culture to geography.”²⁶

Future travel trends

Studying Chinese travel blogs, we not only found that 91 percent of China’s 618 million internet-users have a profile in a social network such as WeChat, Weibo, Renren or Qzone,

²⁴Gou, Yang 2010: *Norway’s Profiling in Chinese Market*, Survey, Agder Research, Kristiansand, Norway. This survey concluded in 2010, that the traditional marketing approach of only presenting the beautiful image of Norway’s nature to the Chinese market failed to attract people’s, especially young people’s attention. The survey focusses on two segments—young overseas Chinese students, and people who has business relationship with Norwegian industries and companies. These two groups are, as it is stated in the conclusion, the most potential visitors of Norway, and they could act like a good starting point to open up the Chinese market, for both tourism and industry.

²⁵ Anne-Marie Westerby 2013:12-13: *Huan-ying. Få nøglen til et godt værtskab på kinesisk. Fakta. Gode råd. Inspiration*. Oplevelsernes Academy. December, 2013, page 13. Report.

²⁶ Xiang, Yixian. 2013:140-41: The Characteristics of Independent Chinese Outbound Tourists. *Tourism Planning & Development* 10 (2): 134–48.

or, that 84 percent of those users share their photos and experiences when they do international travelling,²⁷ we even did a blog ourselves in order to try out what we experienced in our ethnographic research – the experience test-tour - where we studied different regional tourism businesses.²⁸ We also found a few – but important examples of Chinese ‘first-movers’ traveling for pleasure and experience in the countryside of Scandinavia. These Chinese bloggers provided us with great insight into the possibilities of actually exploring the destination in practical ways.

What kind of emerging trends did the regional tourism industry have to take into consideration in order to approach this market? American trend-analysts Janine Lopiano-Misdorn and Joanne De Luca remind us: “Everything about the future and our tomorrow has been planted, moulded and nurtured by what is happening in the present. [T]here are no crystal balls or big secrets to unfold. To get there – to be ready for the big explosion of tomorrow – we just need to look at what is brewing today in the progressive micro-cultures [...] - those thinkers and doers who move in individual mind-set [...]”²⁹

‘First-mover behaviour’ is relevant on two levels for the regional tourism industry. On a destination development level, the first ‘countryside-case’ has been done on the Danish island of Funen [“Fyn”] and Funen has worked strategically in approaching the Chinese outbound market. On an attraction and experience-product development level, perhaps the first photo-documented example of a Chinese family doing self-drive and sleeping overnight in cabins on the ‘road less travelled’ has also been found. We will return to these two examples of first-movers: In the context of Chinese market development such few illustrations will show that Chinese outbound tourism is possible in regional Scandinavia.

²⁷Værtskab på kinesisk 2.0: Fyn gennem kinesiske briller. Oplevelsernes Academy, 2014, page 21. Report. Please view:

www.udviklingfyn.dk/sites/default/files/billeder/Turisme/den_generelle_rapport_oa_er_fyn_klar_til_kina.pdf

²⁸ Please view our blog-experiment based on the ethnographic observations in Norway:

<http://bbs.qyer.com/thread-956954-1.html>

²⁹Lopiano-Misdorn, Janine & De Luca, Joanne 1997:xi: *Street Trends. How Today’s Alternative Youth Cultures are Creating Tomorrow’s Mainstream Markets*. New York: HarperBusiness.



INTRODUCING THE DATA COLLECTIONS

The practice of tourism business development

It is associated with high-risk investments to approach a new and foreign market. It is also expensive to do the necessary research in order to qualify one's decisions. Furthermore it is difficult to tell where capital will go next and how capital will find its new sources of profit.³⁰

In this study we have been investigating what the regional tourism industry did (not) do in order to become China-ready. It was important to establish a 'year one' of regional potential when turning to how possible future Chinese tourism trends could be approached by the industry. Thus, the interviews with the tourism industry showed that there was no established plan on how to approach the Chinese travel market.

We found that regional Scandinavia – the countryside outside the larger cities - needs to be creative in how to 'rethink itself' in relation to the Chinese consumer. The region cannot compete with European destinations, their iconic cities and classic cultural heritage. The ØKS-region – Western Sweden, Southern Norway and Eastern Denmark - have cultural and natural heritage sights and some attractive urban areas, but most of the region is based on nature, ocean, farm and village-related tourism and it is important to work strategically in order to 'fill in the gaps' when providing the totality of an experience-concept with a relevant leisure-schedule. There is thus a need to find ways to link relevant tourism- and none-tourism business together. In this report, we will suggest ways to this.

The studied destinations and attractions were chosen because they correspond with 'what there is'. At this point in time, Chinese tourists will have to 'settle' with what the industry offers and in regional Scandinavia there are – besides on the island of Funen, Denmark - no special destinations, programmes or activities adapted to this consumer group. Therefore, this report will include the case of Funen, an island which in many ways resembles the conditions of the ØKS-region but – since 2012 - has chosen to invest economically, politically and strategically in developing their region on the basis of a Chinese outbound travel market.

³⁰ Thrift, Nigel 2008:29: *Non-Representational Theory. Space. Politics. Affect.* London: Routledge.

How can a destination orchestra success? In many ways the case of Funen exemplifies the recipe on how a regional tourism industry and a set of businesses can define their relevance in a new market and form an alliance. In a backstage-collaboration, businesses, reception-apparatus and value-chain actors need to know how they are linked together when creating the totality of the experience-product and approaching a new market. In product-development it is important to rethink one-self: allocating 'what we already have' to 'what they want' lowers the investment. In the eyes of a consumer anything can potentially be a commodity. The nature of the tourism industry is to sell the authentic and different while still making the products recognisable and meaningful, and, finally: all experience-products and services need to be packaged in order to fit the consumer's specific habits, routines and social emotions.

In the practice of tourism-business development one thus needs to familiarise oneself with several life-worlds, numerous sets of emotions, habits and routines; geographical, cultural, social and material infra-structure and, learning from all this, the result should be the ability to create sellable experience-products.

In this context, it is not necessarily a bad thing to start from scratch. Developing destinations and attractions is very expensive and it is important to perform in an informed and collaborative way working strategically together. Starting from scratch also means that the attractions we studied are very varied in terms of being China-ready. The ethnographic observations were not commissioned by the actual business – sometimes we announced our visit, but most of the time we just wanted to experience the place as other guests normally would do. We wanted to see how the place affected us when we approached it with our China-knowledge provided by our studies and interviews. How did Scandinavian things match Chinese taste?

The research presented in this report is based in several investigations such as group interviews with well-educated Chinese technical visitors in regional Scandinavia; ethnographic field work with Chinese tourists; observations at different – mostly Norwegian

– attractions; and interviews with different actors in the regional tourism industry in Sweden and Norway.³¹

The empirical data (collected in 2014) is very rich and not all will be exhausted and analysed to the fullest in this report. There will in addition be more focus on the Norwegian data, than the Swedish and Danish. Nevertheless, especially the qualitative interviews were collected in order to find out how Chinese technical visitors - and to some extent Chinese tourists - can provide innovative insight into developing the Scandinavian regional tourism industry's performance in the context of the global market-situation.

Interviewing the regional tourism industry³²

It has been important to understand how the regional tourism industry in Southern Norway and Western Sweden perceive this Chinese market-relation and fifteen interviews have been conducted with local actors – tourism business owners, official organisers and marketers.

How did the tourism- and experience industry – the value-chain of e.g. cruise-traffic facilitators, guides and travel organisers, tourists-attractions and chambers of commerce – understand the regional potential and their role when strategically approaching the possible future trends of more Chinese tourists in the ØKS-region? How would each actor in the value chain approach this market opportunity? Would there be any basis for understanding

³¹Work package leader PhD Sarah Holst Kjær, senior researcher, Agder Research, Dep. of Innovation, Kristiansand, Norway, is responsible for the report and the end-result. Professor Can Seng Ooi, Center for Leisure and Culture Services, CBS, Denmark, has been the strategic advisor and has been commenting different versions of the analysis. PhD Carina Ren, associate professor, Aalborg University, Tourism Research Unit, Department of Culture and Global Studies, Copenhagen, Denmark has too been commenting various analysis in process. MA Mathias Thuen Jørgensen, researcher, Aalborg University, Tourism Research Unit, Department of Culture and Global Studies, Copenhagen, Denmark has provided insight on scientific literature on Chinese outbound tourism. MA's Daisy Cai & Rui Liu, Master of Applied Cultural Analysis, Lund University, Lund, Sweden, have provided invaluable research assistance collecting empirical data: Studying Chinese social media, interviewing in Mandarin, transcribing and analysing in Sweden, Denmark and Norway, and, in addition, doing participant observation in the regional tourism industry in Southern Norway, testing experiences and formulating the pamphlet: *Journey to the North* (view attachment 5). PhD Mikaela Vasstrøm, senior researcher, and BA Even Fuglestad, assistant, Agder Research, Kristiansand, Norway, have helped to coordinate and execute interviews and field work in the regional tourism industry.

³² Please view attachment 1 & 3 for interview-questions with reception-apparatus and business to business related activities.

the potentials and work strategically towards this market – what could future China efforts be?

Doing focus group interviews³³

In addition, 35 Chinese technical visitors were identified and group-interviewed in 2014. They were presented touristic pictures of different countryside experiences (e.g. visiting cultural history museums; doing nature-based activities; coastal, farm, mountain and cabin-life, self-drive and camping in the countryside and photos of food, festivals and shopping). They were invited to freely elaborate and associate about their own experiences, the (lack of) accessibility to and information about the places; their likes and dislikes.

The interview group of well-educated technical visitors mainly worked at the universities and in larger companies such as the oil and gas industry in Norway and in the computer and telecom industry in Sweden. The interviews showed the Chinese consumer's lifestyles: habits, routines, age, gender and (ethnic) culture and how these positions affected leisure experiences and preferences.³⁴ In the interviews, a strong principle was uttered: all family-members – child, grandmother, grandfather, mother and father – wanted to participate in the same activities – for example fishing, sailing, berry-picking or cooking. The Western perception of e.g. gender and age was not similar to the Chinese perceptions. No barrier for the entire family to participate in the same activity was established. On the contrary – they wanted to do things together and interact in fun and educational ways.

Interviewing Chinese technical visitors with a first-hand experience on the region's touristic offers and their 'foreign' perception of the everyday-life was relevant: How was leisure experiences valued and handled by the visitors and how would they improve or change the travel-products, services and infra-structure if they were offered the opportunity?

³³ Please view attachment 2 for interview-questions with technical visitors.

³⁴ Mariampolski, Hy 2006:51: *Ethnography for Marketers. A Guide to Consumer Immersion*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

The technical travellers' perceptions of the region were both critical and flattering and in this sense very useful when setting out to customise the region to a new consumer-segments' expectations and standards.

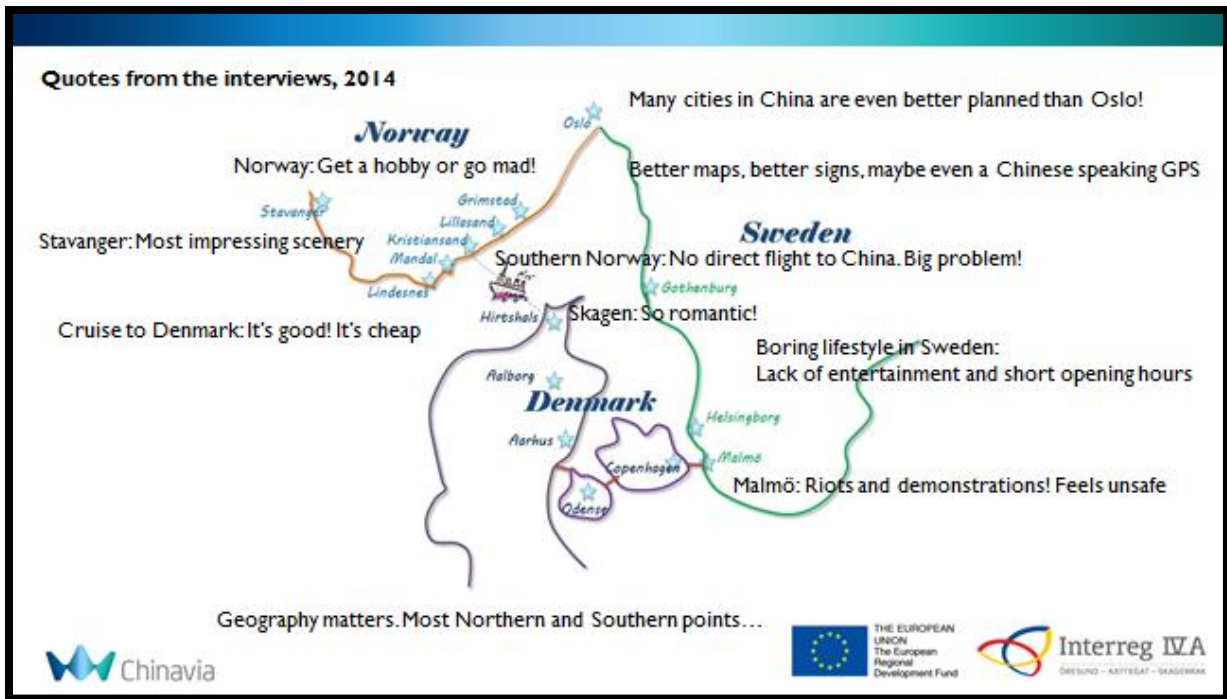


Illustration: The interviewed Chinese visitors' version of the ØKS-region map. **Source:** Screen-shot of Kjær, Sarah Holst 2014: Future China efforts in the region. An analysis of regional potential and future trends in the context of Chinese tourism and travel. *Chinavia II. Partnermeeting, October 29th, 2014.* Presentation.

Total number of informants, qualitative interview

Norway: Regional tourism- and experience and 'traditional' industry : 6

Reception apparatus (cruise, guides, Visit Norway): 6

Chinese Technical visitors: 16 (interviewed in English and Mandarin)

Sweden: Regional tourism- and experience and 'traditional' industry and official reception apparatus: 3

Chinese Technical visitors: 8 (Interviewed in English and Mandarin)

Denmark: Regional tourism- and experience and 'traditional' industry: 4

Chinese Technical visitors/Chinese tourists: 11 (Interviewed in English and Mandarin)

Tourism-images

The methodological approach of the group-interviews with the Chinese technical visitors was to explore the match between Scandinavian things and Chinese taste by conducting the interview around professional tourism photos. The research team and I thus interviewed in English and Mandarin showing tourism pictures of the Norwegian and Swedish regional countryside with their particular characteristics of farmland, ocean life, mountainscapes and rural surroundings.

We borrowed commercial tourism-pictures from the Chinavia II project-partners and the illustrations are part of the regular tourism marketing in – and of - the region. What first became clear was that there were no Asian-looking people in the pictures. The regular campaigns were not marketing a Chinese journey to the North.

In the interviews, we hence presented around 40 photos of e.g. shopping by Scandinavian women with shopping bags from the Danish clothing-company Noa Noa; we showed them pictures of yellow rape flower fields in Sweden. Blond, nuclear family members were walking, fishing, rafting, hiking, camping, going to the light house, attending crab festivals and dressing up at national holidays in regional folk costumes. The Chinese informants were shown images of Absolut Vodka, Saab cars, Myseost (Norwegian brown cheese) and Waffles, they were presented with pictures of the Scandinavian royal families – and the likings of the Nordic democratic model was discussed. There were pictures of camping and cabin life and we discussed infra-structure, roads, ferries and public transportation.



Illustration: A sample of tourism pictures which were presented to the Chinese interviewees. **Source:** marketing material, Innovation Norway.

Conference and workshop

In relation to the research project, and from the 11th -14th of June 2014, a conference and a workshop: “Scandinavian Things and Chinese Taste” were held. Student, researchers and stakeholder participated. The 29th of October 2014 a partner-meeting and a workshop-day were furthermore held. Here the preliminary research-results were given, analysed and discussed. In addition, comments by the project’s strategic advisor were presented for Chinavia II partners and stakeholders.

