

Book Reviews

Tourism in China

A.A. Lew, L. Yu, J. Ap and G. Zhang (eds). New York: The Haworth Hospitality Press, 2003. Pp. xix + 325. ISBN 0-7890-1282-0 (pbk): US\$ 39.95. ISBN 0-7890-1282-2 (hbk): US\$ 69.95.

Tourism in China is an edited book which examines the rapid growth of China's tourism industry. Through the work of a multidisciplinary group of scholars, the book covers a wide spectrum of tourism issues in China, including transport, hotels, theme parks, travel agencies, ecotourism, marketing, leisure, economic impact, the historical development of tourism, and in- and out-bound visitor flows. The authors construct a view of tourism and the travel industry in China – past, present, and future – to offer a timely analysis of the diverse opportunities and challenges that China's tourism industry faces in meeting the World Tourism Organisation's projection that the country will become the world's leading tourism destination by 2020 (World Tourism Organisation, 2000).

The book contains five sections. Part One traces the historical evolution of China's tourism industry with four chapters on the tourism boom and the policies regarding its development since 1978, the impressions of Western travellers in China during the 19th century, and the Chinese vernacular heritage as a tourism attraction. The chapters by Zhang and Lew are a little over-optimistic but provide a sound descriptive analysis and overview of China's tourism boom through discussions of the related policies, experiences, and lessons learned. While Wang Xiaolun calls the readers' attention to the implications of studying 19th century Western travellers' impressions of China for the country's contemporary tourism policies, Wang Ning charts the key issues involved in the dilemma between heritage conservation and culture change for a modernising China.

Part Two contains three chapters. Zhang offers some insights into the current tourism research in China. The chapter by Xu and Kruse is a bit shallow but reveals the true mentality that prevails, namely economics will remain more powerful than anything else in China's contemporary 'rush for modernisation'. Lindberg, Tisdell and Xue provide some interesting insights into the ecotourism practices in China's nature reserves but offer limited theoretical analysis of the differences between the Chinese and Western understandings regarding the ecotourism principles.

Part One and Part Two both concentrate on the overall development and impacts of tourism. Part Three, with four chapters, focuses the attention on the operation of the tourism system. Yu's exploration of the hotel landscape provides an insightful analysis of the prospects and challenges China's hotel industry faces in the new millennium. Qian's study of travel agencies in China, although weak in both a theoretical and a methodological context, does help the reader to gain a glimpse of a specific tourism sector in China which has been rather insufficiently explored so far. Both Mak's examination of the tourism transportation and Ap's assessment of the theme park development are largely descriptive, unimaginative, and lightly theorised, but well referenced with interesting discussions of

the experiences gained and lessons learned in China's tourism infrastructure and facility development.

Part Four contains four chapters. Suosheng Wang and John Ap offer some insights into China's tourism marketing, while Xiaoping Shen discusses the short- and long-haul international tourism to China, providing some interesting insights but limited theoretical analysis. Honggen Xiao's chapter on 'Leisure in China' is much stronger in both a theoretical and historical context and allows the reader to appreciate China's contemporary leisure landscape which has been rarely studied so far. Hanqin Zhang Qiu, Carson L. Jenkins and Hailin Qu finish the section by exploring the Chinese outbound travel to Hong Kong and its implications. They believe China's outbound travellers will become a major regional and global force, shaping the travel industry market in the next decade and beyond.

Part Five concludes the book with a discussion on 'World Trade and China's Tourism' by Lawrence Yu, John Ap, Guangrui Zhang and Alan Lew. The four authors recognise that China's recent entry to the World Trade Organisation has opened up tremendous opportunities to the country's economic development including tourism. They also frankly point out that China will have to seek appropriate strategies in order to cope with the strong challenges in the areas of international competition, domestic industry consolidation, transportation infrastructure, and environmental enhancement, if the country hopes to achieve the goal of becoming the leading tourism destination in the world in the next two decades.

All in all, this book provides an updated and comprehensive coverage of China's tourism development in the last three decades of the 20th century. The papers are logically ordered and presented, with their distinct strength in the current and critical understanding of tourism in this important but poorly understood part of the world. There is little doubt that the editors attempt to reconfigure a number of papers along the major themes – China's Tourism: Opportunities, Challenges, and Strategies. This conceptualisation is obvious and discernable in a series of paradoxical issues associated with the Chinese social reality unveiled by the papers about China's tourism landscape. China is in the midst of 'modernising' its norms and values, but still has no civil society to counterbalance the power of the state. It enjoys the benefits of a growing economy which is generally considered successful, but is far from being regulated by the invisible hand of the market. There is intense social opposition, but there are no social movements that might lead towards a democratic system crucial to the continuous economic success in the 21st century. Those paradoxical issues are characteristic of China's current pursuit of a false modernity whose primary agents are the nation-state and capital, and one of its principal vehicles is tourism, in which places saturated with tradition and authenticity are constructed and consumed (Oakes, 1998). Although Ning Wang lightly addresses those paradoxical issues in his discussion of heritage conservation versus culture change, the whole book fails to recognise that an understanding of those issues is crucial to studying contemporary China where the obsession with achieving modernity remains paramount in the country's largely incomplete 'transition' into modernisation. In this process, tourism is not just a profoundly modern phenomenon as some scholars claimed it to be (Horne, 1984; MacCannell, 1989; Urry,

1995), but that it offers an especially appropriate illustration of the paradoxical struggles between the objectifications of 'false modernity' and the promise of an 'authentic' modern subjectivity that is likely to be liberating in a chronically unstable and ever changing Chinese society.

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Cultural Tourism: The Partnership between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management

B. McKercher and H. du Cros. New York: The Haworth Hospitality Press, 2002. Pp. xiii+262. ISBN 0-7890-1105-0 (hbk): US\$69.95. ISBN 0-7890-1106-9 (pbk): US\$39.95.

Cultural tourism, according to McKercher and du Cros, is a *form* of (special interest) tourism and should not be categorised with cultural heritage *management* whose aim is intrinsically different. In practice, there is a forced union between the two and this has led to the creation of many tensions in cultural attraction sites (p. 6). McKercher and duCros emphasise that once a decision is made to embark on cultural tourism, because it is principally a form of tourism, the fundamentals for countries must '[be] based on sound, commercial tourism reasons *first* and cultural heritage reasons *second*' (p. 6, my emphasis).

To illustrate the difference in the aims of cultural tourism and cultural heritage tourism, the authors dedicate Chapter 2 to a discussion of tourism and what tourists expect as consumers. They outline how tourism is demand driven and therefore cultural tourism must be shaped according to these needs. For example, shortage of time and finite budgets often delimit the experiences of cultural tourism consumers. Thus, the authors ascribe to a controlled, user-friendly, mainstream-oriented form of cultural tourism experience. The superficial nature of this experience is warranted because travel is about reaffirmation of a socially constructed authenticity which is based on minimal knowledge. Travellers do not want realism; they only want to experience an 'other' so as to come 'to terms with one's own culture' (p. 40).

Chapters 4-6 discuss cultural heritage management whose larger goal is for the 'social good' of both local people and tourists (p. 46). Readers are methodically brought through the steps, including an inventory of attractions, the introduction of legislation and professionalism (e.g. formalisation of codes and formation of bodies/NGOs), stakeholder consultation (and conflict resolution) and finally, a review of cultural tourism resources (p. 51). These processes are applicable for tangible (landscapes, sites, historic places, built environments) as well as intangible heritage assets (collections, practices, knowledge, living experiences). As managers go