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## FROM THE EXOTIC OF DISTANT DESTINATIONS TO THE ADVENTURE OF SLOW TOURISM AND STAYCATION PRACTICES: THE ADAPTATION OF HIKING TOURISM IN A PANDEMIC SITUATION

**Acknowledgements:** THEAUDI Yvan, TUGAA Altantsetseg.

### INTRODUCTION

Sociologists and philosophers of the XXth century have analyzed the effects of rationalization of the society which disenchant the Western world (Gauchet, 1985; Winkin, 2001). Indeed, human societies always develop on the material and rational level, especially from collective dreams and social imaginary. Under the effect of the industrial economy, the part of the dream is gradually transformed into consumer products. The vacations became distinctive signs of social ease, while others in poverty are deprived of it.

Under the effect of the industrial economy, the part of the dream has been transformed and displaced in different areas of conspicuous consumption. The strong growth of tourism and new forms of tourism are the consequence of these processes of re-enchantment that have led to the inflation of commercial offers in the field of leisure and tourism. As a result, sports and adventure tourism is one of the fastest-growing tourism sectors. It represents a significant part of the tourism industry (Beckman, Whalley, & Kim, 2017; Cheng, Edwards, Darcy, & Redfern, 2018; UNWTO, 2014). One of the main drivers of demand for sports and adventure tourism is the urbanization and digitization of society. These phenomena lead consumers to seek active and authentic experiences composed of natural and cultural dimensions (Adventure Travel Trade Association, 2016; UNWTO, 2014). The growth of these new forms of tourism can be explained as a reaction to the disenchantment of the world. As societies changed, so did their imaginaries. Travel has become a means of creating situations of enchantment through the exoticism it provides. Extreme adventure and highly mediatized tourism to the Asian continent have developed strongly (India, Himalayas, Tibet, Nepal and Mongolia).

Prior to the pandemic, the global tourism trade was booming. It was one of the few economic sectors to experience constant and sustained growth. In 2020, global tourism was worth approximately \$2,000 billion, and its growth over the past 20 years was 420%. The economic reality of the pandemic period can be summarized as a series of losses, with less than 98% of international travel, with a loss of 320 billion dollars in the tourism industry and 300 billion for airlines (UNWTO, 2021). Prevention practices in the face of the virus have also reinforced the tendency to distrust the other, the foreigner suspected of presenting a risk. Internal confinement and restrictions on travel have accentuated this tendency. The images of abandoned tourist sites have fueled this fear. Nevertheless, they have also allowed promoting the ideas of

more sustainable and respectful tourism that highlights the attractiveness of Nature and Culture. It is a question of rethinking tourism development and transforming the current obstacles (pandemic, climate crisis) into forces of strategic innovation. This pandemic is upsetting our relationship with time and space. Tourism seems to face a significant change in practices and ways of travelling. The recent Covid crisis and the climate crisis have complicated international travel. Consequently, the new forms of sports tourism must adapt to the precaution requirements for the planet and health. We can say that shaping tourism is a matter of perception. Tourism professionals know this: wonder is a condition for successful travel. Putting people in a euphoric state (Winkin, 2001) is the responsibility of the professionalism of tourism development agents. They create the conditions for an illusion of freedom that is subjective. For example, what was once a sign of poverty has become a sign of social excellence. Thus, walking on vacation is a valued choice, whereas it was once the characteristic of the poor who could not afford any other mode of transportation.

Recently, the epidemic episode and the climate crisis have had a strong impact on the world

