

## CHINESE DOMESTIC TOURISM The Double Influence of The Politics (Policy) and The Nature

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### ABSTRACT

*Nowadays, one of the Asian's tiger in economy, The People's Republic of China (PRC) not only developing their economy through a pure industrialization as we can found in Mao's Era. When we throw back into the Deng Xiao Ping's era, PRC announced its new policy that is ready to face the new world, called the Open Door Policy. According to the policy, tourism became one of the alternatives to increase the economy after suffered from Mao's era. Furthermore, the term of tourism in China is not restricted as the businesses travel, as pilgrimage or as wellness business. Afterwards, tourism became a need, not only a want toward the Chinese citizen and grown up into the development of domestic tourism. The government of the PRC do their effort in accommodate the need of the citizen of tourism by bridging the tourism policy through manage the potential of the nature and giving the sufficient accessibilities to built the proper tourism destination.*

**Keywords:** *China, domestic tourism, nature landscape of China*

### ABSTRAK

*Salah satu macan Asia dalam bidang ekonomi, Republik Rakyat Cina (RRC), saat ini tidak hanya mengembangkan perekonomiannya melalui industrialisasi seperti pada era Mao. Ketika era Deng Xiaoping, RRC menyatakan Cina terbuka terhadap perkembangan dengan dunia luar, melalui Politik Pintu Terbuka. Hal tersebut menjadikan pariwisata merupakan salah satu alternative yang menjanjikan bagi Cina untuk mengembangkan perekonomiannya. Pariwisata tidak lagi terbatas hanya karena alasan perjalanan bisnis, kesehatan ataupun napak tilas. Pariwisata perlahan menjadi suatu hal yang dibutuhkan oleh masyarakat domestic Cina untuk mengkonsumsi produk pariwisata domestik. Segala upaya dilakukan oleh pemerintah RRC untuk dapat memberikan produk pariwisata kepada rakyatnya dengan menjembatani antara kebijakan pariwisata dengan menata potensi alam yang dimiliki oleh Cina dengan memberikan aksesibilitas yang baik untuk membangun destinasi pariwisata yang baik.*

**Kata Kunci:** *China, pariwisata domestik, nature landscape of China*

### I. INTRODUCTION

The People's Republic of China (PRC) is situated in Eastern of Asia and western shore of the Pacific Ocean. Covered with a land area of 9.6 million

square kilometers and a water area of about 4.73 million square kilometers. As cited in Travel in China (2013), the enormous numbers bring China become the biggest country in Asia and the third

largest country in the world. The topography descends toward sea level from West to East and gives rise to a variety of landforms. Mt. Everest in the Himalayan mountain range and lying on the southeast edge of China at 8,848 meters above sea level, is the world's highest peak. China is the most populated country as the number of the population reached 1,3 billion in 2005. The Capital city of PRC is Beijing.

The Yangtze and Yellow rivers, 6,300 kilometers and 5,464 kilometers long respectively, are the most important rivers in China and the Jinghang Canal, which stretches for 1,794 kilometers, is one of the longest artificial canals in the world. Qinghai Lake has an area of 4,583 square kilometers and is the largest inland salty water lake in China while Poyang Lake has an area of 3,583 square kilometers and is China's largest freshwater lake according to Travel in China (2013). China experiences a complex and varied climate. Most parts of the country lie in the northern temperature zone and subtropical zone and belong to the eastern Asia monsoon climatic area.

## II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As an overview in general, tourism in China has become one of the important growing element in sector of economic. Researchers such as Xiao-Long Maa together with Chris Ryan, Ji-Gang Bao

(2009 : 21-30) confirm the statement that tourism industry has a significant impact in developing regional economic, especially in developing countries region. China is one of the examples toward this. Among 31 provinces in China mainland, 25 provinces have recognized that tourism has become the major revenues in their economic system and tourist attractions and plans has spread widely in the country. As forecasted by the UNWTO, China will become the primary destination and tourist originating country in the world by 2015.

