

Preface

This book provides a selective review of tourism research in China. We intend to offer our readers insights into, and fine-grained analyses of, topics which we have been researching for years and in which we can thus claim a measure of expertise. The book contributes to the sum of tourism scholarship – alongside other scholarly books on China tourism – in its unique positioning which aims to reveal the current state of tourism research in China in selected research areas. China has a distinctive research tradition and tourism researchers in China are subject to the influences of such a tradition. Researchers in China tend to apply their own institutionalised lenses and paradigmatic approaches in studying tourism and tourism-related social and economic phenomena. Although the tourism research community in China is relatively large in terms of the number of researchers, only a small number of tourism researchers in China are able to publish their research output in English in international academic journals. Most of the tourism research output produced in China is published in Chinese academic journals and thus remains inaccessible to researchers in the international research community who cannot read Chinese. There therefore exists a form of information asymmetry between tourism researchers in China and their international counterparts outside China. Whereas tourism researchers in China can mostly read and access tourism literature in English produced by the international tourism research community, the reverse is not the case. Many researchers outside China cannot easily access the tourism literature created in China in the Chinese language.

Such an issue was actually flagged in some email exchanges on the Tourism Research Information Network (TRINET), an international tourism research community listserv group managed by the School of Travel Industry Management, University of Hawaii. A few TRINET members highlighted the need to ‘dig out’ those ‘hidden gems’ of tourism scholarship in languages other than English. Unfortunately, several years passed, and not much has been done to reveal the ‘hidden gems’.

This book may lay claim to being one of the few academic attempts to reveal these ‘hidden gems’ to the international tourism research community. Considering the preponderance of China tourism in the world and the increasing importance of China tourism research for tourism scholarship, perhaps it is needed even more urgently!

There are more hot topics in relation to China tourism that warrant being covered in the book but were not. These include the outbound tourism market from China, smart technology and tourism, the impact of social media on tourism, city and urban tourism, heritage and cultural tourism, red tourism, to name just a few. We look forward to seeing these topics covered in future books of this type.

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