

## **STRUCTURE IS BODY , LIFESTYLE IS SOUL : PRESERVING SETTING AND THE YUNNAN EXAMPLE**

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### **Abstract**

Yunnan Province in China is home to Lijiang and Weishan, two similar historic towns at dissimilar stages of preserving their settings. While both emphasized preserving structures, Lijiang's World Heritage site status created increased tourism which dramatically altered residents' lifestyles. Weishan has not yet seen expansion of tourism and loss of traditional lifestyle, but seems increasingly likely to do so. This paper will argue that the lifestyles associated with building groups are the most important and vulnerable part of historic townscape settings, and that benefits derived from conventional emphasis on structural preservation and promotion often come at the expense of residents' lifestyles.

Using the example of Yunnan's historic towns, this paper examines the following issues:

- How do we define lifestyle as part of historic townscape settings?
- Is Lijiang a positive example that enriches its community? How do we evaluate local lifestyle changes resulting from tourism? Is Lijiang's example inevitable or even desirable in Weishan?
- How do we assess the impact of World Heritage status on local lifestyles? Is this status a double-edged sword? If so, how do we identify and prevent future loss of lifestyle?

In addition, this paper identifies unique challenges to Chinese preservation, and discusses the tension between improving living standards and maintaining lifestyles. It also review preservation practices in similar situations worldwide, and suggests alternatives.