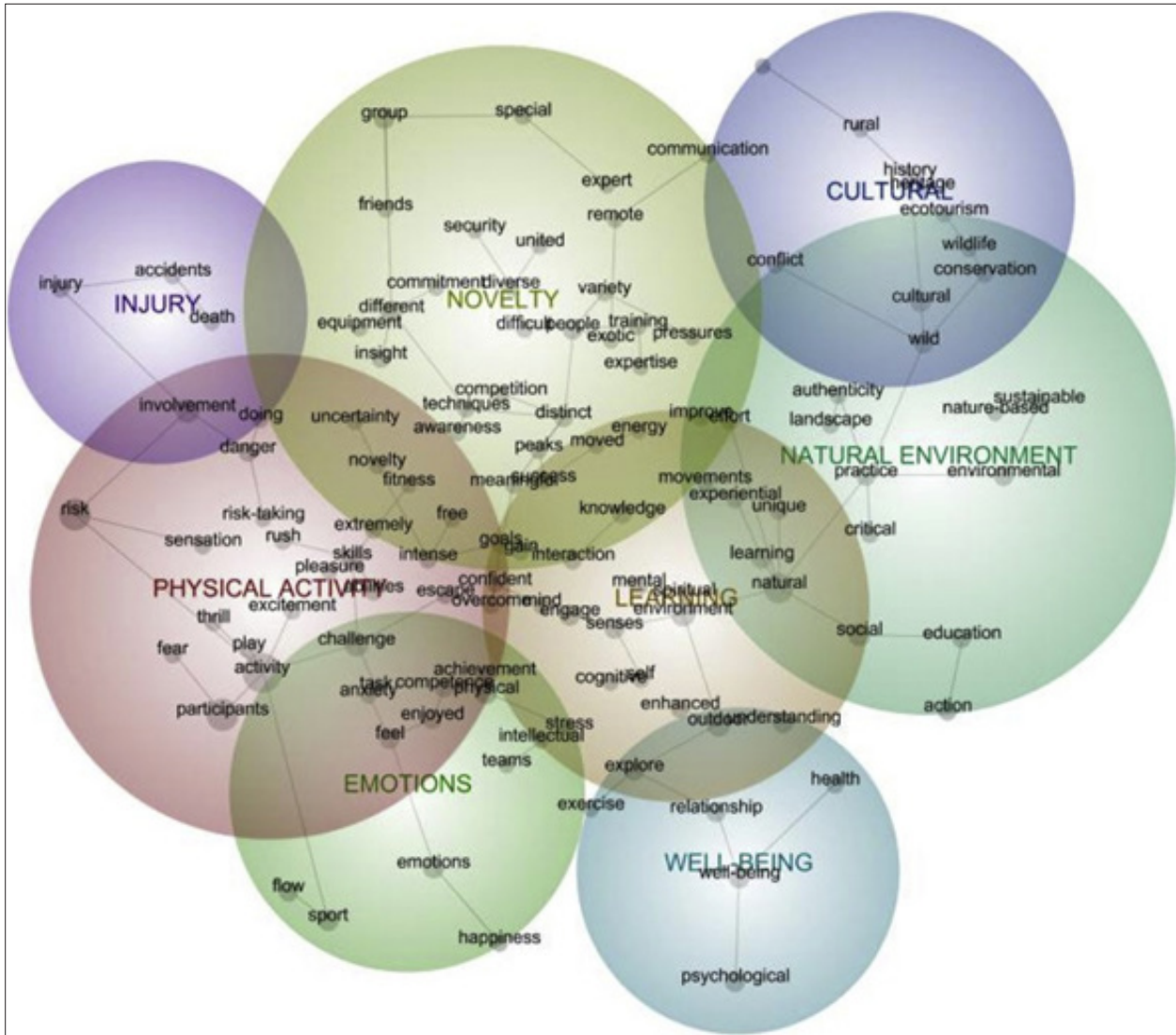
of tourism, particularly on the social space dedicated to sports and cultural practices. The process of disenchantment seems to have accelerated in times of pandemics. In times of confinement, human societies are all the more searching for wonder and subjectivity. The revival of sports and adventure tourism cannot be based on the same model as in the past. Recent experience teaches us that societies are seeking to re-enchant themselves with other previously ignored destinations such as villages considered unattractive through different practices and modes of discovery. Therefore, this work explores some of the transformations of long-distance sports and adventure tourism practices that seem to have mutated into local hiking practices but in original forms that we will illustrate with a few case studies. The practices of hiking tourism that could take place in distant and exotic destinations before health constraints, such as treks in Mongolia (Appendix 2), seem to be transformed into local hiking (Santiago de Compostela, Stevenson Trail,...). Our work explores how these practices respond to the practitioners' quest for cultural authenticity and adventure. Our work also reflects on the skills and training of sports tourism professionals to design and accompany these new practices.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

One of the reasons tourists seek authenticity is to resist the standardization of the world. The notion of authenticity is a social representation, an imaginary that requires professionals to identify the cultures and expectations of tourists. The true, the legitimate, and the original are the three concepts defining authenticity. Sensitivity to authenticity, to the atmosphere, to local architecture and typical decoration, to local culture, authenticity guarantees difference and originality, provided that each region has followed its own evolutionary path. The new sports tourists seem to be attracted by nature and culture-oriented vacations. Their expectations are for small accommodation facilities run by local people, so that they could go hiking on their own with good information. Discovering typical cuisine with local ingredients and experiencing local hospitality makes them feel welcome.

