Paradise Lost: the Making of Shangri-La

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The enthralling mystique of the story in the novel “Lost Horizon” (Hilton, 1933) about Shangri-La, a paradise on earth somewhere in Tibet, has lived in the Western imagination and inspired its quest for centuries. The Chinese Government has put an end to this restless search, finding the official Shangri-La in Yunnan Province. In this videography we research the making of the still under-construction Shangri-La as a Disneyfied tourist destination based upon three keystones: sacralization, ethnitization and exoticization. We take a step further and bring to the fore the economic, social, environmental and cultural utopias and dystopias attached to this new paradise.

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Tea began as a medicine and grew into a beverage. In China, in the eighth century, it entered the realm of poetry as one of the polite amusements. The fifteenth century saw Japan ennoble it into a religion of aestheticism—Teaism (Okakura 1964). With participatory observation in the tea ceremony and interviews with the tea master and her students, this research examined how the Japanese Tea ceremony can be luxury for those who practice it, both a host and guests. It found that the tea ceremony consists of contrastive concepts; rules and restrictions v. play and entertainment, chaste v. expensiveness. Using all capabilities, the host and guests create luxury time and space together, totally isolated from outside of the tea room.

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Our goal with this videography is to understand more about Brand Community. To reach our objective we’ve chosen to interview members of a videogame community: Portalxbox. The community directed at users of Microsoft Xbox players is one of the biggest communities of Xbox Worldwide, with a total of 70,000 members.