The research project furthermore was about creating a basis for further strategic developments by establishing a knowledge panel consisting of representatives of the ØKS-region’s key knowledge institutions. Thus, researchers from Aalborg University, Tourism Research Unit, Department of Culture and Global Studies; Lund University, Dep. of Cultural

Sciences, MACA; CBS, Center for Leisure and Culture Services Research; University of Agder, Bachelor's Programme in Tourism Management; Agder Research, Department of Innovation have been participating in the conference and workshop-activities in order to ensure the spread of knowledge to the Chinavia II project's stakeholders.³⁵



Illustration: Chinavia II Workshop, Scandinavian Things and Chinese Taste. Nordatlantens brygge, Copenhagen. **Source:** Sarah Holst Kjær, 2014.

The workshop was meant as a public-outreach event, sharing knowledge. Becoming China-ready is in the interest of many young students and they were invited to participate. They mostly came from tourism management and culture disciplines. Thus, besides the Chinavia II stakeholders and researchers, students from Aalborg University, Lund University, The University of Copenhagen, The University of Agder and The University of Tromsø actively approached the theme.

The workshop and conference provided insight into the cultural theme on how regions in Scandinavia can relate to new global tourism markets, creating Chinese-Scandinavian tourism strategies and developing Chinese consumer-customised experience products. Furthermore the workshop was meant to investigate how to engage with and create new tourism markets by using ethnographic method, e.g. doing tourism business ethnography and business-

³⁵ Please view attachment 6.

interviews; make use of images and association games in ethnographic field with tourists and undertake critical cultural analysis of field work data. The students worked with doing street-interviews³⁶ with Chinese tourists at different urban attractions in Copenhagen.

Places of street-interviews

The little mermaid

Christiansborg Palace

Nyhavn

Strøget (main shopping street)

A bus stop nearby Christianborg Palace

Christiana

Havnebussen

Lego Shop

Tivoli

None of these attractions are analysed in this report, since they are urban attractions and this report only focus on rural development. Nonetheless, we found that even in larger cities with more advanced routines in handling Chinese tourists there is still a need for better communication, maps, signs, storytelling and things to shop.

³⁶ Please view attachment 4 for interview-questions.

ANALYTICAL CONCEPTS

Realities

Scandinavia – this insignificant and unknown place of the North – it turned out, when interviewing the Chinese technical visitors - was experienced along the lines of two different sets of sensibilities: as the most boring, cold and unsophisticated place they had ever experienced and as a place pure, clean and balanced. In other words, there was room for destination development.

One female biologist exclaimed: It is so boring here. Get a hobby or go mad! A male engineer said: I really want to know more about culture. But the Scandinavians cannot be very proud of their heritage, because nowhere am I able to read about it on the web - neither in English or Mandarin; the museums are never open, and it is impossible to find out which bus will take you there. Some visitors would define Scandinavia as “cold and primitive” and continued: who would ever want to live here?! One would soften the opinion and say: it isn't as cold as I expected. All informants focused on the “cute wooden houses” – exotic because everything is built of stone in China – but was the houses comfortable to stay in, they would ask. They all kept coming back to their experiences with nature – both the flat Øresund-region farm land – which felt familiar - and the mountain landscape: I have never seen such thick snow before, as one said, experiencing a ski-destination in Southern Norway.

All in all Scandinavia – in the Chinese perception “the North” – was understood as “clean” with “fresh air”, “ecological environment was quite good” they explained and contextualised: “blue sky is rare in China”. One informant said: strangers will smile to you, others focused on the lack of smiles: No one ever smiles.

What is clear from these utterances is that the Chinese experience of Scandinavia had variations, but some Chinese (cultural/geographical/social) perceptions, such as the cold climate; (lack of) friendly attitudes; the cleanliness and the beauty of nature were consistent themes.

These statements were unprejudiced: they were lived, sensory approaches which originated from being bodily situated in (a strange) geography. Their wordings were based on

comparison – to other places in the world, better or worse, and in this sense the informants were experienced and held the exact view-points of a critical consumer that the tourism industry needs (but not necessarily wants) in order to develop high quality experience-products.

Happiness

In international surveys, Denmark has now for many years come out as the happiest nation in the world. From previous studies we learned that these surveys mean a lot in terms of branding the country.³⁷ Also the Chinese travellers are curious about what this means in practice: How is Danish lifestyle creating these feelings of happiness and what do they mean? In general, the Nordic democratic model also appeals to the Chinese and Scandinavia is considered a harmonious, balanced and safe region.³⁸

Although the concept of happiness can be viewed in many different ways, this curiosity is important when understanding the Chinese consumer – they too want to make the most of their lives and they understand traveling in Scandinavia as a way to perform the grand tour, becoming experienced, educated and transformed. Thus, in the analysis of the empirical material and case-studies we have tried to focus on how experiences, places and stories are being perceived and can be adjusted in order to fit the emotional, existential and social motives of the Chinese tourist.

Chinese travellers are relationships-oriented and ask: where and how can I nurse my social relationships in the best way? How is my child approached? Where can I socialise and have a good time? The focus on e.g. parenting is important when organising a sight and develop experiences. To the Chinese, family-tourism is about being providing for in caring surroundings. A tourism business, thus, should offer an attractive identity for the tourist in a particular setting. At its best, a business sells dreams of loving relationships and perfect lives made possible through friction-free leisure time.

³⁷ Kjær, Sarah Holst 2010: Den emotionelle storby. In: Jahn Thon & Roy Eriksen (eds.): *Hvem eier byen? Tekst, plan og historie*, Oslo: Novus Forlag, 127-141.

³⁸ Anne-Marie Westerby 2013:13: *Huan-ying. Få nøglen til et godt værtskab på kinesisk. Fakta. Gode råd. Inspiration*. Oplevelsernes Academy. December, 2013. Report.

From the interviews and previous studies we in addition learned that Chinese feelings of happiness is also produced by feelings of confidence – safety and security and personal autonomy – being able to choose where, when and how to go. These feelings can too be enhanced by the organisation of better communication, information, transparency and easiness of accessing infra-structure. Being more aware of assisting the Chinese tourists in this way will generate another highly important aspect of Chinese happiness, namely the control over one’s own life. Later on we will show how such feelings can be stimulated via travel products.

Affinity³⁹

Because experience-products are very expensive to produce, especially if they are designed to a new market, it is important to focus on what the industry already offers and re-arrange it in relevant ways.

“Affinity” can be described as a natural liking and sympathy for something. The term can single out values or things people have in common. In this context, the concept helped us narrow down what we already offered in the tourism industry which they would want. Their desire for experience, taste, things to do and explore, needed to be matched with the performances of the destination. The Danish ethnologist Carina Ren has done studies on Chinese tourists in Scandinavian contexts. From the literature, she states that the grand tour is what the individual traveller seek:

Travelling is a learning journey. I can experience doing something new. [...] I am proud to be able to share those experiences. It is a kind of ‘showing-off’ when I can label myself an experienced traveller [...] I feel more confident travelling with Westerners, firstly, because I can speak English and I can be a translator for them. I have good knowledge of the locals, so I am more confident.⁴⁰

³⁹ This section is based on Ren, Carina 2014: Becoming China-Ready in the Scandinavian Tourism Industry. What does ‘China’ mean? What does ‘ready’ mean? *Scandinavian Things and Chinese Taste. Interregional Chinavia II Conference with workshop*, Copenhagen, 13th of June 2014. Presentation; Ren, Carina 2014: Methods of Association Games in Ethnographic Field Work. Tourism images and Chinese-Scandinavian differences of association. *Scandinavian Things and Chinese Taste. Interregional Chinavia II Conference with workshop*, Copenhagen, 14th of June 2014. Presentation.

⁴⁰ Bui, Huong T., Wilkins, Hugh C. & Lee, Young-Sook 2013.42: The ‘Imagined West’ of Young Independent Travellers from Asia, *Annals of Leisure Research* 16 (2): 130–48.

From Ren's interviews, she furthermore found that Chinese people appreciate values in the Scandinavian society such as the high quality of life, that there is a focus on personal development, the societies are safe, although the sense of security needs to be verbalised even more. In addition, she came to the result that her informants viewed the Scandinavian local culture and lifestyle as very authentic – often 'the Nordic family' in public space became the symbol on the good quality of life, spending time on social interaction and being 'real'. When it came to the environment, Ren found that the pure and unpolluted environment,⁴¹ but also 'the road less travelled' were highly appreciated.

Things we have that they want

Quality of life

Personal development

Safety/security

Authenticity/Local culture & people

Road less travelled

Unpollutedness

This affinity-list has been the point of departure when testing which kind of commodities, activities and places would be worth developing. If we – in our research – found that an experience had the quality of being an affinity, and if we had at least one - or more - documented correspondence(s) and relation(s) in e.g. previous research; from social media; or from our interviews with the Chinese informants, then we would suggest investigating it as a possible customised experience-product.

Examples of possible experience-products, based on Scandinavian potential and Chinese preference, are, something as far apart as the Norwegian author Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) and the micro beer-brewery Nøgne Ø:

⁴¹ Ren, Carina *no year: Spinning Wheels. En kvalitativ evalueringsrapport*. Syddansk universitet, Center for Turisme, Innovation og Kultur. Report



Illustration: Example of a correspondence between Norwegian author Henrik Ibsen and a Chinese interpretation of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879). This piece has been played in theatres for 100 years in China, and is still performed on stage. **Source:** www.chncpa.org/cns/subsite/wozj2014/index.html



Illustration: Example of a correspondence between the Norwegian brewery Nøgne Ø and A beer-festival in Shanghai, China, May, 2014. **Source:** www.imbeer.com/news/8848.html

Storytelling

“Storytelling” can be fined as a marketing tool where different kind of emotions, feelings and experiences generates the centre of attention. Storytelling thus implies knowing the audience’ sophisticated needs, educational desires and cultural preconceptions. Visualisations and visual descriptions are as important as information. Presenting the ideals of e.g. the ideal family life through a vacation should be exemplified through carefully chosen dramas and situations.⁴²

What we learned from previous research and the collected empirical data is that countryside sensations and outdoor activities in many ways were understood and felt as fresh and healthy but also cold and to some extend unsafe, because the place has few people. In a storytelling-perspective these perceptions needs to be rewritten and described with appealing and/or recognisable sensory modalities collected from Chinese practice and mentality. This rewriting does not happen by itself. The industry’s entire value-chain should be aware of how unproductive conditions – such as empty places - can be retold in more suitable ways.

One example of relevant Norwegian storytelling in a Chinese perspective could be the story of the young chess player Magnus Carlsen: He is young, smart, good looking, thinks a healthy diet is essential for his outstanding performances and he loves Chinese food. As a celebrity he represents many values of Chinese youngsters: wealth, health,, education and good relations.⁴³

⁴² Hjemdahl, Kirsti Mathiesen 2003: *Tur-retur temapark. Oppdragelse, opplevelse, kommers.* Kristiansand: Høyskoleforlaget.

⁴³ Ooi, Can-Seng 2014: *Understanding Chinese Tourists. Examples of Scandinavian things. Scandinavian Things and Chinese Taste. Interregional Chinavia II Conference with workshop, Copenhagen, 13th of June 2014. Presentation.*



Illustration: Norwegian chess-champion Magnus Carlsen as an example of relevant storytelling. **Source:** Financial Times/Can Seng Ooi.

'The North' is the Chinese imagination or stylistic figure of the Nordic and Scandinavian geography. Up to now, many do not perceive the region as three (or more) different countries – they just perceive the region as being cold, natural and far away. From a tourism industry perspective, this perception provides possibilities of materialising and productifying the destination as pure, fresh and deep-rooted. The regional elements which do not fit into this Chinese imagination of the North should be avoided. In order to create an appealing

perceptual system, producing a touristic narrative means carefully choosing parts of the Scandinavian culture and landscape which can make up for the entirety, leaving aside the irrelevant reality and complexity of the (un)beautiful everyday life.

Many regional tourism businesses are hard-working, family-based and driven by entrepreneurial ambitions. A company's history and its values are very important in China. When Chinese go abroad, they want to learn more about the businesses they engage with. This interest can easily, for each business, become an encouragement to tell their story and provide a genealogy of e.g. how old the company is; how it was established and why it is special.⁴⁴ The story of a business is thus not only of interest to the segment of technical visitors: it appeals to the Chinese travellers in general and is a great way to establish loyalty and reciprocity.⁴⁵ Chinese guests will therefore always be interested in reading or hearing about the success of the business, how it has created wealth and status for the family and the local community, how the business has e.g. overcome difficulties by being patient, quick to act or to maintain enthusiasm.⁴⁶

In a marketing-perspective, it is thus important that presentations and pictures create expectations on what to do at a location. What is surprising in China tourist studies is that what Westerners think of as for example a good photo-opportunity is not necessarily what Chinese tourists find appealing. Some hotels may forget to tell that their rooms have a great see-view and some restaurants are not aware to place Chinese guests by the window for a better outlook.

Something which is apparent and taken for granted by us, might be special and exotic in the eyes of the Chinese. Things should not only be presented with pictures - a great view, a sight, and attraction a transportation-route, a food-dish - they should also be thoroughly described, using the knowledge on the Chinese preference and mentality as a reference-point. It is important to both illustrate and narrate so that the Chinese tourists can imagine

⁴⁴ Mossberg, Lena & Johansen, Erik Nissen 2008: *Storytelling. Markedsføring i oplevelsesindustrien*. Bergen: Fakbokforlaget.

⁴⁵ *Værtskab på kinesisk 2.0: Fyn gennem kinesiske briller*. Oplevelsernes Academy, 2014, 4. Report. (www.udviklingfyn.dk/sites/default/files/billeder/Turisme/den_generelle_rapport_oa_er_fyn_klar_til_kina.pdf).

⁴⁶ Susanto, A. B. & Susanto Patricia 2013:22-23: *The Dragon Network. Inside Stories of the Most Successful Chinese Family Businesses*. Singapore: Bloomberg Press.

themselves in the surroundings. Thus, having Chinese models in the picture and having a descriptive guidance to the important must-sees is a vital part of building an appealing story of the North.

REGIONAL POTENTIAL

Tourism as regional growth

In the perspective of experience economy, tourism is an important source of income to “marginal regions where other types of economic activity are difficult”. These areas are frequently defined as mountain-areas, islands, coast-lines and are often places of natural beauty. In specialized regions with high-education jobs, tourism- and service-related jobs can be regarded as a way to provide an interesting leisure life for the knowledge workers. If the region does not have specialized employment, the tourism industry is instead viewed as a way to transform the primary industry into experience products.⁴⁷

The number of Chinese tourists is still small compared to the region’s neighboring markets. Still, during the last years, the trends and statistics predict that Chinese tourists will soon be in the habit of travelling frequently – also to Scandinavia. If the region want to part of the “first wave” of group- and individual travelers, a targeted approach is needed – this means understanding the Chinese travel motivations, habits and dreams and getting the local reception-apparatus ready to facilitate on the basis of collaboration in the entire value chain. Group travelers are easier to provide experience-package products for, while individual travelers are easier to handle and do most of ‘the work’ themselves, planning and organising.⁴⁸

Wise shoppers or great spenders?

The outbound tourist has, in general, the same level of wealth at the age of forty as Westerners’ have at the age of sixty. All research shows that Chinese travellers have shopping for luxury goods ‘made in Europe’ on top of their activity-list. Group travellers are bigger spenders than individual travellers who travel for a longer period of time, but on a budget. Comparing to other nationalities Chinese tourists spend the most: from a Danish survey the figure was 1800 DKR pr. day. This amount is five times higher than the German

⁴⁷Cooper, Chris 2012:68: *Essentials of Tourism*. Harlow: Pearson Educational Limited.

⁴⁸ *Værtskab på kinesisk 2.0: Fyn gennem kinesiske briller*. Oplevelsernes Academy, 2014, page 8, 10.

