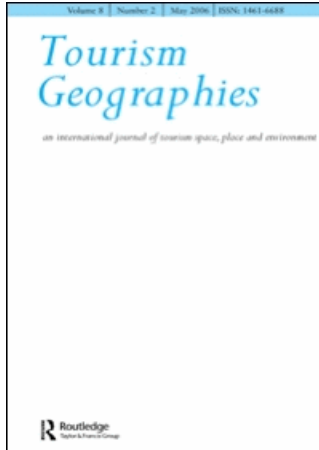


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Ecotourism in Asia and tourism geography worldwide
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Editorial:

ecotourism in Asia and tourism geography worldwide

As many of you already know, much of my personal tourism research interests lies in Asia, although I have also published material related to tourism in the US. A recent meeting of tourism geographers in Guilin, China, which I report on in the Discussion Forum section of this issue, further strengthened my own conviction that China is the most exciting place in the world when it comes to tourism research and development today and in the foreseeable future. While that conference was not focused on ecotourism *per se*, issues of environmental conservation and community empowerment were prominent in papers presented both by Chinese and foreign participants. I think that most of the foreign participants were impressed by the apparent high regard in which academic tourism geographers are held in China by government officials and the private sector. Thus the concerns that these scholars hold for the environment and communities have considerable potential to influence policies and development paths. As a sort of follow-up to that meeting, Jigang Bao, the principal organizer of the Guilin conference, provides a summary and commentary on the 20 PhD dissertations that were passed in China in the 1990s.

This issue also contains several other articles related to ecotourism themes in Asia, including David Weaver's overview of the geographical distribution of major ecotourism themes on the continent. We then shift to Southeast Asia where Sally Yea examines cultural aspects of ecotourism to the longhouse villages of Borneo, while Ghazali Musa looks at the environmental implications of dive tourism (often considered a form of ecotourism) on a small island just off the coast of Borneo. Finally, still in the ecotourism vein, we have a literature review by Brian Wheeler of two books related to the definition and codification of ecotourism.

In terms of international travel, Europe, of course, remains the leading global tourism region. The remaining articles in this issue deal with a variety of aspects on Europe, though not coherently enough to consider it a special theme topic in this issue. Neil Carr reports on his observations and

interviews with young holiday-makers in England, while Olivier Lazzarotti provides us with a commentary on recent trends in the development of tourism geography research and writing in France, including PhD dissertation research. Moving to Southern Europe, Douglas Lockhart reports on two recently edited volumes on tourism in the Mediterranean region. And finally in Europe we have an exciting announcement of the first joint meeting of German and British tourism geographers set for September 2002. As is the case in Asia, the study of tourism from geographical perspectives appears to be strong and growing in Europe. If only the airfares to get to all of these exciting conferences around the globe were a bit more manageable . . .

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