The growing demand for authenticity, nature, slowness, and sustainable development are essential parts of this trend. A recent literature review highlights the new sports expectations,

sports practices and adventure tourism clients (Janowski et al., 2021). Minimalist tourism practices are growing, such as hiking, mountain discovery and agricultural regions. There is the creation of "tourism bubbles" based on the safety of experiences provided by emerging unexpected tourist places, such as small communities offering conditions outside the usual tourism frameworks. Demand for so-called "transversal" vacations is developing, bringing together in the same product, during the same trip, aspects of the discovery of nature, cultures, physical and sports activities, and well-being. Active leisure is becoming more and more important as a vacation model. Modern social practices make sport leisure activities a health element. Therefore, an adaptation seems foreseeable with holiday offers, including tourist components adapted to the new post-Covid safety demands. The Covid 19 pandemic and the climate crisis have accelerated this demand. The climate crisis during this period incites even more to the reduction of mass tourism devastating the ecosystems. **Figure 1:** The new customers' expectations of sports tourism



Source : Janowski I., Gardiner S, Kwek A. (2021)

The concern for the environment has become necessary for tourists, who are more and more “connoisseurs”. Ecological awareness is growing. Health has also become more critical in consumption and solidarity in all its forms has clearly opposed hyper-individualism. Health has also become important in consumption and solidarity in all its forms has clearly opposed hyper-individualism. These issues became part of global concerns from the 1970s onwards, leading to the proposal of zero growth for a time, followed by new orientations in the 1980s (World Commission on Environment and Development) and from 1992 onwards the Rio de Janeiro conference in Brazil and the Earth Summits, or today the climate conference. These events have consequences on the regulation of tourism (Agenda 21, 1990), and professional strategies have partly turned towards sustainable development. New professional tourism strategies no longer seek only short-term profitability, but above all, to escape the irreversible damage and the economic, ecological, and social disasters of tourism that are now known to be de-

structive. Consequently, it is a search for a strategy of compromise and improvement of the capacity to control the contradictions between short and long-term economic interests, equitable distribution of benefits, environmental protection, health and well-being and control of the tourist activity that is taking shape. Three concepts are emerging: experimentation with the unknown, the desire for concrete knowledge, and the desire for transformative and creative initiation.

Slow forms of travel (hiking, horseback riding, donkey riding, etc.) are on the rise. The long-distance paths are becoming more and more popular. Old paths with a strong history are becoming high places of tourism. We can quote the way of Saint Jacques de Compostelle, which receives each year tens of thousands of visitors on foot, more recently by bicycle, electric bicycle, etc. This path used in the Middle Ages by Catholics on pilgrimage has become a mythical route for other participants, non-religious but tempted by the meditative experience of walking for several weeks or even several months. The tourist economy that



has developed to accompany these new tourists is expanding rapidly and its progression seems to be amplified by a transfer of clients who previously consumed long-distance destinations. These practices are developing around low energy cost stays such as hiking on mythical paths, full of history and culture such as the crossing on the paths of Santiago de Compostela, the Stevenson path and many other itineraries that offer simple and efficient accommodation conditions to walkers in search of slowness and authentic relationships (Poitou, Derai, 2020).

The presence of more and more young travelers on these itineraries has been noted. Moreover, some practices already became parts of positively distinctive character registered in their CVs as proof of their skills and experience through this type of effort. A niche of customers is emerging in long-distance travel, aiming to reduce energy costs by offering a combination of tourist, cultural, and sports discovery with a learning purpose. New service providers are striving to create this type of multi-dimensional medium-term product and to provide a framework for stays and local travel combined with sports and cultural entertainment. In recent years, educational expectations are gaining importance with tourists (Schneider and Vogt, 2005; Adventure Travel Trade Association, 2006, Outside Magazine, 2017). By offering a change from the traditional consumer tourism approach, this novelty can majorly motivate people to travel (Schneider and Vogt, 2005; Chang, 2011). This motivation lies primarily in having novel experiences in a sport and adventure tourism context (Cater, 2006; Giddy & Webb, 2016).

**Tools and method.** The methodology of our study is based on participant observation, of which we have recorded various observed situations in ethnographic notebooks of tourist experiences. Qualitative interviews conducted in a non-directive way documented the bibliographic work and some lived tourist experiences are the object of participant observation.