Report. Please view:

www.udviklingfyn.dk/sites/default/files/billeder/Turisme/den_generelle_rapport_oa_er_fyn_klar_til_kina.pdf

tourist visiting Denmark.⁴⁹ In a 2010-survey - and in order to compare - the town of Kristiansand (population 85.000) in Southern Norway expected each arriving cruise-passenger – some of them Chinese - to spend between 500-750 NOK pr. day.⁵⁰ While accommodation is probably included in the first figure and not in the last, and while the first figure is an average of shopping both in the capital and doing day-trips to the countryside, there is still room for more spending in smaller, regional towns.

But what should the Chinese traveller shop for? The need to work strategically in order to find the right goods to promote, instead of the initially desired luxury goods, means turning Chinese habits and values into an advantage in the regional retail-industry. It is probably impossible for the regions to attract the high-end department stores and if they did, they would – compared to the shopping opportunities in the big cities of China and Europe – still be far too modest.



Illustration: High-end luxury retail is most likely unrealistic in smaller towns. **Source:** Sarah Holst Kjær, 2014.

⁴⁹ *Værtskab på kinesisk 2.0: Fyn gennem kinesiske briller*. Oplevelsernes Academy, 2014, page 8. Report. Please view: www.udviklingfyn.dk/sites/default/files/billeder/Turisme/den_generelle_rapport_oa_er_fyn_klar_til_kina.pdf

⁵⁰ Refseth, Aud: *Pengsterke cruise-turister*. NRK Sørlandet, September 7th 2010. Please view: <http://www.nrk.no/sorlandet/turister-legger-igjen-penger-1.7281738>

Cultural tourists

Most of the Chinese tourists have a university degree, more women than men travel and 90 percent of the Chinese who visit Europe visit tourist-attractions. 57 percent visit museums and exhibitions. Places on the Unesco World Heritage list (nature and culture) are very popular, but Chinese also travel to experience people, lifestyle and everyday culture. As previously mentioned, the travel mentality is often defined as the Chinese doing the grand tour⁵¹ which means wanting to get the most out of the trip, learning about culture, becoming experienced, improving one's health, becoming intellectually challenged and emotionally stimulated. In the interviews and case studies done, the trend of wanting to engage in local culture was also found. The informants could say:

Festivals mean people!

I would like to see beautiful folk costumes

I want my family to visit on National Day

Culture, history and tradition are very exiting

It is difficult to visit museums – they are never open

No information available!

In e.g. Chinese travel blogs we found examples of 'grand tour behaviour' for instance that the Chinese who had travelled individually in Norway was equipped with the novel *Norwegian Wood* (1987) by the Japanese author Haruki Murakami. Although the title refers to the Beatles song – and only indirectly to Norway – this is an example of how the Chinese traveller seeks for relevant reference-points and meaningful intellectual stimulation during their tour.

⁵¹ Anne-Marie Westerby 2013:13: *Huan-ying. Få nøglen til et godt værtskab på kinesisk. Fakta. Gode råd. Inspiration*. Oplevelsernes Academy. December, 2013. Report.



Illustration: Chinese traveller in Norwegian train with the book-cover of *Norwegian Wood* (1987) by Haruki Murakami. **Source:** Unknown Chinese social media photo, 2014.

Experience test-tour

In our ethnographic research, we wanted to approach the value-chain's different businesses in the most naturalistic way, finding out the regional potential of approaching the Chinese market. Focusing on the total experience, from leaving home to returning home again, the entire journey should, at its best, be well-designed, thought-trough and themed as a learning opportunity – as a grand tour.

We 'hung out' like tourists would do, doing participant-observation and looking for ways to adjust the experience at a place in order to fit the ideals of a Chinese total experience, meaning having a busy schedule with access to the right kind of food, transport and experiences, preferably doing more countries in one journey.

In the interviews, a young man and telecom-employee explained: "We Chinese are more in balance between entertainment and safety. [...] The type of food is not rich here. My expectation of food of Northern Europe is the lowest. Travelling in this region, I mainly have

fast food, such as falafel and pizza. Of course when firstly arriving in a new country, I want to try something new, but after a while, I will switch back to Chinese food. [...] The public transport here is really... it is not like in China, you can take buses every 5 minutes. Here the buses come every 20-30 minutes. At weekend the buses come one hour once”.

It is obvious from this statement that for a Chinese visitor to even get to the point of experiencing and transforming oneself, doing a grand tour, many barriers need to be overcome and a lot of guidance need to be done.

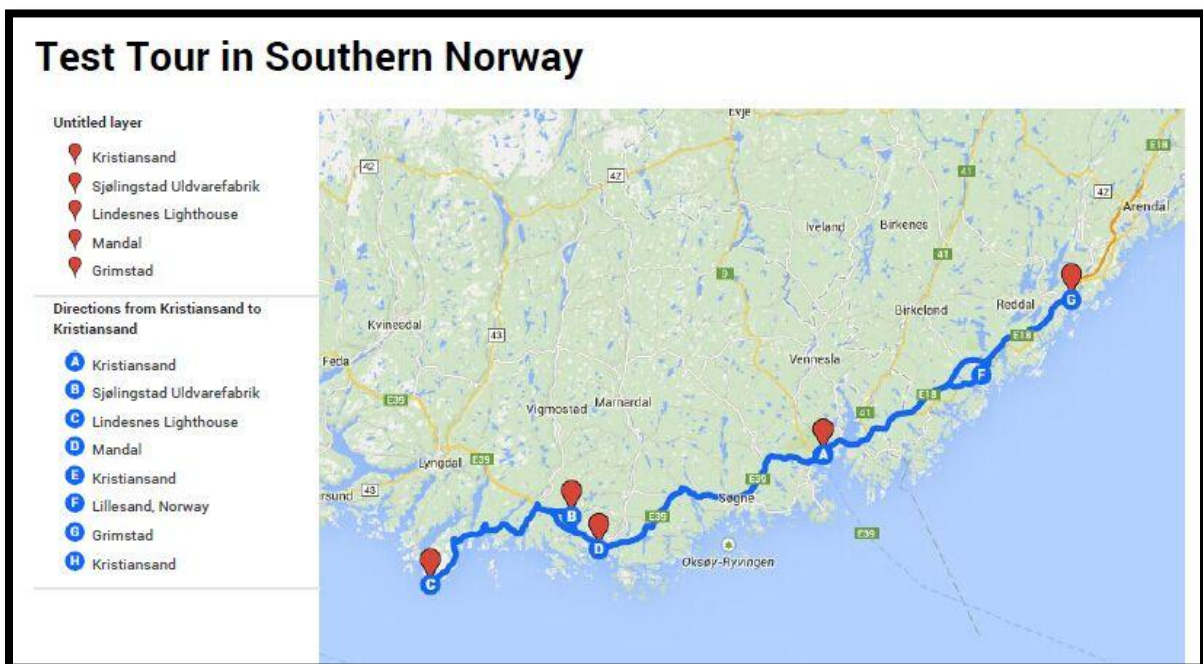


Illustration: The experience test-tour, Southern Norway. June 23rd – 24th 2014. **Source:** Screenshot of Cai, Daisy & Liu, Rui 2014: Journey to the North. *Chinavia II. Partnermeeting, October 29th, 2014.* Presentation.

List of observed attractions in Southern Norway

- Kjevik Airport
- Yess Hotel
- Sjølingstad Wool Factory (guided tour)
- Lindesnes Lighthouse
- Mandal tourist office
- Kristiansand tourist office
- Nøgne Ø Brewery (guided tour)
- Bjellestrand Gård (farm)
- Food Asylum (restaurant)
- Markensgate (Shopping Street)
- Posebyen (cultural heritage town area)
- Kilden Theatre House/Modern architecture

Fiskebrygga (fish market)
Uranienborg, Mandal
Ibsen's café, Grimstad
Ibsen's museum, Grimstad

We focussed on the totality of the experience and asked these questions when we did our field work:

- A Chinese understanding of service and information?
- A Chinese preference to get absorbed in an appealing situation and 'live-feeling'?
- A learning-potential in stories of the place?

The ethnographic study showed that attractions can learn more about consumer behaviour and discover useful angles to sharpen the story in order to communicate more directly to the Chinese traveller.

Later on in the report, we will return the Lindesnes Lighthouse case because of its learning-potentials. Here the experience-tour will be summed up. Not all information will be extracted – but from the field work some starting points on how the businesses can become more China ready when offering experiences to this market, will be suggested.

From Daisy and Rui's field work diary (June the 23rd-24th, 2014):

We learned that the shop Deli De Luca in **Kjevik Airport** is known amongst the Chinese travellers as the tax-refund place and that the airport-bus schedule is not in English. We considered **Yess Hotel's** breakfast-buffet to be an interesting place of local food-product placement and we wanted to buy the brown cheese ("myseost") home with us – we would have wanted more local food products displayed and introduced at the breakfast buffet and we liked that we could get free tea and hot water all day. Arriving at the city hall square in Kristiansand we – as other Chinese tourists – found the Kristiansand Cathedral a good photo-opportunity – we do not know much about church buildings and would like to learn more. The **Kristiansand tourist office'** location was great – but we couldn't get any real advice on what was special in Kristiansand. We didn't find anything special to shop in the local shopping street of **Markensgate** – although we learned from our findings that the clothing line Moods of Norway also sold in one of the shops, amongst the local Chinese, is regarded a very good quality. In the souvenir-shops we found the Norwegian forest creatures – 'trolls' - and had no idea what they were. Many items were overpriced and made in China – this was not appealing to us. The regular supermarkets interested us though – we wanted to buy food-products to babies and local health-products, fish oil, to ourselves. The area of **Posebyen** – old wooden houses – was very interesting since there are no wooden houses in China where everything is built in stone. We wanted to learn more about the

area, but there were no information. It rained and when we walked near the river Ottra and everything smelled of wood. This was a fresh and great sensory experience. The Japanese restaurant **Food Asylum** was very appealing to us and we went there several times. We liked that the menu had pictures. We also heard about some fish-cakes at the fish-market [**Fiskebrygga**] which we wanted to try, but the directions from the tourism office were difficult to follow. **Kilden Theatre House** was beautiful but there was not much there and no information was offered in order to learn more about the building. At **Sjølingstad Wool Factory** – a museum factory – we ate in a small cafeteria. Nearby, we saw a neighbourhood of white wooden houses. **Lindesnes Lighthouse** was very innovative on coastal food culture – although the products didn't have labels in English. The location was itself a selling point. There was lack of information but this place felt like a hidden attraction. Between **Lindesnes Lighthouse** and Kristiansand **Sjølingstad** factory was a good place to stop. We went on a tour in the factory which lasted about an hour. The souvenir shop sold wool blankets ranging from 200 up to 2000 NOK. These blankets were very exceptional and we wanted to buy the whole shop. The potential demand for shopping wool product could be very high among Chinese tourists, because of the good storytelling, during the tour, but also because of the high quality and sustainable material. The tour was a great sensory experience: Visitors can experience the whole process from raw material to the final product, so that they can build up the connection with the product and therefore trust its quality. It takes around one year to produce one wool blanket because of the traditional handcrafted technique, which is very time-consuming, but at the same time it guarantees its uniqueness, professionalism and quality. We also learned that **Sjølingstad Wool Factory** is one of the few factories which are authorised to produce Norwegian national costumes, which makes the factory and its product very prestigious. Here the Chinese consumers' can really get 'value for money' and have their shopping habit for souvenirs stimulated. In addition, the visit was very educational: during the tour, visitors have the opportunity to try out those traditional machines several times to feel how they work, which allows visitors to actively engage. Both adults and children will find this interesting. The factory would be great for tour-groups although we would be afraid that the shop would be emptied in a very short time. The factory-tour should be more concise and organised in case of more people. Mandal felt like a typical Norwegian coastal town with boats along the seaside. A modern bridge linked the old town and the new town, with a big orange ball situated on the sea. The staff at **Mandal tourist office** was able to give us some good advice on where to go and where to eat. The restaurant we tried offered good seafood at a reasonable price. We went to **Uranienborg**: a small hill with a pavilion on top, from where people can view the whole town. Mandal could be a good stop on the road, where people can take some rest from driving. Therefore, restaurants at this place are essential in attracting travellers. The whole town was a bit bland: it is hard to distinguish from other Norwegian towns, besides perhaps the orange ball. The place can be included in a package tour, but only as an eating place. At **Nøgne Ø** Brewery we attended a two-hour tour. The tour guide presented with great passion and patience. From the moment we entered the factory, the sensory experience never stopped: From the smell of the malt to the sound of the machine, from the taste of barley to the view of the assembly-line. The guided tour ended at a small counter where visitors can buy beers and brewery kit. The counter was just as a normal cashier like those in the local grocery store. By the entrance near the counter, there was a glass window overlooking the whole assembly-line. They never kept secrets to customers, we learned from the guide, and this to us showed their confidence and their willingness to share. Attracting Chinese customers, the brand needs to be presented in more elaborated ways: The counter could be better organised. **Nøgne Ø**'s certificates and trophies should be

arranged like a small exhibition and the story of their fame should be presented through the prices they have won around the world: A map could show where they have triumphed and be a way to organise the exhibit. At **Ibsen's café** in Grimstad, we suddenly realised that we had read *A Dolls' House* – the play by Henrik Ibsen, back in high school. Ibsen's Chinese name is Yi Bu Sheng. We then walked across the street to **Ibsen's Museum**. The museum was sort of a walk-around-yourself-and-read experience, but one of the employees offered to walk around with us and tell us the story of Ibsen in Grimstad. We would definitely like to see Grimstad as “Ibsen's home” in Norway. Upscale the activities and promote Ibsen's café, Ibsen's Museum and even the old pharmacy where Ibsen worked. Connect all the places that can be related to Ibsen. More attractions need to be excavated to enrich the narrative! It could be quite the challenge for an unfamiliar tourist to find **Bjellandstrand Gård** – and we almost didn't. There are no signs, and it is not an obvious location to find.

This extract from the ethnographic observations suggests small pieces of advice on how to make the experiences, places and information more transparent. From the description we can excavate and highlight some affinities – e.g. the fish cake, Ibsen's Home, the wool blankets – and enhance the story about them in order to organise what could quickly – and to the inexperienced traveller - become untidy impressions.

Suggesting three experience products

On the basis of our empirical collections and of the fact that impressions needs to be organised, categorised and themed in China-friendly ways, we here suggest how the region on the level of experience could package ‘all that there is’.

Journey to the North – please view attachment 5 - is our collecting metaphor and a pamphlet which concretise the research team's effort in instrumentalising the empirical information, the theoretical knowledge, the different cases and comparative examples into three different experience products of the Scandinavian countryside.

The experiences are based on ‘what we have’ and in this sense these affinities do not have to be invented or created from scratch, they only need to be repackaged, renarrated and reassembled into new travel-products.

The products could be marketed as *Journey to the North* – a title which to the Chinese consumer associates a well-known story – ‘Journey to the West’. The experience products can be combined in different ways since they belong to the same geography. In this sense the

traveler can shorten or prolong the vacation. The packages can also be used by both group- and individual travelers.

The storytelling in the pamphlet is based on the rhetorical techniques of personal language, authentic adventures and ‘word of mouth’. The language is furthermore descriptive and telling a ‘coming of age’ story which correspond with the individual traveler’s desire for the grand tour. The genre of this small piece of travel literature is organised through self-drive on a road less travelled.

In the pamphlet, the selected experiences are organised through three travel thematics. The first package is inspired by literature- and culture-based tourism; the second is produced via ideas of sustainable and nature-based, farm, coastal and activity-based tourism; and the third is developed through educational concepts often used in cultural exchange travel and business to business travel.

Journey to the North

Travel package 1. Fairytale, tradition and Nordic Writers

Cultural heritage and history

Royalty and democracy

What is a troll?

