

Book review

Songshan (Sam) Huang and Ganghua Chen
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As previous reviewers (cited on the cover) judge, this volume offers a valuable appraisal in English of recent tourism research in China, especially that published in Chinese that is otherwise less easily accessible to foreign researchers and consultants. Certainly, the work, with reservations, is a welcome initial reference for research that complements and extends those by other authors. The study is most useful in terms of its explanation of the institutional minefield in the administrative management hierarchy of tourism, primarily, in rural communities, specifically local participation within government-, enterprise-, and community-dominated tourism development. Equally, the volume describes industry and local marketing strategies, tour operations, and related research. Case studies come mainly from destinations in the south-eastern provinces. The book summarizes the scope of research on these topics and methods and related outstanding topics to be addressed rather than the research findings. Possibly the most illuminating section for an international audience is the substantive effort to clarify the epistemology and philosophical basis of tourism and tourism research in China. This draws contrasts with western approaches, noting “the amorphous and fast-changing nature” of Chinese culture and thought and the mixed influences on current developments. Overall, the commentary and critique by the authors is limited and somewhat bland. Nonetheless, their citing of the observation that “the Chinese government’s endeavor of eliminating the difference between urban

and rural regions is in conflict with urban residents ‘reversed’ touristic pursuit of rurality which can only exist by preserving the difference between urban and rural” suggests the underlying intent of the volume. This and my own visits in China since the late 1980s witnessing the dwindling of distinctive historic locales in urban and rural areas translates to a dilemma that tourism in China shares with most nations with respect to domestic and international travel, and, to quote an old postcard adage, “Having a nice holiday in other peoples’ poverty.” That said, and acknowledging the scope of the work as background information, the book has little to say explicitly about tourism futures. There is, for example, almost no attention paid to current tourism trends, prospects, carrying capacity, or questions of longer-term sustainability, or methods employed in futures-oriented research. Another concern here is that the index is incomplete and in some cases misdirects (to incorrect page references) making it difficult to track even these sources. Arguably, with such reference material, a more structured tabulation is essential. Reviewing such a volume exposes another emerging problem: overviews of research, especially of such rapidly evolving themes as Chinese society and tourism rapidly become out of date, suggesting that a regularly updated electronic thesaurus would be preferable to a hard-copy. For data and projections, the Appendix summarizes sources of statistics, such as Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Chinese Tourism Academy. Unreferenced are the somewhat longer-term projections of international organizations (such as UNTWO and OECD). To check whether the near-term emphasis in this volume reflects Chinese tourism research overall, I undertook a limited key-word search of online Chinese tourism journals referenced in the volume (such as Tourism Tribune, *Journal of Chinese Tourism* research, that provide translated

Tourism Research in China: Themes and Issues

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Publisher’s Note: It has been brought to the attention of the publisher that this book review was duplicated in error under the citation Cole, S. (2018), “Tourism Research in China: Themes and Issues”, *Journal of Tourism Futures*, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JTF-10-2016-0030>. This version (10.1108/JTF-09-2017-062) is the correct and definitive version. The publisher of the journal sincerely apologises to the readers for the error.

abstracts or full text of most articles). This suggests that there is somewhat more speculation about Chinese tourism trends and futures and, in some cases novel empirical and theoretical adaptations that might be adopted by others. In some cases, translated versions of articles may be tracked to library accessible journals. Again, this speaks to the transient value of

such anthologies and the need for a more integrated adaptive online system for researching tourism research.

Sam Cole

Sam Cole is a Professor at the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University at Buffalo, Buffalo, New York, USA.