

DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN CHINA IN VIEW OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Travel and tourism have become a strategic industry in China's development toward a socialist market economy. Two decades of development have yielded both positive experiences and hard lessons. The country is still probing better ways of developing a strong travel and tourism industry that can compete successfully in regional and global markets. China faces many opportunities and challenges in developing its tourism in the new century, although they may be quite different from those a decade before. China's tourism has a bright future, although great efforts will be required to develop it effectively.

China, an ancient Oriental country with a 5,000-year history of civilization, has become a major world-renowned tourist country in the 21st century because of its unique historical and cultural heritage, picturesque natural scenery and a rapidly developing modern image. Historical and cultural cities have saved a large amount of historical and cultural relics that embody the long history, glorious revolutionary tradition and effulgent culture [2]. Yet, many people don't fully understand and appreciate how big China is and how culturally different some parts of this country are.

The goal of the publication is to analyze how historical and cultural heritage has influenced the development of tourism in China on the example of ancient historic Chinese sites. In view of this, the following methods were applied: literature review, statistical analysis of tourists arrivals, generalization and systematization of the obtained results.

With changes taking place in social and economic conditions, a growing number of ancient ethnic traditions, cultures, customs, modes of living and environments suffer from increasing serious threats of destruction. It is detrimental not only to unique and precious cultural heritage but also to the historical, social and psychological dignity of local nationalities.

As one of the four great ancient world civilizations, China has one of the most complete sets of heritage sites over a broad range and boasts the largest number of World Cultural and Natural Heritage Sites. It is home to the Terracotta Army (the Eighth Wonder of the World), the Great Wall (one of the Seven Wonders of the World), the Classical Gardens of Suzhou, Mount Tai, Mount Emei and West Lake, among other natural landscapes. Moreover, Chinese heritage sites are found all over the country, with visitors arriving in a Chinese city very likely to bump into one or more World Heritage Sites [1].

China ratified the Convention in 1985, becoming a contracting party, and became a member state of the World Heritage Committee on October 29, 1999. In 1986, China began to identify and nominate sites on its national territory to be considered for inscription on the World Heritage List. So far, the number of its sites on the List has reached 53.

A symbol of ancient Chinese civilization, the Great Wall of China is one of the world's oldest and most magnificent man-made scenes, which can even be seen from the space. It enjoys the same reputation with another two landmarks of China – Forbidden City and Terracotta Army. Given its outstanding architectural achievement and remarkable historical influence, the Great Wall was listed as a UNESCO World Natural and Cultural Heritage site in 1987, the first of its kind in China [4].

The Great Wall of China has become not only a symbol of united China, but also a wall of tears and suffering, and it is also the longest cemetery in the world. The fact is that hundreds of thousands of people died during of its construction. It was built by its convicts, slaves, servile peasants and soldiers – almost all the population of the country served the labor duty. It is impossible to calculate how many Chinese people have fallen on such a grandiose construction, since the wall was built for about one and a half thousand years. And the bodies of the dead were immersed in the foundation of the wall. Their souls also had to protect the borders of the state from the raids of the northern peoples, and most importantly – from their demons.

Today, the Great Wall of China attracts tourists from all over the world. No description of the Chinese capital can be done without mentioning it. The Chinese claim that the story of this wall is half the history of China and it can't be understood without having visited the wall.

Possibly one of the most recognizable locations in China, the world-famous icon and modern day tourist magnet, once the exclusive estate of China's ruling class, is a Forbidden City. The Forbidden City (Imperial Palace) in the heart of Beijing is the largest and most complete imperial palace and ancient building complex in China, and the world on the whole. In the past most of the buildings in the Forbidden City were rebuilt many times, although they maintained the original architectural style.

The buildings of the Forbidden City fully embody the artistic features and style of ancient Chinese palace architecture, and can be called a masterpiece. Today, as the largest museum of cultural relics in China, the Forbidden City, also called the Palace Museum, collected and displayed nearly one million precious historical relics from all the dynasties. It was made part of the world cultural heritage list in 1987. For many, the Forbidden City is a time capsule for China's past and an educational institute for the public to learn and appreciate the history and beauty of this ancient culture.

The eighth wonder of the world, which is located in Xian is Terracotta Army. Now it is a museum to display the terracotta warriors and horses which were made in Qin Dynasty. These warriors have guarded the mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang for over 2000 years. In 1987, the Mausoleum of Qin Shi Huang and Terracotta Warriors were approved by UNESCO to list in the World Heritage List. The Qin Shi Huang Mausoleum is the first and largest mausoleum in China [4]. The army of clay soldiers humbly stands at their posts. They look like alive and everyone has the person's expression. China is known for harsh customs, and for the disobedience of the soldiers would have been the most brutal punishment of the ruler of the heavenly empire. It was on the initiative of Qin Shi Huang that the Great Wall of China began to be built, so it is not surprising that the fantasy of the great emperor decided to accompany his departure to the kingdom of death by such a colossal terracotta army.

All above presented information is systemized in Table 1.

Table 1. Overview of Historical and Cultural Sites

<i>N</i>	<i>Time of Construction</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Results for Tourism</i>
1.	770 BC – 1644	Great Wall of China	1987 – listed as a UNESCO World Natural & Cultural Heritage
2.	1406 – 1420	The Forbidden City	1987 – made part of the World Cultural Heritage List
3.	210 – 209 BC	Terracotta Army	1987 – approved by UNESCO to be listed in the World Heritage List

China's tourism industry has been flourishing over the past few decades to become one of the world's top inbound and outbound tourist markets. It is one of the fastest-growing industries in the country and is the new growth area in their strive for economic development. The boom in travel can be accredited to several factors including reform and opening, the emergence of new wealth and disposable incomes, demand to see the world, and the ease and control on travel restrictions; all of which, make China the third most visited country in the world.

The Chinese tourism market has transformed into one of the world's most-watched inbound and outbound tourist markets. It was estimated that the number of domestic trips in China would increase to about 2.38 billion trips by 2020, indicating an increase of over 50 percent compared to the number of trips made within China ten years ago [3].

To sum up all above presented information, it should be stated that China's tourism industry has begun its development thanks to the existence of a rich ancient cultural and historical heritage, examples of which were described in the publication. Tourist arrivals are expected increase every year and China would be the first most visited country in the world in the near future.

References

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