**Method:** Our objective is to understand the public's interest in tourism offers containing adventure sports practices in singular territories as well as their evolution during a health crisis. A multidimensional approach was used. Interviews were conducted with practitioners and professionals of sports tourism (Appendix 1). They were then transcribed and each interview was analyzed according to the major theme. The objective was to highlight the points of convergence or divergence between distant tourism practices and the new, slower, local forms. The most salient information for the study

was transcribed immediately after each meeting. Finally, grey literature was used as supporting or complementary information to the oral data.

**Tools:** The data comes essentially composed of subjective discourses from meetings with practitioners and professionals of sport and adventure tourism. In addition to the interviews, we used literature sources, which are useful for reconstructing the process of creating long-distance sports and adventure tourism offers in Asia and local practices in France. This involved the study of written documents listed in the archives of the institutions, the nature of which was very varied: articles in the local weekly press, specialized magazines in the tourist or sports field, activity reports for the general public, particularly to celebrate cultural events, and balance sheets and activity report.

**Participants:** These explorations are carried out from sports and adventure tourism practices during trips to the Asian continent to discover shamanism in India, Nepal, stay in yurts in the south of France, and go hiking with or without accompaniment and donkeys. These few experiences are supplemented by the points of view of nature and cultural tourism professionals, organizers of this type of practice. The primary data source comes from qualitative information gathered through interviews conducted with sports and adventure tourism professionals.

**Conclusion and recommendations:** The observations and testimonies that we have collected inform us about the changes in tourism practices linked to the epidemic period. Tourism practices that traditionally provided a change of scenery and exoticism have become inaccessible, and tourist stays are evolving, particularly in the form of "staycation" and "slow tourism". The concept of staycation comes from the contraction of the English word "stay" and "vacation". This trend started in the United States after the 2008 crisis. Lacking sufficient financial means, American tourists turned to nearby destinations. Today, in a post-crisis period, this phenomenon seems to be gaining momentum in France. However, is it a conscious choice of the tourist clientele to tend towards staycation and beyond to sustainable tourism or eco-tourism? Is it not a postponement of long-term tourism made impossible by the health crisis? One of the challenges of this study is to try to answer this question. The concept of slow tourism (or slow travel) is the fact of traveling by taking one's time to soak up the nature surrounding the practices and the richness of the heritage. It is to privilege encounters, to savor the pleasures of the table, with the concern of the respect of the territory and its inhabitants.

We could imagine that if the practice of long-distance sports tourism is impossible, people have to change these forms of tourism, which seem to be able to meet their expectations but without the need to travel far away. We will illustrate these concepts through the case study of long-distance tourism practices in Asia that have adapted to the pandemic context through local hiking practices. The reflection also leads us to question the skills of tourism professionals who must evolve to face the transformations of the conditions of exercise of tourist travel in the face of health restrictions. The skills of transversal assembly between nature sports and culture, health and well-being and the ability to bring out the authentic dimensions of local tourist territories seem more crucial than ever.

### **How does exoticism work and how to deal with the restrictions of long-distance tourism?**

For several years, exotic destinations have been experiencing increased tourism practices from Europe. The demand for exoticism has incited European clients to experience stays, for example, in Mongolia, India, Nepal, Ladakh, etc. The accommodation in yurts accompanied by a nomadic way of life brings us closer to the realities of the countries visited. Once a symbol of social misery, the yurt has become a sign of social adventure at the cutting edge of progress and philosophical awareness. Before the sanitary restrictions prevented travel to these distant destinations, travel to Mongolia and Asia grew rapidly. Tourist companies developed self-catering and steppe dweller tours. In these practices, the social component, i.e., social interactions between people, occupies a large part of tourism practices. Interactions in the group, during sports and adventure tourism trips, are considered indispensable (Cheng, 2017). Therefore, the tour guide's role as a facilitator of group harmony, social interactions, and conversations is key to a positive social experience of sport and adventure tourism (Buckley, 2010).

**In long-term practices**, the need for authenticity requires proximity with local populations. This implies a (great) simplicity of accommodation and often a certain distance from health structures. One answer to the difficulties linked to comfort lies in the alternation of accommodation: a few nights in a local people's home with one night in camping or one night in a hotel with a restaurant. To ensure security, the reception is always done with the support of a reliable receptive agency, a guarantee of trust and seriousness, and with the means to act. The professionals establish their level of requirement in terms of safety and inform the cus-

tomers of the proposed conditions, which implies a particular customer commitment. Within this type of stay, groups of clients are looking for interaction with local populations. However, when we increase comfort and security, we move away from authenticity. The relationship between tourists and local people is a result of this. There are nomadic camps where the traditional Mongolian yurt life is a fake representation while real families are living in these conditions within a few kilometers. This observation is related to how the clientele represents and values the destination. Simply put, the further away the destination is in the imagination, the more worrying it is. Unconsciously, we know that an authentic trip always has inevitable unforeseeable consequences. Furthermore, it is precisely this adventure that motivates clients to leave. Mongolia is the steppe and nomadic families; India is the wisdom of its people through their knowledge and sincerity; and Nepal is the Himalayas and a population known for its kindness. The customers are looking for a certain authenticity from the traveling producer who proposes to live the most authentic experiences possible. They seek to be in tune with the products they offer.