Ethnographic Museums

Folklore and nationality

Costumes and handcraft

Festivals

Nature and spirits

Destinations of Henrik Ibsen, H.C. Andersen, Astrid Lindgren

Travel package 2. The Blue North

‘Blue is the new Green’

Cabin life

Ambience and land of freshness

Activities (fishing, rafting, cycling, cooking and picking fruits – not vegetables)

Health

Fish- and sea food dining

Mountain and forest

Coastlife and lighthouses

Health promoting souvenirs such as fish-oil, sea-weed and pure food and silverware to babies

Travel package 3. 'Welfare' Future

Welfare and fairytales

Tradition and future

Visiting factories, e.g. breweries, wool-factories

Farm-experiences (cooking lessons)

Short travelled food products

Everyday ambience – Scandinavian families socialising in public space – e.g. playgrounds and parks

Peaceful living

Recycling

Balance and consensus – the Nordic model

List over appealing 'raw' products

Many of the things the Chinese travellers' desired were connected to issues of quality, health, food-safety and caring the child. This list of products is what the informants stated as having great China-related potential.

Bottled fish oil

Milk powder

Health related things, e.g. sea-weed, fruit, water, plants and herbs

Helly Hansen

Ecco shoes

Smoked salmon in airtight package

Silverware

Baby-related items, such as Stokke and BRIO

Lego

Moods of Norway clothing line

Myseost (brown cheese)

These preferences are helpful if the regional businesses decide to do product-development: Products are in themselves not commodities. We will discuss the case of Lindesnes

Lighthouse later, since they have worked with refining raw products, here it is just important to point out that a raw product needs to go through several processes in order to become a commodity. In the countryside, and in the practice of farming, fishing and household-production this process is important: One can change a not-so-precious-material into a story, a longing, a token of desire like the souvenir is. On a small scale, an item can brand one's business or an entire destination, but smart product-development can also be a path-creator for a new market like the Chinese.

The 'raw' products, which the travellers preferred when being in the countryside, really makes it necessary to find out how the local industry – to the fullest – can organise some form of consumption around it. Getting 'new money' into the economy directly through tourism is one possibility, but tourism can also work as cultural exchange supporting other types of business-activities.

Business to business

This section is going to focus on how the regional actors approached the Chinese market in e.g. business-to-business relations and in more official handlings of Chinese visitors in the touristic reception-apparatus. How did the regional tourism industry approach the predictions of a new market opportunity?

The countryside - the North - does not have to be 'the best', measured against other similar regions which only we – and definitely not the Chinese consumers - know about. It does not have to compete with the cities. It just need to be the first to take the business opportunity; understand how to produce selective products and an intellectual storyline, and, by doing this setting the scene. The art of adapting a business to a certain market is a process of foregrounding and back-grounding certain elements in a story – not everything are important. But what is? Monica Lunøe Rand, the head of tourism destination management in the town of Arendal - another large coastal town in the Southern part of Norway – was able to see some reasons for why a business to business relationship between Norway and China could be realistic:

We have – to the best of my knowledge - no Chinese tourists arriving on cruise ships.

The port authorities get the passenger list right before arrival. There are no Chinese ships registered in our town's port. We have never had a request on guiding and we do not have any tourism-information written in Mandarin. There are – as far as I know - no tour operators working towards the Chinese market. The county council has not been focusing on this market, but it might happen in the future since several companies - e.g. National Oil Well, Aker Pusnes/MacGregor, Teamtec - in our region, either are owned by, or have very close business relations with, Chinese industries.⁵²

The head of tourism destination management viewed the future visitors in the perspective of already established business-relations. Scandinavian-Chinese relations were thus not just working on a touristic level but could also affect the 'traditional' industry. Aiming at the Chinese market might be viewed on a larger scale – as an official way to do culture and business exchange. When we interviewed the manager of the Kristiansand Chamber of Commerce and responsible for international business, Ole-Petter Sunde,⁵³ he explained:

At the moment the chamber of commerce does not give China a particular focus, but I plan to make it a theme in the nearest future. There are quite a lot of relations in the region. Technological companies, sport chains, graphic companies – some have Chinese owners. I thought we were too different to establish business-relations and the opposite has happened: The Chinese have done massive investments here. China is also beginning to become a high-cost country. Those, who succeed in China, know a lot about China. Trust is very important. In my work we try to attract high-competence migrant workers - technical visitors – especially within the oil and gas sector. The Chinese company owners are very interested in the local business life in general and of how to transfer knowledge and competences from here to China in order to do various construction projects. Many of the companies are world-wide businesses, so things are not so peaceful and quiet as it might seem. We have a lot to offer the businesses in terms of leisure-activities, but it is a challenge to communicate our assets. The biggest challenge in recruiting and keeping a foreign workforce is 'draw back' – the spouse doesn't get a job and wants to go home. People with a high education are often married to people with a high education and here there aren't maybe matching opportunities for both. The regional tourism strategy to work towards the segment of families and children is great for the industry, we think. We have to see to that family-life works in every aspect. Technical visitors do not just go home at night – they need something more. If I could decide, I think that all businesses should create leisure and culture programmes and experience packages for their technical visitors. This material would be useful, when we recruit future Chinese employees: before accepting the job, they would know what the family could do in its spare-time. At the local high-school the youngsters for instance take Chinese lessons. This is because their parents work in an international environment

⁵² Interview conducted in May, 2014.

⁵³ Interview conducted in June, 2014.

or because the young people themselves see that the Chinese market is interesting. We should also teach Chinese from an earlier stage, I think...

A different approach to the possible Chinese-Scandinavian relations was found when interviewing Senior Advisor for International relations, Per-Olof Persson,⁵⁴ Region Skåne, Sweden. Region Skåne deals with arranging Chinese visits to the public and private industries in the region. So far, these visiting delegations haven't had the opportunity of being able to see more of the Swedish country:

The visits from China I have been involved with have been 'official delegations'. Normally they come from the provinces (Guangdong, Tianjiin and Hong Kong). We already have established a contact with the government of the province. Usually our visitors are technical and the delegations are on a political or civil servant top level. We do not work with any travel agency or any consultants. We only respond to the relevant authorities from the province. The visits are often very short – a maximum of two days, more often one and a half day. Often the visits are thematic in very specific ways and are concerning the collaborations we have. We only have time to do business and we never arrange any 'pleasure-related' activities.

As it is stated in the literature and the empirical research Chinese students are already going to universities in the region. Their dream is to invite their parents to come for a visit. At some point in the future, maybe, there will be a cross-over between business-activities and student life. Delegations will probably prefer to see where they themselves studied as young people or where their children are studying now. In other words, mixing business with pleasure in the future will not be implausible.⁵⁵

Year one

In 2014, when this study was conducted, tourism and 'traditional' businesses had almost no experiences with Chinese tourists. As discussed, we contacted as many actors in the regional tourism industry in Southern Norway and Western Sweden which was possible within the timeframe of the project. We also held interviews with different areas of the tourism industry – marketers, guides and tourism offices; cruise line facilitators and tourism business owners. The purpose of the interviews was to establish a notion of 'year one' –

⁵⁴ Interview conducted in May, 2014.

⁵⁵ Petersen, Sanne Leuenhagen 2009: *Chinese Tourists' Travel motivations and their resultant preferred travel activities*. Dep. of International Tourism and Leisure Management: SDU Esbjerg. Thesis.

where were we in 2014 - in order to evaluate possible future strategies towards the Chinese tourist market. Thus, in order to understand how regional strategy could work, we wanted to know where the industry was headed and what the starting point was.

Based on the industry's limited experiences with this particular market, we learned that the countryside of Scandinavia couldn't – and shouldn't - compete with the experiences the Chinese already had at home. One Norwegian theme park owner said:

Have you travelled in China and have you visited all their magnificent sights, you will know that nothing in Scandinavia can compete with this. In this sense we are monkeys in the West. Manhattan is nothing! We cannot impress them with our cultural sights, factories, fine buildings or road constructions – they already have that on a much more sophisticated scale. But! They are not after, what they already have – they want something new.

“Strategies are all about attractions and destinations using the resources and variables they control (for example the organization and the product) in such a way that they achieve their goals and objectives. It is all about exploiting opportunities and neutralizing threats [...] this means being proactive and dynamic [...]” writes the English tourism management researcher John Swarbrooke.⁵⁶ In this way, he defines the fundamentals of a strategy: creating a goal and working towards it.

As we learned in the interviews on the business to business relations, there seemed to be many opportunities – the question was how to exploit them. Getting back to the theme park owner, first of all the Scandinavian countries should not, as he explained, compete with what the Chinese already had. Instead they should be offered something new. In his mind, the Chinese market was a great business opportunity which could be exploited. He continued:

If there is one group of tourists which is really important to customise for it is the Chinese. Really! [...] We had the Chinese ambassador visiting our business and had set the table for 50 guests inside the mountain here. We served plenty of fish and seafood and had planted 'friendship-trees' and lilies everywhere. It was all very beautiful and we were very pleased serving our guests. We tried to get to local

⁵⁶ Swarbrooke, John 2000:218: *The Development and Management of Visitor Attractions*. London: Elsevier.

newspaper to cover the event – but they were not interested. We posted a little on Facebook but could have had a lot more out of it, media-wise.

Establishing a year one, this tourism business owner had produced tourism products, using the local resources and market knowledge he had. Aiming at new customers, the event he had produced, serving a seafood dinner inside the mountain to the ambassador, was a spectacular business to business arrangement, which other actors of the value-chain could make use of. Knowing how to approach the Chinese likings was good for his business, it could increase the official reputation of the region. Marketing and branding expert Can-Seng Ooi explains that there is plenty of “culture in business” and different levels – from frontline service to backstage strategies – are important to understand as interlinked. Thus, often tourism and culture exchange such as consumption, branding and marketing are the visible factors of more strategic activities such as foreign direct investment; management and HR practices; business practices and networks; negotiation and communication; industrial relations; and even; ethics and human rights in this context.⁵⁷

Value-chain support

The theme-park owner had experienced something about the region’s participation in the value-chain, though: The local newspaper was disinterested in covering the event and in this sense it is very important to the tourism industry that all region actors’ back a regional development tourism strategy if, in fact, this is an opportunity a region decides to follow.

Every tourism business probably needs to make an inventory of their existing products in order to find out how easy - or difficult - it will to fit the taste of the Chinese consumer. The next step would be convincing the rest the reception-apparatus – travel companies; tourism marketers; hotels; transport; restaurants – to support the effort.

In general, what characterised the regional tourism industry, when we did the study in 2014, was that the traffic of global tourists was very segmented and random – there were almost no Chinese consumers to test the industry’s performances up against.

⁵⁷ Ooi, Can-Seng 2014: Understanding Chinese Tourists. Examples of Scandinavian things. *Scandinavian Things and Chinese Taste. Interregional Chinavia II Conference with workshop*, Copenhagen, 13th of June 2014. Presentation.

Not having any guarantees that a bus full of tourists would stop by, one could start deliberately creating a market by beginning to shape a collaborative regional value-chain. It was essential for the businesses to prepare and convince (themselves and) a market and, by finding the right material and intellectual narrative, providing a touristic space for Chinese travellers.

The tourism industry interviews nevertheless presented opinions that business development towards the Chinese market was too complicated and irrelevant. The official cruise ship responsible from the town of Kristiansand, Randi Haukum, explained:

It is very random that cruise ships arrive in Kristiansand. Chinese tourists arrive with other nationalities and so far there hasn't been many. They follow the usual guide product, but language is probably a problem. We trained a Chinese speaking guide last year - but we haven't had any requests. In addition, I do not think that there are any travel agencies (neither business nor pleasure) who handle Chinese tourists in the region. I think they mostly are interested in the larger cities (Stockholm, Oslo, Copenhagen and Skt. Petersburg). They only visit Kristiansand, because they 'have to' – because they are on a Norway Cruise or a Baltic Cruise. I think it will be a big job attracting Chinese tourists to our region – we are simply not spectacular enough.

The cruise ship responsible thought that the region was not “spectacular enough” and therefore it probably would not make sense trying to approach the market, the assumption was. In order to succeed, the region had to perform better. The question was which kind of profile one could develop in order to become more outstanding? Were the small coastal towns actually competing with larger cities or could ‘the countryside’ present a supplement?

From this utterance it is clear, that even the optimistic regional tourism businesses were not ‘just’ able to develop towards a new market. Without the support of and collaboration with the rest of the touristic value chain- for example destination managers and official organisers - the actual business could chose to stand out performing a service as (accidentally) special and targeted, but without a systematic approach from the entire industry, this would be very hard work.

Thus, cruise ship traffic should be perceived as more than just a getaway to other places. It was also an important source of visitors. Could Chinese travel in the region *be made* a

success? This we will discuss further, when we analyse the island of Funen case. Here it is important to stress that the perceptions of mediators are very important:

- People who sell trips
- People who guide
- People who review
- People who have visited the place before
- Celebrities
- All other marketing channels - from advertisements to films⁵⁸

The service-encounter

In 2014, the actors in the tourism industry felt it was difficult to supply this huge and unknown market. The European level of service will probably never reach the Asian level, but as many China-experts state, being friendly and wanting to solve problems – best of all anticipating needs before they are outspoken – is the best key to creating the right level of service. Still, this is not really enough and being aware on which segments one best is able to serve is very important: Many regional businesses are small and have little capacity, both regarding staff and training in service-performance. A café-owner in a nature-heritage park explained:

We once had a gigantic travel group from a cruise ship visiting our café. There was a queue as long as I don't know. The concept was that each passenger was going to have a freshly baked waffle and we baked and baked. I think we only prized the waffle 10 NOK to the travel company and we earned nothing compared to the work load – because we wanted everything to be made by hand and served fresh. This was just too much a pressure on our capacity and probably it wasn't much fun for the Chinese tourists waiting in line either!

In order to create the right service-level to large tourist groups, if this is the market the region wants, then, why not learn from the Chinese themselves? What about learning from the routines which the Chinese travellers are accustomed to back home - when e.g. great numbers of people waiting in line, is handled in effective ways?

⁵⁸ Ooi, Can-Seng 2014: Understanding Chinese Tourists. Examples of Scandinavian things. *Scandinavian Things and Chinese Taste. Interregional Chinavia II Conference with workshop*, Copenhagen, 13th of June 2014. Presentation.

The Chinese technical visitors were all - with their habits and routines – used to being in a crowd. The Scandinavian countryside on the other hand was, per se, crowd-less. Could one really expect it ever to be busy?

In an interview, one informant said: “Sweden must have the worst service in the world”. A mechatronic engineer complained: “why is it that in Norway there can be two people in line before you, and still the service takes a longer time than if you had been in China and a hundred people were waiting in line before you? It just feels so ineffective!”

The effective service-routine, familiar to the Chinese informants, was a faraway cultural practice, but to the industry which actually needed to develop new organisational methods in order to facilitate a future market, this knowledge could be useful.

Sweet heart

Several Chinese cruise ship guests had waited for their waffle dish and the owner was clear that the business’ service system was not working well under pressure.

The small café wanted not only to provide great service and offer the best a Norwegian could think of, namely a sweet cake shaped as a heart, baked on pancake dough and served with brown cheese, strawberry jam and sometimes white sugar. The café had also wanted the Chinese tourists to have the cakes baked freshly.

Nothing was wrong with this business transaction when considered in the context of Norwegian identity-making through giving gifts. The heart-shaped waffle is an esoteric symbol of Norwegian cultural and social emotions: it connotes the transaction of familiarity and works as a sign of something Norwegians are very proud of, namely the social reciprocal system where guests – when eating the waffle - are invited to become an equal part of the social fabric. Actually the Norwegians – in their everyday culture – find many opportunities to eat waffles and by this tradition they also celebrate the togetherness of their society: you will find the waffle dish when ending the work week on a Friday in the canteen; when celebrating the Saturday at the sports club, the church bazaar or when shopping in main

street, and you can be sure to be having a waffle when celebrating everything from national holidays to children's birthdays parties.⁵⁹

Food

The wheat-based dessert was unfortunately not the very deluxe in the taste of the Chinese consumer. During the interviews, we discussed the food available in regional Scandinavian public space and one female exclaimed: "Please, no more hot dogs and waffles!"

