

# *A Journey of Love and Compassion*

**Paul Mak**



An exciting opportunity was presented to me early this year when an annual exploration tour to Yunnan, China planned by the Cultural Regeneration Research Society USA (CRRS), was looking for participants. My wife, being a council member of the organization, had committed to going and enticed me to tag along. The suggestions of steamy succulent seafood in Hong Kong and the authentic Shanghai cuisine sealed the deal for me. Our trip comprised five days in Hong Kong before joining the CRRS group to Yunnan for seven days, wrapping up our journey with a five-day stay in Shanghai and flew back home via Hong Kong. I was rewarded with plenty of tasty food in Hong Kong and Shanghai, it was however, the encountering in Malipo County, Yunnan, confounded me the most. I returned with a clearer understanding of the vision and the noble mission undertaken by CRRS. It sees the hopeless poverty of the minority tribes in Southwestern China where the children are in desperate need of accessible education. I was able to observe in person the fruitful results of the CRRS founders' compassionate work in that region over the past several years. It heightened my respect for the organization.

Being an oversea Chinese, born and raised in Hong Kong during the 50s and 60s, a dreadful era under the looming shadow of Communist China, my impression of China is not very different from the mainstream American Public. Opinions are ambivalent, from being a near-future economic power house to a country

that makes shoddy goods, exploiting cheap labor, and over-obsessed materialism, etc. This trip took me from the poor rural region of Yunnan to the most prosperous city of Shanghai. What a striking contrast, from abject penury to ostentatious wealth. It is the way of life in modern China today, a huge gap between the haves and the have-nots.

Here are a few observations I made during the trip to Yunnan:

- The visits were well organized, with optimal use of our time. Every event was taken place accordingly to a well-planned schedule, except at the mercy of traffic and road conditions which are highly unpredictable in China.

- We were accompanied by an official from Beijing, from the time we arrived at Kunming airport to the minutes we departed. I can sense that he represented central authority, assigned to watch our every move. Contrary to being officious, he was pleasant, polite and attentive to our needs. We later found out he was educated in Italy, a very open minded person that even became our friend after a week long together. We were excited to learn that through small talks with us, he had been receptive to our prayers and Christian point of view.

- I was surprised by the overwhelming hospitality of the local Chinese officials. We were treated as honored guests with deference. CRRS is an organization well received by both the central and local governments for its luminous track record. This is a direct result of past compassionate missions performed by several founders of CRRS, especially Dr. In-Sing Leung, who had pioneered a meaningful dialogue with the central government in Beijing over the years.

- The two elementary schools we visited were in the remote area of town connected by a one-lane dirt road. Travel time in general was unpredictable

