

## Book review: Hitchcock, M.; King, V. T.; Parnwell, M. (Eds.) (2010). *Heritage tourism in Southeast Asia*

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**Rezensionen / Book Reviews**

**Hitchcock, M., King, V. T., & Parnwell, M. (Eds.) (2010).  
Heritage Tourism in Southeast Asia.**

*Copenhagen, Denmark: NIAS Press. ISBN: 978-87-7694-060-7. 322 pages.*

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Heritage tourism is one of the issues most recently discussed within the tourism discourse. Tourism influx in South-East Asia and domestic tourism within the region has intensified in the last two decades. Along with this, there has been an increase in listings of World Heritage Sites by UNESCO, and a more intensive awareness-raising of national heritage issues throughout the region can be discovered as well. These developments make this book a timely contribution to heritage tourism in the academic discourse. The editors who had previously collaborated on the book *Tourism in Southeast Asia: Challenges and New Directions* provide more precise and up-to-date information on the topic of heritage in their recent book, entitled *Heritage Tourism in Southeast Asia*. The promotion of heritage for tourism issues by the states in South-East Asia is ubiquitous. But what is heritage? What is promoted? Cultural and natural heritage, an imaginary construct, is part of a wide political discourse and of the tourism industry throughout the region, and deals with the perception of the past, the transformation of cultural and natural heritage, and their adoption in the present. Various scholars and researchers have contributed to the highly complex subject matter. The book is concerned with this complexity by providing analyses of different theoretical streams and explanations of many issues related to heritage tourism.

The volume contains 13 chapters, 12 of them based on empirical research, an index, and a bibliography. The first chapter by the editors provides an introductory definition of heritage as a term and its connection with other problematical and arguable issues like identity, globalisation, management and policies, and its interrelation with nature, culture, and, of course, tourism.



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In the second chapter, entitled *Courting and Consorting with the Global*, Kathleen Adams (Chicago University) outlines the historical and colonial role of *Ke'te' Kesu'* in Sulawesi, Indonesia, the beginning of tourism, and how locals deal with and perceive their own heritage in the context of tourism. Furthermore, this case study contains local, national, and global perspectives on the involvement of UNESCO and *Ke'te Kesu'*'s fall from international celebrity as a tourism destination through its rejection as a mixed – both natural and cultural – site.

In the chapter on *Reconstruction of Atayal Identity in Wulai, Taiwan*, Mami Yoshimura and Geoffrey Wall (University of Waterloo) point to the relationship between culture, identity, and tourism, and the Atayal people's identity shifts within various colonial periods, and how tourism can be of benefit for the indigenous group's heritage. The theoretical framework of identity provided here is helpful for understanding the shifts in Atayal identities.

Moreover, Nick Stanley (Cambridge University) and Michael Hitchcock (University of Luzern) describe the role and importance of ethnographic museums in Indonesia and Taiwan, and how the museums contribute to nation-building, but also in which ways they are instrumentalised by the two states. The 'living museums' as described in this chapter reflect a special kind of museum which is in "part [an] open-air museum" to educate visitors and in "part [a] theme park" to entertain – thus realising the "edutainment" idea (pp. 72-73).

Heritage tourism in South-East Asia as a field of study yields many different analysable examples, so there is actually no need to hark back to extra-region case studies like Taiwan in the last two chapters. Despite the authors' giving reasons for adding the case studies to this volume, Austronesian languages as well as some common cultural features with South-East Asia are not in this reviewer's opinion sufficient reasons for their inclusion.

The next chapter, written by Can-Seng Ooi (Copenhagen Business School), illustrates the phenomenon of 're-making Singapore' by discussing attempts to 'orientalise' and 'asianise' the city through three different museums which are located in the city state. He builds his argument on a theoretical discussion of Edward Said's concept of 'Orientalism'. Each of the museums discussed in the text traces a special aim of the government's 're-Orientalisation', 'self-Orientalisation', as well as the 're-Asianisation' process within the region and in tourism issues (pp. 96-97). *The National*

*Museum of Singapore* reflects the attempt to build a Singaporean identity, whereas *The Singapore Art Museum* and *The Asian Civilisations Museum* present a regional identity and therefore inadvertently convey an imperialist attitude.