Everything unhealthy is not part of the Chinese ideal holiday, the other informants agreed. On the contrary, in their mind-set a holiday should make you fresh, healthy and strong. Hot dogs, pizza and waffles – convenient food which Scandinavian families 'allow' themselves during a vacation or accept, because it is difficult to find anything else - were probably the worst a tourism establishment could serve a Chinese guest.

Instead, (organic) fresh fish and vegetables were considered both health promoting and fell in the taste of the Chinese consumers. Restaurants and hotels should therefore take advantage of this combination also presenting issues such as the high level of food-safety, describe locally produced foods, and explain the food quality and what it does to the body. This would mean a lot to the tourist and make him or her secure.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Døving, Runar 2003: *Rype med lettøl. En antropologi fra Norge*. Oslo: Pax.

⁶⁰ *Værtskab på kinesisk 2.0: Fyn gennem kinesiske briller*. Oplevelsernes Academy, 2014, page 20. Report. Please view: www.udviklingfyn.dk/sites/default/files/billeder/Turisme/den_generelle_rapport_oa_er_fyn_klar_til_kina.pdf



Illustration: Diner *Kina Mat*, Kristiansand, Norway. **Source:** Sarah Holst Kjær, 2014.

The informants' opinions on:

Restaurants, self-catering, farm and forest activities

Picking berries can be attractive

Strawberries are fine

Berries are natural without any pesticides

Better than in China

Norwegians think local food is best

I haven't seen any eco-friendly restaurants in Norway

Too dirty picking vegetables – not a leisure activity!

I like seafood - I don't like seafood

Wild - not domesticated – is best

Easy to get here!

Fresh, Safe, Healthy

I prefer warm seafood – and my parents do too

Eating cold shrimps is still okay

My dad really likes eating king crab

Catching king crabs is forbidden in Norway

Attraction adaptation

Learning from the interviews, the ethnographies and the experience test-tour, we will now go further into exemplifying the Chinese expectations to a tourist attraction by discussing the case of Lindesnes Lighthouse in Southern Norway.

The first lighthouse in Norway, a cultural heritage sight with a light house still in use, is to the Chinese consumer, an attraction with many interesting activities such as small cinema showing short films about Lindesnes Lighthouse in both English and German. It also has exhibit halls in an old bomb shelter built during the Second World War. At the most Southern point in Norway, and with signs pointing to the most Northern point of Norway (the Cape of the North) Lindesnes Lighthouse was already China-ready in many ways.

As mentioned, we found that Chinese are very interested in health products and the pure Scandinavian environment. We also found that Scandinavian family-values of relaxing, socialising and ‘hanging out’ in public space are a very important ‘people’s study’. Lindesnes Lighthouse was already able to market, package and trade many values of health, freshness and opportunities for social bonding. The lighthouse could even offer a spectacular photo-opportunity based on the Norwegian King Harald the V’s signature which is inscribed in a granite stone and placed in a rock next to the lighthouse. Since Scandinavia has something as exotic as royal families – and since this is associated with a fairy-tale universe in the eyes of the (young) Chinese - celebrities sell through their famousness. The fact, that a king had actually been to the lighthouse created glamour, associated wealth, and perhaps had a role-modelling effect. At least, it probably worked as a testimonial utterance: this place is important and worthy a king.⁶¹

⁶¹ Pringle, Hamish 2004:111, 122: *Celebrity Sells*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.



Illustration: The best photo-opportunity at Lindesnes Lighthouse: The Norwegian King's signature. **Source:** Even Fuglestad, 2014.

Thus, beside the magnificent blue view, the fresh – preferably hot dish - seafood offered in the restaurant – also with a view, the cultural history, geographical location and the high-quality see-weed products (beer, bred, salt, crackers, etc. mixed with locally produced see-weed) with a clear reference to the attraction and sold in the souvenir shop, were not only promoting values of health, the products also presented an authentic taste of the clean ocean; could be shared amongst friends and family and was even a souvenir to be send home as gifts. In addition, one could buy postcards with pictures of the lighthouse and it was even possible to purchase a certificate stating that one had been at the southernmost point in Norway. All this made Lindesnes Lighthouse exactly what a Chinese tourist wants.

In our additional social media research on Chinese travel blogs, we found that Chinese travellers in general have many previous experiences with traveling to their neighbouring Western countries - Australia and New Zealand – and their lighthouses. These experiences are creating the travellers' preconceptions which works as a comparison between Scandinavian and global attractions. Thus, Australia and New Zealand have already had years

of experience working with the Chinese market. From these countries, the Scandinavian destinations could easily learn important techniques on how to customise nature-based tourism attractions to fit the Chinese consumer.⁶²

Getting back to the ethnography at Lindesnes Lighthouse, there was no guidance to the stone with the King's inscription where the great snap-shot could be taken. The connection between the lighthouse, being a symbol of the southernmost point, and the place, was not very strong either. This weakened the understanding of why this lighthouse was special. If could be a sign at the tower informing the visitors that *now* they were standing at the most southern point and that a certificate from the souvenirs shop could be a prove of this, maybe more Chinese people would be willing to visit the shop and pay for this unique experience.

The Chinese visitors also asked for more comfort in the cold and stormy climate. From the interviews with the Chinese technical visitors, they also wanted to “enjoy the sunshine in the restaurant”; “sit [in furniture with blankets] on a big grass lawn”; “see the sea-view”; “make a barbeque” and have access to “entertainment equipment for the children”. All this was part of their social desires and something they – from their previous experiences - would expect to have provided for at an attraction. But, as one informant explained: “places in Norway aren't planned like tourist attractions”.

Sharing a dish of healthy sea-weed products were part of the Chinese social fabric, but the informants also wanted long-lasting memory-tokens – something to put in their scrap book – a ticket, a post-card, a stamp, some info-material. China was the first to invent paper and quality-paper matters.⁶³ To the Chinese tourists, postcards are “like stamps and pins – precious tokens from which one can prove him or her being there”.⁶⁴ The travellers were

⁶² Pan, Grace Wen & Laws, Eric 2002: Tourism Marketing Opportunities for Australia in China, *Journal of Vacation Marketing* 8 (1): 39–48; Pan, Grace Wen & Laws, Eric 2003: Tourism Development of Australia as a Sustained Preferred Destination for Chinese Tourists, *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 8 (1): 37–47; Yu, Xin & Weiler, Betty 2001: Mainland Chinese Pleasure Travelers to Australia: A Leisure Behavior Analysis, *Tourism Culture & Communication* 3 (2): 81–91.

⁶³ *Værtskab på kinesisk 2.0: Fyn gennem kinesiske briller*. Oplevelsernes Academy, 2014, page 20-21.

Report. Please view:

www.udviklingfyn.dk/sites/default/files/billeder/Turisme/den_generelle_rapport_oa_er_fyn_klar_til_kina.pdf

⁶⁴ Ren, Carina *no year:6: Spinning Wheels. En kvalitativ evalueringsrapport*. Syddansk universitet, Center for Turisme, Innovation og Kultur. Report.

also in the habit of writing postcards home – maybe a nostalgic practice in the eyes of the Western traveller - but an important documentation and sentiment of being there, in the perception of the Chinese tourist. Could this appreciation of a paper-collection, meant for the scrap book, be transformed into important documentation of a journey? Could Lindesnes Lighthouse collaborate with other tourist-attractions in completing a travel route by creating a small book, some stamps or postcards – even for download - which the traveller could set out to collect?

Destination development: A road less travelled

Travelling cannot work without infra-structure. At the beginning of the project, we too worried about the regional challenges where public transportation – as opposed to urban areas - is not functioning well. A tourist is extremely dependent on this service its frequency, transparency and availability.

Baring in mind, that not even the local airport's flight-bus did not have a time table in English, we nevertheless hoped that some Chinese 'micro-culture of thinkers and doers' could already have created a travel-path in the region, from which we could get inspiration from. In Chinese social media we started to search for these so-called early birds of independent travellers. Was there any Chinese family who had actually found a way of composing a touristic journey of the North and found it interesting in itself? Our informants had not – but wanted to. They had these opinions on travelling in the countryside:

Opinions on traveling the countryside

Quite safe

Too many mosquitos during summer

Going on a company trip, we Chinese didn't know what to prepare for the wilderness

The toilets are not clean as in hotels

Cabin life is cheap!

No wolves or bears in the forests of Norway. And I am not afraid of reindeers!

If lots of people are together, then we feel safer

Living in cabins sounds good!

The information is not enough

Information is basically spread out by friends

I heard everyone is using www.Qyer.com

If it is too fancy, it will lose its specialty and originality

The living condition wouldn't be very good. Plus before you leave, you need to clean it up

As mentioned in the introduction, the research team began an investigation on Chinese social media and here we found one single holiday picture of a Chinese family: A grandmother and a child and one of the parents probably taking the photo in clearly Norwegian surroundings with red and white wooden houses was suddenly visualising a possible conceptual and infra-structural frame for a Chinese journey to the North.



Illustration: Chinese family on self-drive vacation in Norway. **Source:** Unknown Chinese social media page.

This photo of an unknown Chinese family located in a Nordic context became our icon of the future trend of Chinese individual travel: If one family had hired a car, been able to rent a small wooden-vacation house, had been going by car and had travelled the three Scandinavian countries, taken the ferry and returned the car in another country, then, this type of self-drive travel – in a quite impossible environment - was possible.

We did not underestimate this visualisation and in our interviews we presented some commercial pictures of self-drive travel to the informants.

We wanted to test if self-drive tourism, when more and more Chinese became accustomed with international driving, and if the travel was supported by better travel maps and GPS information, could not only be an interesting way to package experiences, but also solve the problem of the almost non-existing public transport in rural Scandinavia.



Illustration: Picture self-drive presented to the Chinese informants. **Source:** Marketing material, Innovation Norway.

We came to learn in our interviews, that the Chinese – as opposed to our own opinions - actually found that the local roads were in a very good condition compared to Chinese roads. Nevertheless, the importance of safety – or tourist anxieties - needed to be addressed.

Thus, the groups of informants all agreed that they were “quite interested” in self-drive tourism. It was considered safer to drive in Scandinavia than in China – the roads were less travelled and this felt quite “relaxing”, one respondent said: “You can enjoy the view along the road”. Another said: “You feel free - you can change your route anytime anyway”. Another informant who had earlier made a complaint about the lack of food when traveling the countryside – “prepare yourself to be hungry” she had said - was thrilled about the idea that it was possible to “get some food in the small stores and farms” one passed by. Though the roads were good, they were also quite narrow with twists and turns unlike the flat and wide roads in China, one said. Another found self-drive “challenging” and asked for a twenty

four hour help-line, just in case. Going by car, they agreed, one could “catch the ship” and “cross the lake”. “Just slept overnight in the car with an open roof top window”, one exclaimed, He added: “this is really attractive”. “I would plan everything before getting on a road trip” another said. “I would book hotels in advance”, a third said, continuing: “Road trip for at least one week – and the family could come along!”

On the road, one could find this “view of nature so gorgeous” that it had “shocked” one female. Another said: “you never need to be hungry again” now being able to move around, one was able to find restaurants or shop for self-catering. Another got the feeling that a place “quite empty” where you could do “basically nothing” was all of a sudden exiting. The informants listed their interest in nature-based activities:

Chinese views on nature-based activities

Camping:

You need to some basic knowledge of living outside.

Suitable for family, young people, people who love nature.

My father, who loves nature, would like to have a try.

It’s hard to find out how to rent a caravan.

Most information is in Norwegian.

Is it safe?

Water sports activities:

Attractive!

Not a common thing

Normally safety important

We Chinese want a balance between entertainment and safety

Fishing:

Really attractive!

You just need a hook to catch crabs

Oyster and blue shells is great

From child to grandmother – everybody likes fishing!

For the family!

Go to some small beach, where you also can have barbeque, enjoy the sunshine – but swimming is too cold

Unexpectedly, we had established a situation of being charged. This imagined scene of being on the road, protected by the car in a country with “too many mosquitos during summer” and without the safety of being in a crowd - “if lots of people are together, then we feel safer” - but with a sense of being able to plan and prepare, created an idea self-made freedom. This singular situation of being able to practice an ideal of also inviting the family on a road-trip, had all the qualities of a vacation-dream which fitted both the social fabric and the ambition of the individual, not wasting precious time but filling it up with the “beautiful nature” – making it possible to be healthy by “eating fresh fruit” and vegetables, catching fish, enjoy the ocean and walking in the mountains. A car made things possible. Now it was only a matter of designing the route to meaningful visitor attractions, towns and sceneries.

REGIONAL POTENTIAL - SUMMING UP

The regional tourism industry, the value chain and reception apparatus and the potential of countryside-experiences have to be considered together in order to analyse whether (already existing regional) opportunities such as business to business, technical visitors (and cruise traffic) can be further exploited. It is furthermore important to view tourism as just one – front stage – aspect several other Scandinavian-Chinese business relations. Regarding the tourism and experience performances of the tourism industries individual travelling – designed as a grand tour for the entire Chinese family – instead of group travel will probably fit the capacity of the industry better. Still, shaping the entire value chain in a collaborative way is needed:

- Decide whether to ‘tap into’ the already moving Chinese tourists. They may be few, but also interesting to test the business’ performance up against.
- One tourism business cannot make itself China-ready without strategic and practical support from the entire value-chain and reception-apparatus.
- Turn ‘limited information’ about the North into helpful guidance and meaningful communication, via the tools of storytelling.
- Based on affinities, create targeted packages of transport, experiences, food and accommodation.
- Use the experience-packages as part of local companies’ recruiting routine, attracting well-educated Chinese knowledge workers to the region.

- Investigate when and where the Scandinavian countryside is ‘pleasantly busy’, e.g. at festivals, events, sport-activities and match the events with the taste of the Chinese consumer.
- Narrate the aspects of safety and security – what is possible to do – self-drive, extreme sport, cabin and camping life, eat short travelled food - while still feeling safe.
- Getting about: Make infra-structure, transport and locations easy to find.
- Good health and a clean environment go hand in hand. Tell the tourists that the (tap)water is pure to drink and that (organic) vegetables and fruits directly from the source can be eaten without being washed.
- Good service means being helpful and quick. It also means free availability of e.g. wifi, parking, tea or Chinese instant food to prepare, or information on what to do. In addition, make it easy to pay (with Pay Union) and make sure this is communicated. Good service also means understanding the business’ capacity and learning from people who know about good and effective service – the Chinese.

THE REGION AND BEYOND

Spill-over effects?

In an interview⁶⁵ with theme park Legoland, Jutland, Denmark, Sales Manager Martin Aadal Nielsen clarified that the theme park had decided not to work towards the Chinese market, but instead aims at the traditional neighbouring markets (including Russia where, by the way, many Chinese tourists travel). The reason for this, Aadal Nielsen explained, is that although the market is big, the expected volume visiting Jutland is too small for a theme park of Legoland's size: "You will definitely find tourists of Chinese descent in Legoland, although we haven't done any studies on this segment. Instead, I will have to refer you to our expansion plans in China where the owner – Merlin Entertainments - intends to open 3-5 Legoland theme parks in the future. We focus on international families with children, but find it easier, although also costly, to market and brand ourselves abroad."⁶⁶

The branding strategy of opening theme parks in China will probably have some spill over effects on the Danish countryside in Jutland and wider on the Southern part of Norway (and Western Sweden). At least, in the research we found that Chinese travellers want to do as many countries as possible – and geographically this is possible, when using the infrastructure, ferry-transportation and car-hiring between Norway, Denmark and Sweden.

In addition, the island of Funen ["Fyn"], Denmark, has, since 2012, worked strategically towards the Chinese market. Developing Fyn Municipal Ltd ["Udvikling Fyn"] and the town of Odense (population 200.000) is not only planning on opening an experience-centre about the famous writer H. C. Anderson which can support the cultural attraction of his birth place which today is a small museum in Odense. The entire island is furthermore going to be Anderson-themed whenever possible. In addition, Odense has invested in the event-industry, in particular the badminton-cup: Yonex Denmark Open. Badminton is an affinity - both big in China and Denmark – and Funen works with the principle of experience economy and its

⁶⁵ Interview, December 16th, 2014.