The impossibility of pursuing this type of distant practice has led clients to turn to adventurous practices of the "staycation" type, which we illustrate by recounting the experience of 45-day itinerant tourism trips at a slow pace with three donkeys. The part of the unknown that this type of staycation can provide also allows escaping from the standardization of industrial tourism. This trip, although local, is no longer destabilizing because of the language and the foreign culture, but because of the changing environment adaptation for travelers. Close travel also seems to function on an adventure dimension. The motivation for adventure sports travel finds its answer in the subjective domains of introspection more than in the criteria of material tourist comfort to which Europeans are generally accustomed. Since the pandemic, the postponement of long-distance sports and adventure tourism to local destinations has increased. This approach is illustrated by the story of a horseback traveler in Mongolia. The reconversion will take place in two stages of travels on foot, one through France with three donkeys and the other in a journey on foot on the roads to Santiago de Compostela.

### **From the Mongolian steppe on horseback..... to hiking in known terrain with donkeys**

A trip on horseback in Mongolia associated with a professional mission will be the opportunity of tour-

ist development at a lower carbon cost. Ten days will be dedicated to the tourist trip on horseback. It was to satisfy an ancient equestrian dream: to live in the steppe as a nomad and on horseback. The logic of enchantment was at work. A tourist company had in its catalog the adapted offer, proposing the equestrian dream, the great nature and the Mongolian life. Indeed, the experience of ten nights under the individual trekking tent, the mattress and the reinforced comforter usually equipping the Mongolian soldiers is definitely rougher than the ultra-secure nights in a normalized and comfortable hotel. Five French and Italian tourists gathered for a ride requiring some physical and mental effort. The first evening will be spent under the yurt of a family of breeders. The hosts will welcome you at the entrance of the natural park which will be used as the ground of evolution. The approach to the starting point takes place crammed in the back of an old Russian truck, the only one that can cross the torrent separating the horses. The journey begins with the ritual tasting of the welcome tea, salted and enriched with animal fat, an emblematic specialty. At dawn, the hosts gather and equip the horses they have fetched from the surrounding mountains. The saddles and equipment are rudimentary, Russian metal saddles or Mongolian wooden saddles, the discomfort will be maximum. The saddle cushions are recovered from old cars, and the stirrups are made of strings and recycled laces. Everything is as it should be. After the first moment of anxiety, it is clear that everything is adapted, and no incident is to be reported. Of course, sitting in the saddle is torture, better to learn quickly to stay suspended on the stirrups, which will make one of the riders see his cushion escape during a big gallop.

The team is composed of 17 horses, five Mongolian guides, among them: one expert in Mongolian cuisine adapted to the stomachs and delicate tastes of Europeans; one guide, the group leader, the oldest, a model of an older man as we dream of them, a true sage, smiling, open-hearted, agile on horseback as it is unlikely that we will become one day, stamina that is unfailing. Two breeders whose mission is to prepare the horses and watch over them every day, load the pack horses and adjust the riders' saddles with incredible dexterity. Our offers of help are always turned down as the work requires excellent expertise and does not suffer the inexperienced. Safety is at stake, they tell us through the youngest of the team, interpreter and cultural animator of the group, speaking an impeccable French learned in Switzerland. We will find on the way different landscapes of steppe, mountain, swamp, a lake of altitude. Our paths will

cross the tracks of bears one morning in the mud caused by night rain. The nervousness of our horses will attest to their recent passage. The simple fact of knowing that they are around is enough to agitate our imagination. Better, say our hosts, not to really meet them. The nights are rough, and the temperatures are always negative between minus two and minus ten. The installations in bivouac are done under the enlightened direction of the team of Mongolian guides. They are five to take care of five tourists, all riders of correct competence without more. The Mongolian horse is reputed to be sure and nervous, resistant to any test. We verify its truth of the first rides at full gallop. The multitude of holes in the ground, caused by the marmots, causes some worries about possible falls. None of this will happen. No fall, except a clumsiness of the Mongolian cook who will fall while climbing a low wall with her horse, without damage.