Keiko Miura (Waseda University) provides a comparative chapter of two World Heritage Sites: Angkor in Cambodia and Vat Phou in Laos – both ‘living heritage sites’, meaning that locals reside there – are explained on different levels of interplay between conservation and tourism management. The paper also points out the problems each site faces, and improvements and lessons the persons with responsibility for Vat Phou learnt from Angkor, where some effective changes, especially for locals, took place.

Nigel Worden (University of Cape Town) portrays the construction of ‘Malayness’ by means of the most important historical city in Malaysia, Melaka. He underlines Melaka’s cultural heritage in a historical and colonial context, how it contributes to develop a ‘Malayness’ identity, and how this cultural heritage is conditioned for domestic as well as international tourists.

George Town’s development and the problems this Malaysian city faces are explained in the eighth chapter by Gwynn Jenkins (University of Hull). She describes the ongoing urbanisation, decreased population, and the social change taking place in the context of the city’s World Heritage Site nomination. This has caused a touristic influx and various consequences for “multi-cultural users and producers” (p. 153) of the urban space and for conservation efforts.

The subsequent four chapters deal with different heritage issues in Vietnam. Mark Johnson (University of Hull) refers to John Urry’s classic *Tourist Gaze* while analysing how differently the researchers and tour guides at the *Hue Monuments Conservation Centre* portray the World Heritage Site to tourists in an “on-going ideological struggle . . . in the present about the past” (p. 175). He also focuses on the various kinds of tourists and concludes that the interests and intentions for visiting the site differ considerably among domestic tourists, which also contrast with those of international tourists.

The authors of the tenth chapter, Wantanee Suntikul (Macau), Richard Butler (Strathclyde University), and David Airey (Surrey University), demonstrate the nationalistic, patriotic, and symbolic character of three Hanoian monuments and the politicisation of the past for international and especially domestic tourists. The An-

cient Quarter, Hoa Lo Prison, as well as the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum have stood as symbols of national identity and “cultural anchor[s]” in a “period of transition” (p. 219) in Vietnam since the beginning of *doi moi* (renovation) era.

Nguyen Thi Thu Huong, who was project manager of the Handicraft Centre in Hai Duong, and Simone Wesner (London Metropolitan University) reflect on the role of handicrafts sold in one of Vietnam’s numerous traditional handicraft villages in Hai Duong as cultural heritage. Handicrafts as heritage became a notable tourism product when the number of tourists greatly increased. As a result, copying and cultural adaptation is taking place. The authors underline that the real heritage is displayed more in the abilities of the producers than in the final product.

Michael Parnwell (University of Leeds) shows in his comparative study the contradictions of heritage and tourism in the case of tourism management at Ha Long Bay, Vietnam, and Phang Nga Bay, Thailand. Whereas the latter is not an UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site like Ha Long Bay, it faces similar environmental problems through tourism and mismanagement of the site. Hence, being a World Heritage Site can be a burden – for the people and the site itself. According to the author, heritage conservation and tourism should be in a state of equilibrium. Recently the authorities have become aware of these problems.

In the final chapter, the editors outline problems of different perceptions of heritage and the fact that it is rather a European concept. Further research should emphasise more the views and perceptions that South-East Asians have about cultural and natural heritage, as well as their meaning to the local people and the connections they have with the site. The editors point out the necessity of more comparative studies of different heritage sites.

This volume brings up various theoretical concepts and approaches such as nation-building, tourism development, cultural change, democratisation, participation, and nationalism – all tightly linked to heritage tourism and therefore clarifying the complexity of this subject within each case study. It shows the instrumentalisation of heritage in order to strengthen nationalism and national identity, and to develop tourism. On the other hand, the same intricacy allows the different approaches to merely be superficially debated so that it is challenging for non-scholars to follow the arguments.

Instead of discussing more of the diverse examples of heritage in the Philippines,

Thailand, or other South-East Asian countries, extra-region case studies, although highly interesting, were included in this volume. Except for the case study on tourism management in Thailand and Vietnam, there is a lack of analyses of natural heritage sites, e.g. national parks, though the environmental preservation of the sites is extremely necessary for tourism.

Despite these little deficiencies, the book is well researched and provides compelling reading for researchers of social sciences, tourism, or area studies as well as for students. It contributes to a deeper awareness of tourism and heritage-related problems and their complexity. Each case study is well examined and well grounded in heritage tourism issues. The book is therefore not only a timely but also an essential contribution to the academic discourse.

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