⁶⁶ For additional information: Ritzau, September the 19th, 2014 (<http://politiken.dk/oekonomi/virksomheder/ECE2400323/kina-skal-have-fem-legolande/>).

'multiplication-effect' when the cup is TV-transmitted to a world-wide market like the Chinese.⁶⁷

The case of H.C. Anderson

The Danish tourism-business conditions have not been to focus of this study. Still, one regional case-study can be worth-while examining, because it contains many similarities to the Norwegian and Swedish countryside: The island of Funen can be perceived as far away from the capital of Copenhagen, it is mainly farm-land and the tour-companies who handle the Chinese tourists most often avoid driving the tourists to the island – they think the place has too little to offer. This means, that the main town, Odense, most often only have a couple of hours of day-tourism and sometimes only one bed-night in Odense where the main attraction is H. C. Andersons house.⁶⁸ The goal, since 2012, has nevertheless been to extend the number of bed-nights and in 2014 seven Chinese tour-operators were invited to the island – and they all agreed that not only Odense, but also the rest of the island had great potential for extending the bed-nights.⁶⁹

Getting back to the research objective

How can a strategy for future China efforts in the region and beyond Scandinavia be developed, and what could possible future trends be in the context of Chinese tourism?

Funen can easily be the representative of a possible future trend: Being a first-mover in approaching the Chinese market, this case-study is intrinsic which means, that the example is selected because it is worth studying: it can provide a deeper understanding of Chinese tourism development in the rural areas of Scandinavia and how a local community have to work together in order to make the entire value-chain work.

Geographically, Funen is located South of Kristiansand and West of Copenhagen. One can either go by boat or drive via E45 from Kristiansand/Hirtshals, through Aarhus to Odense

⁶⁷ www.udviklingfyn.dk/event/sportevents/yonex-denmark-open-2015

⁶⁸ Taken Funen's regional China strategy into consideration, it is interesting to see how H. C. Andersons house – a local town's museum *and* a giant global attraction –by the end of 2014, still has not adapted its website to the Chinese consumer (<http://museum.odense.dk/museer/hc-andersens-hus>).

⁶⁹ www.visitfyn.dk/fyn/kinesiske-turoperatoerer-fyn-er-et-eventyr-kinesiske-turister

and further on to Copenhagen, Malmö and Gothenburg. Odense is a university-town and the university has been engaged in developing the design of Funen as China-tourism friendly.

Garden of Denmark

In many ways, the island of Funen also presents 'the countryside' and market itself as 'the Garden of Denmark'. This metaphorical garden is filled with fields, small farms with fresh farm-products; there are several castles, historical parks and gardens, fortifications, old town areas, etc. The landscape is appealing, because it presents farm-production methods which respects nature. In addition, the segment of Chinese families with children is the new target group,⁷⁰ although the individual young travellers are the main focus because they are easier to handle than the larger volumes of tour-groups with seniors which also are difficult to recruit because of the tour-companies conservatism.

The most important reason why Funen decided to work actively towards China is that Odense is the home-town of H. C. Anderson (1805-1875). H. C. Anderson is bigger in China than many can imagine. The writer is not famous himself, though, but his fairy-tales; *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Little Mermaid*, *The Little Match-Seller* [*Den lille pige med svovlstikkerne*] are part of both Chinese educational system and of the Chinese self-identity, which appeal to Chinese (child). This also means, that the local university - Odense University – invited several fairy-tale researchers and tourism business developers from China to investigate if the island could develop the cultural heritage literature into a theme park or experience centre and, in this sense, accommodating the critique that there was too few experiences in the island to fill more than a couple of hours.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Please view: www.visitdenmark.dk/da/danmark/kinesiske-boernefamilier-skal-til-fyn

⁷¹ Blichfeldt, Rune & Eriksen, Jesper Mads: Kinesere tror på HCA-park, *Fyens Stiftstidende*, torsdag d. 4. oktober 2012, 241. årgang, uge 40, nr. 272. (www.ooi.dk/articles/fs1210b.pdf & www.fyens.dk/indland/Kinesere-garanterer-HCA-park-vil-vaere-et-traekplaster/artikel/2167647).



Illustration: H. C. Anderson's *The Little Mermaid* in Asian (Korean) style.

Source: www.boredpanda.com/asian-korean-fairytales-remake-illustration-na-young-wu/ (2014.12.21).

The tour market is difficult to work with – so it is mainly the individual market, Destination Funen aims at. Tourism development towards the Chinese outbound market has thus been going on since 2012 and “already now, the possibilities of the Chinese market is creating awareness. We work strategically and do not expect successful results before 5-10 years. We know that we are not larger than our competitors – so we want to be different”, Thomas Kastrup, head of business-development for Developing Fyn Municipal Ltd explains.⁷² Kastrup continues:

During the last two years, we have become more and more aware on how to take advantage of H. C. Anderson as a regional-based experience product. His fairy-tales are famous in the entire world and especially in China. This is something we have to work with. Now, H. C. Anderson will become a brand for the entire destination Funen – and not only his home-town of Odense. In the town of Odense, we have developed tours like “walking in the footsteps of H. C. Anderson”, but we realised that Anderson had been everywhere on the island – in all the castles and mansions where he could get a free meal and entertain with his stories. There are several

⁷² Interview, December the 16th, 2014.

historical documents, e.g. house-hold lists where it is stated, what he was served for supper, which fairy-tales he wrote, and which celebrities he entertained.

Destination Funen contains different tourism business related projects, e.g. China Alliance Funen [“Kina Alliancen Fyn”] with 27 businesses, mainly tourism attractions, museums, hotels and castles, but also other locally based food-businesses who know how pure, organic and locally produced food is appreciated by the Chinese consumers. Kastrup explains that the alliance has worked together for almost two years, and in January 2015 the projects is going to be evaluated. The city council has only funded 1/5 of the costs – the rest of the funding the businesses themselves pay. “We wouldn’t put public money into a China strategy unless the companies themselves saw a possibility to develop towards a new market, either here or there. In this sense the food-production companies – for example a local cookie factory – wants to develop a H.C. Anderson cookie and sell it in China. But we also have other business-relations between China and the region which are supported by the county and city. Before we started the China Alliance Funen, some businesses had never seen a Chinese tourist – others dealt with them every day, because they tapped into those 152.000 (2013) of Chinese bed-nights in Denmark.⁷³ When this project is being evaluated – some businesses will for sure feel they have gained nothing – e.g. castles far away from Odense. Others will feel more comfortable when working with this market, Kastrup says.

The businesses have both attended a crash-course learning about the basic things about Chinese leisure consumers and Chinese-Scandinavian cultural encounters. But during the year 2014, sixteen businesses have also received a more targeted and advanced analysis with their particular business in focus. The different developmental reports have been confidential, but one main report has been published.⁷⁴

“H. C. Anderson is bigger in China than any other Scandinavian author,” China-consultant Lisa Johansen from Tourcom explains.⁷⁵ Johansen has developed most of the tourism-development literature on the Chinese-Funen project.

⁷³Værtsskab på kinesisk 2.0: Fyn gennem kinesiske briller. Oplevelsernes Academy, 2014, page 7. Report. Please view:

www.udviklingfyn.dk/sites/default/files/billeder/Turisme/den_generelle_rapport_oa_er_fyn_klar_til_kina.pdf

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵Interview made December the 15th, 2014.

“Larger than Norwegian writer Henrik Ibsen⁷⁶ and Astrid Lindgren⁷⁷ in Sweden”, I ask Johansen.

Chinese family segment

“Nothing can compete with Anderson, but it is a very good idea to do more with culture-products which are already well-known in the Chinese market. Anderson is the main attraction, but there is room for other literature-based destinations which can support the theme. Build upon a brand is what we do. We advise the tourism-, service- and experience businesses to find everything they’ve got which is related to Anderson – and adjust and develop experience and service around it. The text step is to make the entire island Anderson-oriented, but only, and this is important, if the Anderson-story is profound and related to that particular place – Anderson went to many places, he did many things. Still, we want to own him! In this way, we also suggest to hotels to e.g. give out the fairy-tales as bedside stories in Chinese, we ask them to take extra good care of the Chinese children – and this means a lot to the Chinese family – can the business provide a small present or some educational material? The parents will really appreciate this. We recommend the restaurants to create menus (in Chinese and with pictures) based on local, organic food and with dishes Anderson ate. We also ask the businesses to think more about the Chinese travel habits – they want to get the most out of their time and there is no time to relax: narrate and explain what to experience within a short distance of the hotel, we tell them”, Lisa Johansen describes.⁷⁸

Many hotels also have invested a lot in Danish design: explain to the Chinese guests that much of this design was actually inspired from Chinese furniture. Or, tell them where the best photo-opportunity is – one could imagine many places, but actually the most famous

⁷⁶ Please view the ethnographic observations from the experience test-tour on the attractions connected to Henrik Ibsen in Grimstad, Norway.

⁷⁷ Please view these links on the relation between China and Astrid Lindgren: www.sbi.kb.se/sv/Om-SBI/webbfiler/Astrid-Lindgren-och-Kina/; <http://beijing.swea.org/svenska-barnbocker-oversatta-till-kinesiska/> (2014.11.04)

⁷⁸This knowledge is also available on the website Huan Ying, regional tourism businesses can learn more about their (future) Chinese consumers and how to approach them (www.huanying.dk).

snapshot-location in Odense is a sculpture of a bench where Anderson sits in the middle and there is room for two more – here you can see that many pictures were taken, when you examine Chinese social media”.⁷⁹

Lisa Johansen has developed most of the knowledge-material and the courses at The Academy of Experiences [Oplevelsernes Academy] which was the first China-oriented project in Funen.⁸⁰ It was funded partly by the county and partly by the EU-fund for regional development.

Project manager for the Academy of Experiences, Julie Bjørg Nordlund,⁸¹ started the China project in 2012. “No-one believed in me at that time. We realise that we do not have the capacity to receive thousands and thousands of Chinese tourists. Our goal is to aim at the individual traveller and we work towards, in 2015, receiving 10.000 more Chinese tourists than we have today. At the beginning those businesses who received our education were those who dared - and were willing - to experiment. It is difficult because every-day business routines are very time-consuming. In the eyes of the Chinese, Denmark is very small – this also why our tiny island in itself can be themed with just one story – that of Anderson. This might be absurd to locals, because there are so many other stories, but those other stories are not what the Chinese want”.

Film-induced tourism

When asked if Nordlund believes in this new market, she replies: “I believe for sure that we are able to attract the individual travel-market and some tour groups. Smaller volumes are important to the local economy. And I believe, we have a great product in H. C. Anderson, and I am furthermore very optimistic when I see where we were a couple of years back. Suddenly things are starting to happen. For instance, the world famous Danish film company’s Asian department Zentropa China is now being partly funded with four million DKR by Odense City”, she says.

⁷⁹ Værtskab på kinesisk 2.0: Fyn gennem kinesiske briller. Oplevelsernes Academy, 2014. Report. (www.udviklingfyn.dk/sites/default/files/billeder/Turisme/den_generelle_rapport_oa_er_fyn_klar_til_kina.pdf).

⁸⁰ www.oplevelsernesacademy.dk

⁸¹ Interview, December 15th, 2014.

A Danish film is getting ready for the Chinese audience. Thus, in 2015-16 the film "True Beauty" (working title) will be one of those 34 foreign films which gain access to the Chinese market. The audience is expected to be 150 million people across different media. China has 15.000 cinemas in the country and in 2015 the number of cinemas is expected to rise with 30 percent. The film - with a total budget of 35 million DKR - is about a young, lonely girl who lives in a fantasy world with H. C. Anderson as her mentor. Soon she will have to learn that life is more than a fairy tale. The film is a modern interpretation of the Ugly Duckling and the Nightingale.

The movie is filmed in Funen and has a Chinese star as the leading part. While the actual production is expected to increase local jobs, the mayor of Odense, Anker Boye, also views the film as a great marketing opportunity for Funen. It is part of our strategy to - at the same time - work on creating an Anderson fairy-tale house with an estimated budget of 300 million DKR. We expect it to open in 2018 Boye explains and refers to how Odense has learned from the German city of Salzburg and how they have promoting Mozart.⁸²

"We believe in the Chinese market and are willing to take the next step", Thomas Kastrup from Developing Fyn Municipal Ltd explains.

Before aiming at China, the island of Funen was investing a lot in becoming a film-making destination ["FilmFyn" - established in 2003], providing sets, props, seconds, hotels and catering to the Danish film industry, offering film-education activities for young local people and making spin-off in terms of events, festivals and guided tours to selected film-locations, but not least the region co-funds film-productions which means that manuscripts are rewritten and adapted to the island's different locations.⁸³ In order to get the most out of the investments it is thus natural to fuse film-induced tourism with the new Chinese market development.

⁸² For more on the Zentropa production of a Chinese fairytale-film in Danish surroundings, please view:
www.oplevelsernesacademy.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/Kursus_materiale/Files/OA_Filmturisme_enkelt.ny.pdf

⁸³ Ibid.

THE REGION AND BEYOND- SUMMING UP

In order to develop a strategy for future China efforts it is important to scrutinise cases which are ahead. In the Funen example it seems like things are moving fast – from just beginning to understand the Chinese market in 2012 to the choice of investing millions in destination development and marketing in 2014. But can the selection of a very tight storyline based in the cultural heritage of literature be transferred to the ØKS-region? Here it is also possible to investigate the experiences which Australia and New Zealand have had accommodating the Chinese tourists for at least ten year offering nature-based tourism.

- Build upon previous strategies, e.g. the strategy of being a destination for children and families or the strategy of being a nature-based destination for e.g. outdoor activities and local food production, when adding on a new strategy of approaching the Chinese market.
- Use Chinese experts in literature to make sure that a cultural heritage profile, such as Ibsen and Lindgren, is big enough to carry a literature-based tourism.
- Multiplicity: Use several media in order to market different layers in one story. Use Chinese – or national - celebrities to sell.
- Build upon cultural heritage and storytell the theme whenever possible – in menus, in guided tours, in souvenirs, in places. Remember good storytelling is built upon plausibility and authenticity.
- Challenge a place' identity and think decentred: In Southern Norway it can easily be Ibsen's Grimstad – and not the main town Kristiansand, and, in Western Sweden it could be the marathon in Lund – and not the main towns of Gothenburg and Malmö, which are the main attractions in the eyes of the Chinese.
- Collaborate with large actors such as H. C. Andersons' House (DK), Astrid Lindgren's Vimmerby (S) and the theme park Legoland (DK). There is plenty of room for regional culture-based destinations which can support a theme.
- The region is very small, but large enough for the Chinese consumer to feel that he or she effectively has 'done' three countries – take advantage of synergy-effects already created by others.
- Learn from Australia and New Zealand in relation to nature-based tourism.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment I: Questionnaire template: Regional tourism- and experience industry



CHINAVIA II (1214)

Interview-guide with chamber of commerce

I. Chinese technical visitors:

Identity of visitors: Age, gender, occupation, regions/cities in China?

Work: What kind of industries, businesses or public engagements do they participate in?

Position: Owners, employees, knowledge, education, 'family'?

How – and why - do they typically contact 'The Chamber of Commerce'?

How long do they stay - Certain times of the year?

Do they return to revisit Sørlandet – how many times?

How do they live (hostel, hotel, apartment, friends and family)?

Does the *Chamber of commerce* help out with leisure/educational activities for the visitors?

What kind of cultural or other experiences, places to be, foods to eat, things to buy do the Chinese visitors like?

How can regions become more China-ready:

How much activity do the region's business relations show today?

Within which industries? (Goods, import, export, workers, owners, education, others?)

Could the region benefit from this gigantic market – in what way?

How could the region become China-ready?

Is there a market for leisure and tourism to Chinese technical visitors?

How much investment – and in what - would it take?

Prices and quality?

Things to shop (retail, restaurants, leisure-activities)?

Infrastructure, communication and orientation?