Travel and tourism account for 9.2% of the GDP and 7.7% of employment in China (2010). China's surface area and population are two advantages that other countries can hardly match. The country's surface area provides rich resources, and the population provides the market. Therefore, tourism remains a vital component in China's economy. In absolute terms the numbers are staggering as explained by UNWTO Commission for South Asia (2012 : 6) that:

*“According to the statistics released by China National Tourism Administration, in the year of 2010 the number of domestic trips reached over 2.1 billion, generating RMB 1260 billion as revenue. The number of overnight-stayed international arrivals was 55.66 million in total,*

*generating over USD45.8 billion as foreign exchange earnings from tourism. Therefore, the grand tourism revenue for the year was over RMB 1570 billion, accounting about 4% of the country's GDP".*

Considering of the fact that tourism in China becomes the crucial component in the economic development, three questions that will be concerned in this research. First, how is tourism in China in the earlier era? Second, How is the development of tourism in China after era Mao? Third, How the government concerning the development of domestic tourism in China?

### **III. METHODOLOGY**

Our methodology will be cross analyzing of official data, bibliography, and personal survey associating in the literal surveys. The research methods will be more quantitative methods because it will be using the data from the second resources. As mentioned by Mick Finn, Martin Elliot-White and Mike Walton (2009 : 9) that we can found the numbers as the qualitative data and supported by the gathered information in words. Mixing the methods together will support the information one to each other, for example the published data support by the observations. Besides, the research will be enriched by the literatures both printed or

online that is in line within the grand theme of the research.

### **The Earlier Tourism in China**

In the earlier era, tourism in China was seen as a propaganda tool rather than economic development, especially when the communist regimes under Mao Era (1949-1976). Tourism is not an appropriate form of economic activity during this time. Both of international and domestic tourism were almost non-existent. Most of the visitors in China was doing the politics pilgrim. There were only 125,000 numbers of visitors that allowed to entry the country because it was strictly controlled by the communist regimes through the China International Travel Service. The firm regulation was set up from 1954 until 1978 and limited to the closely 'foreign friends' that can be accepted.

Tours focused on the material achievements of communism such as factories, communism and revolutionary peasant and worker communities. The tourism activities were held tightly in the hands of state and this cause the minimal contact between the local people and the visitors. Promotion of the heritage sites was zero. The tourist accommodation in hotel was separated between several categories such as; foreign tourists, overseas Chinese, Hong Kong and Macau Chinese, and locals. As confirmed by Fung

Mei Sarah Li and Trevor (1998 : 362 - 392) that the socialist ideology influenced the tourism sector in China and this case seems brought effects toward the tourism in China was not well developed during the time.

### **Tourism in China : A New Revolution**

After the death of Mao in 1976, Deng Xiaoping took in charge to rebuilt the country in term of economic. He brought the second revolution through sounding the ‘*gai ge kai fang zheng ce*’ (Reform and Open Door Policies) in 1978. He has proofed to develop the economical sector within tourism through the ‘Five Directional Talks’ from October 1978 to July 1979. From this point of policy, tourism becomes one of the crucial aspects in emerging the economic system in China. As stated and noted in the second round of five talk,

*“We should try to increase income by all means through tourism. Now that we have decided to develop the tourist industry, we should see how to make it profitable”* (Deng, 2 January 1979)

The first talk was on October 9<sup>th</sup> 1978, discussing about opening relations to the international world and accelerate the development of civil aviation and tourism toward a meeting between the executive director of the US Pan-American Airlines. Besides, Deng also talked about