For safety, the group has a special radio, capable of alerting the emergency services by helicopter in case of a severe fall. During ten days, the progression is done out of any human civilization, except for some breeders' huts and a supply store with sufficient stock of vodka. At the time of a bivouac, one of the companions disappears at full gallop. He comes back an hour later with the precious bottles, officially forbidden during the trip. We are going to share a party as the Mongolian riders like them. The oldest of them disappears every evening for about two hours, with his rifle and disguised with a magnificent white costume and big ears intended to trigger the curiosity of the marmots. The too curious ones are killed and butchered, cut into pieces of meat and put back inside the animal's skin. Then come the burning stones placed in the abdomen of the marmot, which will be sewn up and placed on a spit until complete cooking. This will take about an hour. The hour is used to celebrate the success of the day. The hosts feast on the heart and bladder of the two marmots, which are such a delicacy that fortunately for our delicate taste buds, they do not offer to share. The tasting of the marmots gives place to very joyful and fraternal conversations. One of the Italian tourists takes out of his bag a wireless speaker and starts listening to an opera by Verdi. Listening to Verdi and singing it in the middle of the steppe amazes our Mongolian friends and the team of tourists. They sing in their turn traditional songs. The level of Vodka rises and the voices are released. The night comes with the cold. It is the evening of daring experiences. The five tourists commit themselves to sleep outside with the oldest guide, who sleeps every night with his traditional costume, the Del, and a blanket for



all equipment. The tourists take place at his side. In the early morning, around five o'clock at daybreak, they beg the cook to make hot tea and warm bread. The heavy hiking jackets thrown across the sleeping bags were insufficient to keep out the heat. The jackets are covered with a nice layer of ice.

Each day, the ride lasts on average six hours with many sequences of great gallop, then steep mountain passages, and unexpected discoveries, at the bend of the path. Thus appears a tourist camp of yurts which at the price of one hour of additional riding will lead us towards a beer fantasized for several days at the height of the heat, which can reach 30 degrees in a full day. The pleasures are simple but intense. And then a storm is coming, we are threatened by a rain accompanied by thunder. We rely on our guides who suggest us to take shelter under big trees in the middle of the forest. That leaves us time to meditate on what we have just discovered in the middle of the forest: an old Buddhist monastery, devastated by the Chinese invader during the period of occupation by China. The occasion to make us know the ingenuity of the Mongols to escape the massacre during a long period which unfortunately ended by the success of the well-informed torturers of the place. The occasion for our guides to evoke the tragic moments of the recent history, Chinese occupation followed by the arrival of the Soviet communism which will proceed under Stalin to massacres and deportations. One Mongolian in twenty will be deported to Siberia or executed. During this same trip, the contact opportunities will approach the Mongolian traditional medicines, made of suction cups, acupuncture and medicinal herbs in a specialized clinic in Ulan Bator. A solitary excursion by night train will lead to the gates of the Gobi desert for a night in a hotel of the Soviet period and a return in a train equipped as in the past with a female crew that prepares tea and various sweets, manages the untimely overflow of drunken travelers, with an iron hand and a knowledge that borders on expertise. The wood-fired samovar in the corner of the carriage corridor remains an exceptional image. The tea has never been so good. Thus, our hosts have been built an indelible memory on these various moments of very ordinary life. The cultural and material gap created the conditions for adventure and intercultural rapprochement.

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**AN EXPERIENCE OF PROXIMITY  
HIKING ACCOMPANIED BY THREE  
DONKEYS**

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It has been several months since the sanitary crisis nailed a good number of hikers to the house. At the first light, the idea of traveling on foot in the middle of nature and bivouacking under the tent made its way. Slow tourism and maximum respect of sanitary rules give back to hiking its letters of nobility. A 45 days journey is organized from the Alpes de Haute Provence to the center of France (Clermont Ferrand being the possible target of arrival) for a part, in the opposite direction of the Stevenson's Way, now famous since Stevenson immortalized it in his writings and that it became emblematic until giving place to a film. Here are the participants, each at his own pace and according to his possibilities to join the group of hikers with the three donkeys in charge of the material, water and food reserves. The group welcomes and separates participants according to individual possibilities. The group includes a few participants up to eight people, for a duration of two to eight days and walks ten to fifteen kilometers daily. Accommodation is in bivouacs in natural areas and in complete autonomy. The constraints of comfort and food reserves for the donkeys that define the places of bivouac. Setting up and dismantling the tents, loading and unloading the donkeys, brushing them, cleaning their feet, checking their good health, making them safe for the night and offering them the best possible pastures, all sorts of concrete tasks that put each hiker in front of his limits. There is a lot to learn from donkeys; for example, it is futile to try to make the donkey move at the same pace as the walker.... Nothing is done after a few hours of struggle, pulling on the rope and multiplying the verbal orders,. Finally, the hiker took the good rhythm .... That of his donkey. A beautiful lesson of humility and agreement with the elements.