Thank your for your time! For further questions please contact:

Senior Researcher Sarah Holst Kjær, Agderforskning, Kristiansand, Norway.

Project leader of Research and Strategy, Chinavia II (2014).

sarah.holst.kjar@agderforskning.no

0047 40 60 48 78

Attachment 2: Questionnaire template: Interview with Chinese technical visitors

Interview Guide

Chinavia II. Interview-guide with Chinese technical visitors

Scandinavian things and Chinese taste

Language: English/Mandarin

2-3 hours group interviews (2-6 people).

- 1) Presentation of each informant: name, age, how many years in the region. Position.
- 2) Where do you come from (Chinese map shown, please circle out).
- 3) Reason to be here?
- 4) Estimate how many hours of leisure time do you have pr. week – and how do you spend them?
- 5) Which activities do you participate in?
- 6) Would you participate in other activities, if you had the time?
- 7) Do you participate in activities where there is none-Scandinavian people present – which?
- 8) Have you had family and friends visiting you? Would you? Why/why not?

- 9) Infra-structure: How do you come around? Easy to find what you want? Get inspired to experience things?
- 10) What do you miss the most from your home-place?
- 11) Of all places – cities, towns, countries – you have been to, what is the best place?
- 12) Please discuss these pictures (Go through tourism-pictures with the informant).
 - A) Describe what you see in the picture?
 - B) What do you think? Price, quality, relevance, interesting, typical Scandinavian?
 - C) Is this something of relevance to you, your family and friends?
- 13) What have surprised you about this place?
- 14) What is the most beautiful, weird, interesting, ugly, worst thing you have experienced?
- 15) What would show your family and friends? Your perfect Norwegian/Nordic holiday! Please describe...

Attachment 3: Questionnaire template: Interview with regional reception apparatus

Interview guide – regional tour operators

Interregional research project: Chinavia II. Scandinavian Things and Chinese Taste.

- 1) Describe the local tour/event industry in general and your business in particular?
 - Is it seasonal work or full time?
 - How does the industry work together?
 - Is the potential of local activities used to the fullest?
- 2) Describe your tour-product?
 - How do you create it?
 - Which places, people and services do you include?
 - How do you find out what the consumer wants?
- 3) How do you evaluate the customer experience?
 - Surveys, questionnaires, experience-based, other?
- 4) Which groups do you facilitate – percentage estimate?
 - Business tourists, technical visitors, tourists, locals, nationalities?

Turning to the Chinese consumer

- 5) Describe the tour(s) you have had with Chinese visitors.
- 6) How did you create and customise your tour to the Chinese consumer?
- 7) In your opinion: What kind of cultural or other experiences, places to be, foods to eat, things to buy did the Chinese visitors like?
 - Looking back - would you have done things differently?
- 8) What can we do in Southern Norway to appeal to this cultural segment?
- 9) As a local tour-operator what do you think Chinese people (could) find attractive about our region?
 - What needs to be done in the local tourism industry in order for us to be better at facilitating to the Chinese visitor?

Thank your for your time! For further questions please contact:

Senior Researcher Sarah Holst Kjær, Agderforskning, Kristiansand, Norway.

Project leader of Research and Strategy, Chinavia II (2014).

sarah.holst.kjar@agderforskning.no

0047 40 60 48 78



Attachment 4. Questionnaire template. Street-interviews with Chinese tourists

- Basic information: gender, age, individual or group tourists?
- How long have you stayed here?
- Is it your first time visiting the city?
- Did you plan your free time? (for technical visitors)
- Where have you been?
- What have you seen?
- Why do you come here?
- Any plans to visit other parts of Scandinavia?
- Can you show us some photos?
- Do you have any recommendations?
(Food, places of interest, shopping)
- What do you like about Copenhagen?
- Have you bought any gifts/ souvenirs?
- Would you revisit the city, and in what ways?

Attachment 5: Journey to the North. Pamphlet, 2014. Authors: Daisy Cai & Rui Liu





"The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page."

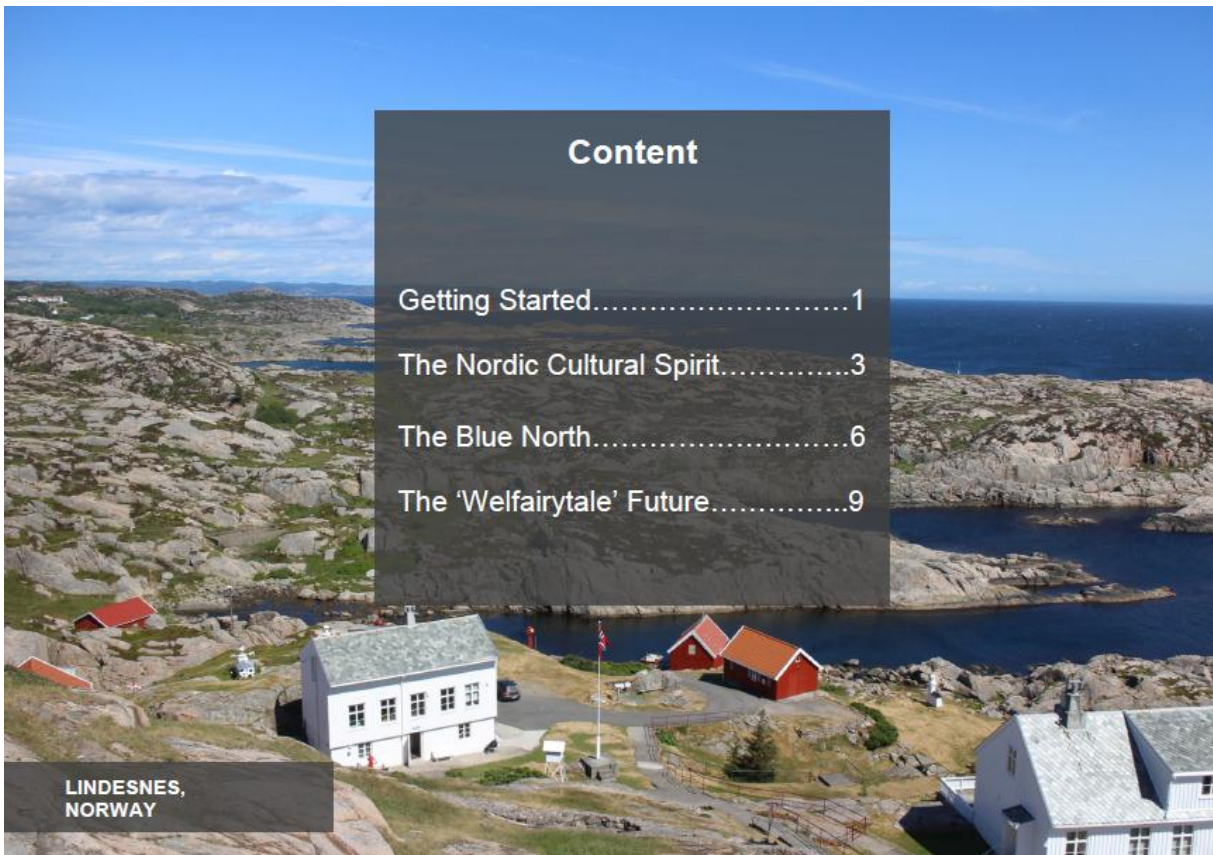
— St. Augustine

Born and growing up in China, now living in Sweden, we are two Chinese girls who are trained to become cultural analysts. In our spare time, we do traveling quite often, mostly in Scandinavia. This is such an amazing land. It definitely has more to offer than the breathtaking fjords and the magnificent northern light. Nature is generous and humble here; it does not spare any single drop of its beauty, but meanwhile it awaits our exploration and true appreciation. This is paradise for true travelers.

Thanks to the "Chinavia II" project, we are able to combine our passion in traveling with ethnography skills. The more we travel with a cultural analytical lens, the more we feel necessary to present a multifaceted Scandinavia to our Chinese peers who love to see, to know and to explore. Hence, we wrote this booklet to share our traveling stories. Hopefully, you will, after reading it, get a feel of how special and rewarding your journey to the North will be.

In this booklet, 3 tour packages with different themes are presented as well as useful links, based on the traveling resources and experiences we have collected. There should be one that suits you. Plus, recommendations are addressed, regarding issues such as the choice of transportation, the food, the accommodation and the best travel season. As we all know, traveling always starts at home, and the North is not far.

GRIMSTAD, NORWAY



Content

Getting Started.....	1
The Nordic Cultural Spirit.....	3
The Blue North.....	6
The 'Welfairytale' Future.....	9

**LINDESNES,
NORWAY**

Getting Started

'The North' – Denmark, Sweden and Norway – is tightly connected, historically, culturally and geographically. It might be hard for foreigners like us to tell apart people from the three Scandinavian countries, but they themselves will strive to prove their distinction, most likely in the way of joking about their neighbor countries. Yet deep down you can tell they love each other. Thanks to this love-and-joke relationship, traveling in Scandinavia actually becomes much easier for us foreigners.

- Boats, trains and coaches connecting the countries go regularly. Cars can even be brought onboard of ferries and cruises!
- In Denmark and Sweden, public transportation system is more developed, while in Norway, the best way is definitely self-driving. It does not simply give you the freedom, but also the amazing roadside scenery.
- Car rental service is well established and professional. It is possible to rent cars in Denmark or Sweden and return them in Norway before you take the flight.



Speaking of accommodation, you can always choose to stay in downtown hotels where Chinese breakfast may probably be served, but in Scandinavia, that sounds a bit boring. There are many other options, which offer much higher price-performance ratio.

- Wooden cabins in the forest, by the lake, up in the mountain.
- Lighthouses by the ocean.
- Caravans in a well-equipped camping site; or bring your own tent!
- And Airbnb, which you may get to know the locals better.

1

Getting Started

One thing you can't miss is seafood in Scandinavia. The natural surroundings and modern cooking techniques maximize the freshness and the authenticity of the ingredient. Fish soups and fish cakes are popular dishes in this region, especially in Norway. They can be found in local fish markets and restaurants that serve Norwegian food. We once ordered a plate of 3 huge sea crabs for less than 200 Norwegian kroner, and it literally took us 2 hours to finish...

If you decide to stay in a cabin, then why not get the grocery at local supermarkets first? It actually is one of the best ways to experience the local life. On top of that, you can even make some fusion cuisines by cooking Scandinavian food the Chinese way!



You may have seen so many insanely heaven-like photos of Scandinavia that have gone viral on the Internet, but we have to advise you to think 'season-wise' before making travel plans.



Winter is notoriously long and dark here and spring can be rather dim, yet you can still do loads of activities such as skiing and fishing if you are the Viking material! However, if you are like us, preferring warm breezes and longer daylight, then summer and autumn are the best seasons to visit Scandinavia.

From May to October, the colors of the nature appear in various shades; the beach, outdoor cafes, festivals and the open markets all become 'pleasantly busy'. The world is so alive that you can't, we bet, resist singing with the birds!

2



THE NORDIC CULTURAL SPIRIT

One thing in common among the three Scandinavian countries is the existence of the monarchy and their royal families. They are to some extent the witness of the history and the development of that country. Many royal palaces are now open to visitors. Besides, some fortresses and parks that were built hundreds of years ago in the order of kings are well integrated into people's life nowadays.

Christiansholm Fortress in Kristiansand, Norway is such a place of interest. In 1672 it was built to defend the city of Kristiansand – still one of the best preserved renaissance towns in Europe.



CHRISTIANSHOLM FORTRESS, NORWAY

KRONBORG CASTLE, DENMARK



Picture from <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/696/gallery/>

If you have heard of Shakespeare and his work "Hamlet", then you can't miss the chance to visit Kronborg castle in Denmark. It actually is the original setting of the story of Hamlet.

Why Shakespeare set this tragedy in the kingdom of Denmark? How was the character Hamlet related to the real Danish prince in history? Was it the same Denmark as was illustrated in Shakespeare's work? If you want to know the answers of those questions, then you probably should pay a visit to the castle, located in the beautiful town of Elsinor.

Can you think of any famous

Norwegian names?

When we talk about Norway, people may relate to the book "Norwegian Wood". It does reflect Norway somehow in the way that this country used to be famous for its wood export. Still, when it rains, you can smell wood processed years ago. The pillars of Amsterdam and Venice are made with Norwegian timber! However, one real big Norwegian name we should remember is Henrik Ibsen and his famous play "A Doll's House". It was actually a jaw-dropping moment for us when we realized he was Norwegian.

Ibsen's home is situated in a town of Southern Norway called Grimstad. It is a small and peaceful coastal village, which is decorated with the symbolic white wooden houses.

It was a dramatic day when we visited there. The sudden rain pushed us into a vintage café. Since it was about lunchtime, we decided to have some food there. The décor was in a retro style. Coffee and tea were served in fine china cups. Glancing over the walls, we noticed a photo frame in which some clips from old newspapers were presented. It was called Café Ibsen, and the Ibsen Museum was just across the street!



IBSEN MUSEUM & IBSEN CAFE, NORWAY

H.C. ANDERSON & THE LITTLE MERMAID, DENMARK



Speaking of the kingdom of fairy tale, we must mention a big name, H.C Anderson, who made up so many beautiful dreams and fantasies for every young kid.

Born in a poor family, young Anderson moved to Copenhagen to pursue his dream. He continuously and persistently developed his creative writing even during tough and frustrating times. His hard work finally paid off and people coming from all over the world come to see the statue of the Little Mermaid. As Denmark itself – she is tiny but delicate!

Do you remember that the Little Mermaid has actually been to the Shanghai Expo in 2010?

If you would love to know more of Anderson and his stories, Odense is a must-go, which is his birthplace and where you can visit his childhood home.

SUGGESTED GIFT IDEAS

- The little trolls. In Norwegian folklore and mythology, it is said that these monsters haunt around in the forests. There is even a film called "The Troll Hunter". Those in the souvenir shops still look a bit fierce, but quite cute.
- Dala Horse from Sweden
- Amber jewelry from Denmark
- Myse ost (Norwegian brown cheese). Thanks to the suggestions from our Norwegian friends, we tried this special kind of cheese with waffles and cream. The caramelized flavor adds the sweetness, which actually agrees our Chinese appetite!



NORWEGIAN BROWN CHEESE & TROLLS, NORWAY

A STORE SELLING LOCAL HANDCRAFTS, NORWAY



USEFUL LINKS

Christiansholm Fortress

<http://www.kristiansand-norway.com/attractions/kristiansandfortress.html>

Kronborg Castle

<http://www.kronborg.dk/english/ibsen-museum>

<http://www.visitnorway.com/en/product/?pid=78141>

Odense

<http://www.visitodense.com/lin-ml/funen/hans-christian-andersen/hans-christian-andersen-attractions>



If there is only one piece of advice that we could share with you, it will definitely be SLOW DOWN and TAKE IT EASY. 'The North' is not as freezing as you might think but the weather change could be even more dramatic than you could possibly experience in other parts of Europe. The autumn-leaves turn red and golden. Overnight, the sun plays hide-and-seek as the clouds of marshmallows hang on the sapphire sky.

If you ask us to describe 'the North' in one color, then it must be blue. It is bright and calm, but very agreeable. It simply gets along with every piece of object under the sky.



MANDAL, NORWAY

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK



Just imagine: the white wooden houses, the mountain and water surrounded country roads, the mirror-like lake and the majestic ocean... Everything is coated with this magic color. It shines.

When Scandinavian countries were ranked among the happiest countries in the world, and all of a sudden this low-key region was exposed to the spotlight, we, like other curious people, were wondering what the secret ingredient was in their happy recipe. Those Scandinavians are famous for not smiling much, aren't they?

For a thousand people, there might be a thousand different interpretations of happiness. As urban dwellers, we fight for a spot in the city, because it probably is the closest place to our hopes. We work hard, day and night, but never in a single second do we forget the dream that one day we can have enough confidence and capital to escape the smog, the crowd, the noise and the hopeless traffic jams. Before the last straw breaks our back we want to start the journey towards tranquility, balance and afterthoughts.