the development and investment of the tourist accommodations, and preparation of the tourists attractions in Kunming stone forest, Chengdu, Guilin and Lhasa. Furthermore, the second talk constructed basically the fundamental tourism management sources, namely, the human resources. The third talk was concerning about the advantages of the tourism development, mainly in economical term, social development and environmental. The fourth talk was more specifically focus on the way to increase the national income by preparing the tourism elements based on the nature and the culture strength in some provinces in China. For example, E’mei Mountain in Sichuan Province, Three Gorges, Dunhuang Cave and Jiayu Pass in Gansu Province and Stone Forest in Yunnan Province. At last, the fifth talk was on July 15<sup>th</sup> 1979, promoting Huangshan as a tourist destination. According to Honggen Xiao (2006 : 803-814), Deng also suggested that tourism as an earner of foreign currency as said in the goal, “Tourism in China should earn 10 billion US dollars by the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century” (Deng, on October 9<sup>th</sup> 1978). This goal has achieved in 1996 according to the statistic that released by the China National Tourist Administration (CNTA), 4 years ahead of the schedule.

The tourism agencies that are built to manage the tourism in China such as,

Beijing Overseas Chinese Travel Service (1953), China International Travel Service (1954), General Overseas Chinese Travel Service (1963) which was later replaced by China Travel Service in 1974, and China Bureau of Travel Service (1964) which was re-named in 1978 and known to date as China National Tourism Administration (CNTA). CNTA has empowered with overall responsibilities of the development and implementation of Chinese policy.

Era of Deng Xiaoping also urged the provincial governments to have tourism development plan. Since 1980s, the tourism development and planning has been a vital issue in CNTA and provincial government agenda due to the advocacy of Deng's. CNTA has made several top-down regulations relevant to the tourism development and planning program. For example, the first regulatory document was formulated and made effective in March 1999 as 'Temporary Regulations on the Administration of Tourism Development and Planning'. Moreover, the regulations were renewed with the title General Specification for Tourism Planning and released on 24<sup>th</sup> of February that effectively applied on May 2003.

### **Concepts in Developing Tourism in China**

We can add the four pillars in tourism that highly concerning the building of the tourist destination. In developing of the tourism, we need to concerned in four concerned aspects. **First, attractions** as we can assume that the greatest asset of China is its wide and large landscape area. Tourist attractions greatly affect the demand or the number of tourists visiting a tourism destination. The more tourist attractions, the more demand of the visitors to visit. The tourist attractions divided into natural and cultural. The more unique and interesting a tourist attraction, the more tourists who want to see or visit. Derek R. Hall, Irene Kirkpatrick and Morag Mitchell assumed that (2005 : 90) China is a country with a high index of diversity (diversity index). It has a high historical value, nature and unique culture.

**Second, accessibility** is a vital and influence tourist traffic. If an area is not provided with sufficient accessibility, such as airports, ports and roads then no or less visitor who wants or can visits the area. Supported infrastructures in China are vital aspects along with the need of tourism development as market-based economy. Urban areas plays important role in tourism development in China, not only as tourist origins or destinations, but also as hubs that provide transportation, hospitality, infrastructure, and facilities to support tourism in peripheral areas.

Accessibility is an important pull factor, and is influenced by the distance between attraction and destination.

**Third, amenities,** are no less important in tourism. Amenities can be supporting facilities such as hotels, transportation, restaurant, spa, and more. If in an area there are no adequate amenities, the possibilities to get higher demand will be lower. Amenities are strongly affected by demand and consumer expectations. Facilities or accommodations cause the comfortable feeling of the visitors in the tourism destination. China now has 372 hotels that acceptable to inbound tourists, of which 45 are 5 stars, 127 are 4 stars and 675 are 3 stars and the domestic tourists are usually choose beyond the 3 stars above.

**Fourth, ancillaries** are small things or supported, such as small shops and a tourist information center. There are also said that ancillaries were the organizations that encourage the policy of the government. For example, China as a tourism area there is also a merchant seller of food, drinks, and souvenirs. It is an income for local communities. Besides, government policies also need to be developed as a essential basis to develop tourism.