To leave for a new day supposes the dismantling of the material, the remarkably balanced distribution in weight on each side of the donkeys, a work of precision, a copious breakfast, and the preparation of the cold meal of mid-day. All in all, whatever we do, if the getting up is invariably at 7 am, the departure is instead around 10:30 am or even 11 am. The evening meals are systematically done around 9 pm, with the headlamp, the down jackets and the cold which settles — an excellent way to learn to take it slowly. Not once does the idea of questioning this harshness of the days come to mind, even though they are sometimes exhausting, like this supposed moment of rest by the river in the middle of the heat. The stopover turns into a disaster without even giving any warning. Suddenly, a donkey gets stuck in the mud up to its chest, its body is sucked into the mud. The

mosquitoes in horde, fall on the animals and the humans. It is necessary to act quickly to get the donkey out of this bad situation. He is as if frozen in the mud, calm, confidently waiting for a solution. No animal panic, a tremendous human feverishness and suddenly emerges the excellent idea: to untangle the donkey and to make it oscillate from right to left to release it from its mud sucker. Once one leg is free, he takes advantage of it to pull himself out of the trap. The journey ends at the pass of the Mont Lozère, the last participants contemplate the sunset. The conversations, as at every bivouac, are introspective and deeply warm. Everyone shares their thoughts in confidence. Such a possibility of fraternity required the participants' creativity and obstinacy. To enter in harmony with the natural elements and the donkeys that govern the atmosphere required time, sweat, countless steps, a form of letting go.

### **AN EXPERIENCE ON THE MYTHICAL PATHS OF SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA: 50 DAYS ALONE ON FOOT.**

**T**raveling on foot, backpack of a dozen kilos, tent and sleeping bag included, fitted hiking shoes, hat and shorts adapted, water reserve of two or three liters. That is for the equipment a few changes of clothes, a minimum. Every gram counts, everything is thought out. The exercise is "simple": take only what will be helpful and eject from the bag everything that has not been used during the first eight days. Step by step, the rhythm sets in, the feet speak, sometimes they even whine, the muscles tense up, the morale weakens. Listen to what the body says, a beautiful maxim that is not simple to apply. Preconceived ideas are jostling each other, the idea of crossing limits, of surpassing oneself, as we say with a certain complacency, leads to neglecting the warnings. Let's go a few more kilometers, let's go to the next step. We don't take a break, as if the time was counted and we had to beat a record. This simple adaptation work, praise of slowness, and attention to the humility required to walk sustainably in good conditions is work in itself. Some are motivated by medieval architecture, the multiplication of visits to religious buildings; others contemplate nature, the sunrises and sunsets. The breath of the wind, the quivering of the trees, the flight of birds, the unexpected crossing of a deer, a boar, a rabbit.

We decided to leave very early in order to escape the heat before 6 am. The dormitory beds, made of metal, creak nervously, a few alarm clocks mark the beginning of the next stage. The bags are filled, the straps are fastened, the headlamps

take place and then gradually fade away as the eyes adapt to the darkness. It becomes possible to advance on the dirt road, without public lighting, which goes without saying, then in a headlamp. The silence imposes itself and the hikers do not say a word, muffle as much as possible the noises of steps on the gravel, the murmurs of the breaths draw up the sound background. Pauses and daydreams, like a sleep that dissipates step by step, leave time to get in touch with the environment, a few flights of frightened birds, rabbits observing in the distance, then delicately the day that comes. The colors emerge, become stronger, are covered with golden reflections. The sun emerges, the photos crackle. Every morning the dawn is a delight. Then comes the intense desire for a break after two hours of the night walking. The smell of coffee, tortillas, cookies and toast is reinvented with each step, bringing us closer to a village that is supposed to hold the most precious place of humanity: the bar. Sometimes it is the joy of a few rudimentary tables and simple, sweet delicacies. Sometimes, the hoped-for bar is hopelessly closed, closing day, vacations, definitive abandonment, so many reasons that plunge the hiker into an immeasurable frustration and that he will overcome each time by diving into the strategic reserves of his backpack.