A financial elite friend of ours



LINDESNES LIGHTHOUSE, NORWAY

KULLABERG, SWEDEN



came to visit Scandinavia. She had travelled almost half of the globe and had experienced all the excessive grandeurs of continental Europe. "You know, the sights are magnificent, but still a bit too much bustling and hustling", said she. However, in a beautiful Nordic autumn weekend, a sense of happiness just caught her: "It's simple, peaceful and lovely here". We were happy to share this moment of existence with her. To phrase the great Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard, here we felt that 'even the richest personality is nothing before he or she has chosen oneself'.

So, what is the secret in the Scandinavian happy recipe? Is it visible or tangible? After quite some time of searching, we think we have got some clues: it lies in the respect Scandinavians have to the nature. They live with it, appreciate it, get inspired by it, and cherish it. Once we slow down, and take our time feeling and thinking, nature soothes our soul and we are not far from the Scandinavian happiness.

We can start the journey by car, by ship, or even by bike and by walk!

In slow pace motion true emotions are released:

- Rent a bike and cycle through small country roads lined with massive fields of bright yellow rape flowers or follow the coastline experiencing nature-preserved beaches.
- Rent a fishing pole, jump on a fishing boat and sail to the heart of the sea or lake to explore a deep sense of serenity. Who knows? You might also harvest some meter-long salmon or trout!
- Pack your bag, and start a hiking journey in numerous national parks. Fresh breezes, singing birds, and the rustling forest-leaves compose the most beautiful sound of the landscape.
- Rent a wooden cabin, either by the lake or on the mountainside, and enjoy the intimacy with the nature.



KRISTIANSAND, NORWAY

LUND & MALMÖ, SWEDEN



USEFUL LINKS

Skåne leden trail with over 1000 kilometers of beautiful landscape in Sweden

<http://en.skaneleden.se/>

Lindesnes Lighthouse, the southernmost point of Norway
<http://www.visitnorway.com/uk/where-to-go-uk/south/welcome-to-the-lindesnes-region/lindesnes-fv-norways-oldest-lighthouse/>

Skagen, Denmark. Artistic, white beach, and heaven for seafood enthusiasts

<http://www.visitdenmark.co.uk/en-gb/denmark/skagen>

Ravnedalen Valley Nature Park, in Kristiansand, Norway

<http://www.visitnorway.com/uk/troduct>



Long before we could locate Scandinavia on the world map, we could already associate certain concepts to the Nordic countries. In this regard, we believe we are not the only ones. Many times when we tell our friends that we now live in the Northern Europe, their first reaction is surprisingly identical to ours: pondering a second, as if to figure out where that is, and then carefully asking if it is true that they have got the best social welfare system in the world.

What can we say? Yes, they have the famously super long paid maternity leave and well-established political support to ensure gender equality; everyone has equal access to health care and education.



MARATHON IN LUND, SWEDEN

SJØLINGSTAD ULDVAREFABRIK
WOOL FACTORY, NORWAY



When it comes to everyday life that we also take part in, we see children-friendly and disabled-friendly infrastructures in almost all the public space; we see car drivers give way to pedestrians and bikers without getting impatient; we see the help one can get from strangers; and we even see babies who have just learnt to walk and how they follow their parents learning to recycling garbage.

Do all this sound too good to be true? This is not a Shangri-La in the middle of nowhere; this is truly Scandinavia.

Oh, and one more thing: small towns and countryside can be even more charming than big cities in its natural beauty, life quality and locals' hospitality.

While you may now picture a Shangri-La in your mind, these Scandinavians are also a bunch of innovative people. Have you ever heard about brands like Volvo, Absolute Vodka, Ecco, Lego, or Helly Hansen? Do you know where they are originally from?

Well, the answer is that they all come from Scandinavia, a region full of ideas and home to several world-known brands.

Paradoxically we may think this is a highly industrialized society with advanced technological development, yet in contrast, traditions are also treasured. And Scandinavians know very well that the path that connects the past and the future is to follow the principle of sustainability.



SOME FAMOUS SCANDINAVIAN BRANDS

10

SJØLINGSTAD ULDVAREFABRIK
WOOL FACTORY, NORWAY



One of the factories we visited is a wool factory in southern Norway called Sjølingstad Uldvarefabrik. It is a real living museum, where the old-fashioned production lines are still being used to produce yarn, fabrics and blankets.

Being a cultural heritage sight, the traditional craftsmanship is preserved. Can you believe that it takes up to one year to finish a handmade Norwegian national costume in this factory!?

Another factory we highly recommend is a popular Norwegian brewery, Nøgne ø. From the moment we entered

the factory, the sensory experience never stopped, from the smell of the malt to the sound of the machine, from the taste of the barley to the view of the assembly line.

Equally fascinating was their frankness and commitment to the tradition. We had a staff member as our guide. He showed us around the factory, presented different recipes for home brewery and explained every process of the line. We even tried some freshly brewed craft beer! The taste was very rich!

As a leading brewery in Norway, their product can actually be found in several pubs in Beijing and Shanghai.



NØGNE Ø BREWERY,
NORWAY

NØGNE Ø BREWERY,
NORWAY



USEFUL LINKS

Nøgne ø, Grimstad, Norway, the uncompromising brewery. Guided tours are offered.

<http://www.noegne-o.com/>

Sjølingstad Wool Factory, Mandal, Norway.

<http://www.visitnorway.com/uk/product/?pid=206455>

Absolut Vodka, Åhus, Sweden. Book a tour with the best-known Swedish spirit brand.

<http://visitskane.com/en/article/absolut-vodka>

11

Special thanks to...

Sarah Holst Kjær, who has put much effort in guiding us through this whole research process.
Erik Engenes, who has kindly given us opportunities to present our ideas and suggestions.
Even Fuglestad, who has helped us arranging the trips within southern Norway and given us a local perspective.



12

Journey to the North

Please feel free to contact us, if you have any questions or further information is needed.

Daisy (Wentong) Cai
daisycai703@gmail.com

Rui Liu
lr0805@gmail.com



Attachment 6: Chinavia II Conference and workshop programme and partnermeeting programme

DEN EUROPÆISKE UNION
Den Europæiske Fond for RegionaludviklingInterreg IVA
ÖRESUND – KATTEGAT – SKAGERRAK

Scandinavian Things and Chinese Taste

Becoming China-ready in the Scandinavian tourism industry

Interregional Chinavia II Conference with workshop, Copenhagen, 13th, 14th-15th of June 2014

PLEASE REGISTER BEFORE THE 1ST OF JUNE 2014

Conference and workshop participation is free of charge

Date: 13th of June 2014, 12.00-19.00

Venue: The Japanese Tower - Formerly known as The Chinese Tower.

Address: Vesterbrogade 3, 1620 København (inside Tivoli)

Website: www.detjapansketaarn.dk

At the entrance to Tivoli please state which conference you are attending and you will get in for free

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

[Register for the conference here.](#)

12.00 Registration and mingle tapas

13.00 Welcome by Erik Engenes, Visit Sørlandet, Kristiansand, Norway, project-owner of 'Research and strategy' in Chinavia II.

13.15-15.00 Understanding Chinese Tourists. Examples of Scandinavian things.

Can Seng Ooi, professor and Center Director

Center for Leisure and Culture Services, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

15.00-15.45 Tivoli's China Town. Communicating Chinese symbols at the theme park.

Sarah Holst Kjær, senior researcher

Agder Research, Kristiansand Norway

15.45-16.00 Coffee brake

16.00-17.00 Becoming China-Ready in the Scandinavian Tourism Industry. What does 'China' mean? What does 'ready' mean?

Matias Thuen Jørgensen MA in tourism & Carina Ren, associate professor

Tourism Research Unit, Department of Culture and Global Studies, Aalborg University, Denmark

17.00-18.00 Inside the mind of the Chinese Consumer? Retail- and shopping strategies in the 'ordinary Scandinavian main street'.

Stephanie Pabotoy Møller & Joan Thorup Bojesen, MA's of Managing Creative Business Processes

Stephanie works at Kopenhagen Fur and Joan at SuperSellers – both in PR

18.00-19.00 Fresh air and a guided tour with Tivoli guide

19.30 Dinner

Venue: The Japanese Tower

Workshop in creative field work

Mapping and creating new tourism markets

Please note that this workshop is for both stakeholders and students

There is a limit of 12-15 participants

Date: 14th-15th of June 2014

Venue: Nordatlantens Brygge, Christianshavn,

Copenhagen – contact the reception for direction to the room.

Website: www.nordatlantens.dk

WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

[Register for the workshop here.](#)

Saturday 14th of June, 10.00-16.00

10.00-10.15 Welcome and introduction

Sarah Holst Kjær, senior researcher

Agder research, Kristiansand, Norway

10.15-11.15 Catering for the Dragon - Perspectives from the Danish tourism industry on Chinese incoming tourism.

Matias Thuen Jørgensen, MA in Tourism

Tourism Research Unit, Department of Culture and Global Studies, Aalborg University, Denmark

11.15-12.15 Methods of Association Games in Ethnographic Field Work. Tourism images and Chinese-Scandinavian differences of association. With discussion.

Carina Ren, associate professor

Tourism Research Unit, Department of Culture and Global Studies, Aalborg University, Denmark

12.15-13.15 Business-Interview Studies. Analysing strategies, discussions and evaluations on selling 'Danish design' in China. With discussion.

Stephanie Pabotoy Møller & Joan Thorup Bojesen, MA's of Managing Creative Business Processes

Stephanie works at Kopenhagen Fur and Joan at SuperSellers – both in PR

13-15-14.00 Lunch

14.00-15.00 Creative field work session I. Students interview stakeholders. Topic: The best Nordic experience for Chinese travelers?

Master class participants work in pairs

15.15-16.00 Creative field work session II. Analysis of interviews. What did we learn from session I?

Joint discussion

Sunday 15th of June, 11.00-15.00

Preparation for today's session: Field work observations at The Little Mermaid or in China Town, Tivoli. Pick the notes, pictures, brochures, artefacts or other things from the field for a culture analysis in class.

Please read: Can-Seng Ooi and Carina Ren: Auto-communicating micro-orientalism: Articulating 'Denmark' in China at the Shanghai Expo, *Asia Europe Journal*, June 2013, Volume 11, Issue 2, pp 129-145.

11.00-12.00 Tourism Business Ethnography. Creating experience-products while field-working?
With discussion.

Sarah Holst Kjær, senior researcher

Agder Research, Kristiansand, Norway

12.00-14.00 New ways of experiencing China Town or the Little Mermaid? Presentation of one's chosen field work material. 10 minutes for each participant.

Joint analysis

14.00 Grab a lunch-bite

14.15-15.00 Discussions on Chinese-Scandinavian tourism strategy: The Unknown North? How to accommodate the Chinese traveler? Infra-structure, marketing, experience products and package tours.

Joint discussion

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Conference, workshop participation and accommodation are free of charge for Chinavia II stakeholders. Please save the original travel recites for a refund.

The conference is free and open to the public. Please register.

Accommodation

Until the **1st of June 2014** we have pre-booked rooms (chose one or two nights between the 13th-15th of June) at the Comfort Hotel Vesterbro (breakfast included).

Adress: Vesterbrogade 23-29, DK 1620 København, Danmark

Hotel telephone: +45 33 78 80 00

Website: www.nordicchoicehotels.com

Get directions here: <https://maps.google.no/maps?hl=no&ie=UTF-8&q=comfort+hotel+vesterbro+k%C3%B8benhavn&fb=1&gl=no&hq=comfort+hotel&hnear=0x465253764030803b:0xf12e177be3968203,Vesterbro/Kongens+Enghave,+Copenhagen,+Denmark&cid=17320289428570697687&ei=0E-IU-bsG6iA4gTBz4CYAw&ved=0CEoQtQMwAw>

Please send booking (choose one or two nights between the 13th-15th of June) to erik@visitorsorlandet.com. You will receive a confirmation by email.

After the 1st of June one will have to find one's own accommodation.

Students

Students are invited to participate in the conference and in the workshop. There will be some available rooms – free of charge – for students. Please contact Erik Engenes, erik@visitorsorlandet.com before the 1st of June 2014. Students have to pay their own travel expenses.

Please note: There is a limit of 12-15 participants of the workshop. To those accepted, please familiarize yourself with the program and prepare the given tasks.

Find your way here: <http://www.visitcopenhagen.com/copenhagen/transportation/getting-around-copenhagen>

We are looking forward to seeing you in Copenhagen!

For more info: Erik Engenes: erik@visitorsorlandet.com, Visit Sørlandet, Kristiansand, Norway

9C. Press-release:

Scandinavian Things and Chinese Taste

Becoming China-ready in the Scandinavian tourism industry

Interregional Chinavia II conference with workshop

Copenhagen 13th, 14th-15th of June 2014

Host: Visit Sørlandet, Kristiansand, Norway

In 2010 Europe received close to 3.8 million Chinese visitors. In 2012 80 million Chinese people visited destinations around the world. While Europe's and Scandinavia's economy are stagnating, the China's middle class is on the rise.

Chinese visitors are becoming the travel industry's number one growth-segment and e.g. account for 20% of the global expenditure on tax-free shopping. The rapid development and huge potential of this Chinese source market have been felt in Europe, also making the market very important to Scandinavian travel destinations. Still, the Scandinavian tourism industry needs to decide how to dig into this large market potential. How can one create Chinese niche tourism? How can the local become global?

This conference Scandinavian Things and Chinese Taste wants to gain a deeper insight into the Chinese travel market, the preferences of the modern Chinese travelers and the performance of our destinations in serving them.

How can we develop the best Nordic experience for Chinese travelers? Is The Little Mermaid or in China Town in Tivoli enough to facilitate this market? What happens when we move outside the capitals and into the regional travel landscapes – is there enough to buy in the local shopping street, is the experiences, foods or services right? How can the tourism industry work to make Scandinavia 'China-ready'?

The conference will furthermore give a Workshop in Creative Field Work discussing how to investigate and create empirical data on Chinese travelers and their taste for Nordic experiences while, at the same time, producing a path for a future travel market.

CHINAVIA II

PARTNER MEETING

Place: Wonderful Copenhagen

Nørregade 7b
1165 Copenhagen
Denmark

Time: Wednesday, 29 October 2014, 11:00-14:30

Visit Sørlandet (N), owner of work-package I Strategy and Knowledge, is inviting partners and other tourist organizations and businesses in the travel industry who want to learn more about getting “China-ready” in a regional perspective – outside the Scandinavian capitals. Leisure- and culture politicians which create framework-conditions for tourism may also have interest in the presentations.

Regional Scandinavia – the ØKS-region – and a ‘Nordic appeal’ in the Chinese travel market?

The first two presentations are based on new qualitative findings (2014) – interviews and participant observations – presenting opinions by, and experiences of, Chinese technical visitors and regional tourism industry.

11:00-12:00 (incl. 10 minutes for questions and comments): *Future China efforts in the region. An analysis of regional potential and future trends in the context of Chinese tourism and travel*

PhD Sarah Holst Kjær, work-package research leader

Dep. of Innovation, Agder Research, Kristiansand, Norway

12:00-12:45: *Journey to the North. Regional experience-products*

MA Daisy Cai and MA Rui Liu, researchers and Chinavia II interns

Dep. of Cultural Sciences, Master of Applied Cultural Analysis Programme, Lund University, Sweden

12:45-13:00 *Break*

13:00-14:00 *Concluding remarks and taking the findings further*

Professor Can Seng Ooi, strategic advisor for WP I, Chinavia II

Center for Leisure and Culture Services, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

We are happy to announce the release of The Chinavia II Strategic Advise Report: A copy will be ready for download at the end of the year 2014.

14:00-14:30 Presentation of Wonderful Copenhagen visitor survey

Wonderful Copenhagen has asked more than 400 visitors about their cultural experiences in Copenhagen during the summer of 2014, among them a number of Chinese visitors. The purpose of the survey is to learn more about the cultural motivations, actual experiences and opinions of visitors in order to work strategically with the cultural sector on targeting their product to foreign visitors.