### **Domestic Tourism In China**

Zhang Wen (1997 : 565) wrote that domestic travelling before the late 1970s was only for the purpose of business trips, visiting relatives and travelling for study or health reasons. During this era, the most focused problem of the tourism issues was the international tourism. On the other hand, the development of domestic tourism was neglected. We could conclude that domestic tourism in China is the Chinese people travelling in China. The other reason was the infrastructure was not adequate to support the development of domestic tourism.

In contrary to these circumstances, the domestic tourism was increasing because of the fast growing national economy and the market improvement in living standards. Zhang Wen (1997 : 566) mentioned that national average of the national income per capita in 1989 was reaching 1189 RMB Yuan. This number has increased 3,44 times from 1979. For other regions that include in coastal areas can reached even higher than the others. For examples, Shanghai 4501 RMB Yuan, Beijing 3035 RMB Yuan. These examples showing that coastal area were able to provide the travelling for pleasure and the domestic tourist market began. As answering this phenomenon, the government decided to fostered the building infrastructure and accumulating

foreign capital in order to expanding the potential market of domestic tourism.

Beside the policy of the government to increase the important aspects in providing tourism, the other factor that influenced the growth of domestic tourism is the policy of the government to add some holiday to promote the national tourism as it goes along with the need of the citizens to refresh their mind from the daily activities. According to Zhang Wen (1997 : 568), that it was in the early 1990s, the Chinese government started to implement a nationwide holiday system that permit the employee 7-15 days to be freed annually. In 1994, the government then implement the 5 days work per week throughout the country. According to the policy, the citizen has more time to spend their leisure time for long distance travel and weekend outings. This policy encourage the visitation to the touristic sites as mentioned that 22.6% number of tourists has increased over the previous month.

As a good example toward the Golden Week holidays shown by Nelson and Cathy (2011 : 886), that overturned the Asian financial crisis in 1997 and could be the best examples of massive domestic travel. It is also noted that the

increased leisure time and disposable income has expedited the growth of domestic tourism, beside the supported situation in developing the market-based economy as the basis of the tourism development. The other example brought by Mimi Li, Bi Hu Wu and Liping (2008 : 309) is take place in the Eastern part of China that is concentrated by the upper defiles of disposable income also contributed a high percentage of domestic travel by expenditure.

#### **Development of Domestic Tourism in China**

Reasoning to the stabilization of the economical sectors in China that presented by the increase of the national GDP per year into 9%, the domestic tourism well cultivated toward this conditions. The increasing of the domestic tourist arrivals was occurred from 1990 to 1995 by 17, 62% and the average annual receipts revenues increased by 51,39%. In 1990, the number of tourists arrival reached 280 million and the tourists receipts were 17 billion RMB yuan. The growth of the number of domestic tourists arrival sharply developed into 640 million and the tourists receipt reached 163,8 billion RMB yuan as shown by the table 1 that mentioned in Mimi Liu (2008 : 309).

**Table 1.** China Domestic Tourism 1985-1996

Year	Domestic tourist arrivals (million)	Domestic tourist receipt (billion RMB Yuan)	Average expenditure per visitor (RMB Yuan)	Tourist arrivals/ population (%)
1985	240	8.0	33.33	-
1986	270	10.6	39.26	-
1987	290	14.0	48.28	-
1988	300	18.7	62.33	-
1989	240	15.0	62.50	-
1990	280	17.0	60.71	23.73
1991	290	20.0	68.97	24.37
1992	330	25.0	75.76	27.50
1993	410	86.4	210.73	34.17
1994	520	102.3	196.73	43.67
1995	630	137.6	218.41	52.40
1996	640	163.8	255.94	53.00

As it is shown in Table 2 that written by Zhang Wen (1997 : 567), we can conclude that in the 1990s the domestic tourists preferred to go travelling as an individual traveler rather than the group traveler. According to the China Domestic

Tourism Sample Survey, the number of tourists taking part in package tours was 8.2 million in 1993; while 2 years later in 1995, the number then jumped into 34.65 million. The percentage of the annual average increase is 105.56%.