To approach the other, to perceive him, to understand him, the common walk provides this opportunity without making it a dogma. Observe the other, guess him through his words, more surely through his gestures, trust the sensitivities that will assert themselves without more speech. When the vibration becomes unpleasant, it will be enough to slow down or speed up the pace to find the proper distance. There is no need to declare incompatibility. Everyone understands this language of counted steps. Conversely, when the steps are in sync, when day after day the travel companions stabilize and the pleasure of meeting each other becomes evident, then the dance of brotherly conversations can begin. Thus, at the foot of a steep slope appears a little boy of six years old a little tired by the heat. We greet each other and an intense emotion passes. And each one continues his way at his own rhythm. The little boy resumes his ascent, after having expressed to the passer-by that I am, his feelings of the moment: "I am sweating", he announces peacefully. He joins his parents and his little sister installed in his father's backpack. A few kilometers later, we are again in phase. In a gesture of extreme softness, the little boy slips his hand in the hand of the new companion of road. We share our impressions and thoughts on a philosophical level, never known with a six-year-old



child. We will share this harmony for three days. Our paths will separate due to family obligations. The traveler and the little boy exchange phones so as not to get lost. After declaring their mutual affection, the new friends separate. Tears appear as the tear is so violent. This is an example of what could happen at the bend in the road, in the middle of nowhere, as we say so clumsily.

### ABSTRACT

This article is part of a reflection on the consequences of the Covid pandemic in tourism practices. It describes the movement as acceleration and amplification of an older phenomenon of underlying generalized disenchantment that set off the frenzy of conventional forms of tourism. The article explores the process of developing tourism practices that are both more active, more committed to addressing the degradation of natural and human environments, and more immersive. This trend seems to contribute to the growth of a new kind of tourism, based on slowness, in-depth discovery, and even tour-

ism focused on the local and immediate environment, thus reducing the bulimia of distant travel. This orientation finds its meaning in “staycations” and “slow tourism”. The realities of the pandemic have accentuated the demand for practices that integrate the hedonism of tourism with an immersion in the social and cultural realities of the territories visited while reducing the tourism negative impacts. Therefore, our prospective study focuses on the development of new tourism offers and demands. The questioning explores this emergence of practices: is the customers’ demand in search of authenticity a simple means of distinguishing themselves in the usual game of culturally and economically hierarchical societies, or can we expect a human benefit and a capacity to transform consumer practices? The article relates a series of concrete experiments of these new forms of tourism.

**Key word:** Adventure, Exotism, Slow Tourism, Staycation, Sport.

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## Appendix

### Appendix n°1: International tourism, number of arrivals - Mongolia



Source : <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/MNG/mongolia/tourism-statistics>

### Appendix n°2: Discussion guide (zoom)

- 1 - What motivates these clients to experiment with different tourism practices (low tourism, staycation, spiritual tourism...)? Do they have a particular tourist experience before coming? Do they have particular expectations (practical needs, comfort, safety, change of scenery, exoticism....)?
- 2 - How do the groups of clients live and what interactions with the local populations in these experiences that are out of the ordinary in terms of comfort and safety? How do they express their satisfactions and difficulties? Are there any dissatisfactions?
- 3 - What professional skills are needed to create and manage these new forms of tourism? How does the idea of building such tourist products come about and what are the methods of manufacturing them?

# **"СИТИ" Их сургууль Боловсролын салбарын "Энтрепренер" боллоо**

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Монголын үндэсний худалдаа, аж үйлдвэрийн танхимаас Монгол Улсын нийгэм, эдийн засгийн хөгжилд бодитой хувь нэмрээ оруулж буй шилдэг, онцлох аж ахуйн нэгж, байгууллага, бизнес эрхлэгчдийг шалгаруулан өргөмжилдөг "Энтрепренер 2021" ёслолын арга хэмжээг зохион байгууллаа.

Салбар бүрийн баялаг бүтээгчдийг дэмждэг, хамгийн нэр хүнд бүхий тус шагнал гардуулах ёслолын арга хэмжээ энэ жил 24 дэх удаагаа болж байгаа юм.

"Энтрепренер 2021" нь энэ жил анх удаа боловсролын салбарын оны онцлох байгууллагыг тодруулсан нь 23 жилийн түүхтэй Монголын хувийн хэвшлийн ууган их, дээд сургуулиудын нэг "СИТИ" Их сургууль байлаа.