**Table. 2** Percentage of types of Domestic Tourists

Year	1993	1994	1995
Group Traveler	2.0	2.9	5.5
Individual Traveler	98.0	97.1	94.5

As seen in Table 3 that most of the domestic tourists in 1993 and 1995 doing the sightseeing and holiday.

Visiting relatives become the second issues that is important toward the domestic tourists in China.



**Table. 3** Proportions of classified tourists

Year	1993	1994	1995
Sightseeing and holiday	46.0	38.1	45.4
Visiting relatives	20.5	23.6	22.5
Health	1.0		
Sports and cultural exchange	2.2		
Business	4.6	5.2	4.0
Conference	23.6	26.0	16.8
Others	5.4	7.1	8.1

The development of domestic tourism in China grow rapidly that during 2005 to 2007 increase the number of the tourists along with the expenditure as it shown in Table 4. The development of the tourism in the first six months of 2011, total revenue from tourism in China exceeded 1 trillion RMB as reported by the CNTA. As cited in online source written on February 2013, the percentage of the

increasing development in tourism reached 18% from last year in the same period. Domestic tourism made up about 920 billion RMB of that total and 22% from the total revenue in tourism. The number of the domestic tourists who travelled inside the country was approximately 1.33 billion people and this has been an increase up to 13% since 2010.

**Table 4.** Major Statistics of Domestic Tourism

Year	Domestic Travelers (100 Million)	Rate	Domestic Tourism Expenditure	Average Expenditure
2007	16.10	122.5	7770.62	482.6
2006	13.94	106.1	6229.74	446.9
2005	12.12	92.7	5285.86	436.1

Source: CNTA

As the biggest asset of the tourism in China is the large land area, China has numerous of National Park which basically supported by the nature condition. As Xiao-Long, Chris and Ji-Gang (2009 : 21-30) mentioned that in China, 80% domestic tourist

trips are to national parks, it means the Park hosted more than 1 billion domestic travelers in 2006. In 2007 the number of the national parks reached more or less 1000 with different classifications in combined area of more than 96,000 square kilometer.

It is located in the Eastern part of China, exactly in Jiangxi Province and has large area within 22,950 ha. Mount Sanqingshan has awarded into one of world the heritage from UNESCO since July 6<sup>th</sup> 2008, within the category natural phenomena or natural beauty. The attractions here serve the view of the peak of the mount Huaiyu that constructed by the 89 granite pillars and 48 granite peaks. The most popular peak which look like with the Taoism God in a row, namely, Yujing, Yuxu, Yuhua resting in a row, hence the name Mountain Sanqingshan. As cited in official site of UNESCO on February 2013, the height in China promotes the several waterfalls, and surrounded by lakes and springs. The access to get there can reached by suspended walking trails in the park permits visitors to appreciate and take a gaze the scenery.

The national park is very well funded by the Central Government through the Five years plan. The contribution together brought by Jiangxi Provincial government and Shangrao Municipality to prevent the harm impact and to keep the national park as it is. The intervention of the government toward the concern of the environmental aspects was shown by the removal of 12 hotels near the park

in order to eliminate overnight accommodation in the park. The number of investment in this park mentioned by UNWTO is reached 235 million USD since 1990. The number of visitors since 1988 reached 37,000 visitors and nowadays receiving around 300,000 visitors per year.

#### **IV. CONCLUSIONS**

The domestic tourism in China is highly influenced by the tourism policy of the government in China. First, from the Deng Xiaoping era that concerning tourism as one of the major elements in order to develop economic sector. Since the growth of the economic in China after Deng's Open Door Policy, the growth of the tourism managed into a positive direction. Supported by the policy of the government to built the infrastructure, accommodation and facilities that necessary to be added in aim to create a better tourism future. As the well-developed economic condition, government also gives the citizen a longer holiday in 1990s and this brought a flourish toward the domestic tourism in China in the same era. Domestic tourists visit the nature landscape the most because of it's the main asset of tourist attractions in China.

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