

Preface

Geotourism is an alternative tourism which may be categorised under nature tourism or alternative tourism. It can be practiced in both natural and urbanised areas. Its main focus is the sustainable use of geology and natural landscape as tourism resources to attract tourists, provide geoscience knowledge to the public and students and encourage appreciation and develop a sense of place and value for protection. The National Geographic has a different definition as it views geotourism as geographical tourism which embraces geographical characteristics as tourist attraction. Geographical characteristics include varied natural and cultural features of a place and do not highlight the values of geology and natural landscape which form the foundation of all ecological and cultural components of a tourist destination. This definition makes not much distinction when compared to the usual mass tourism.

Geotourism in this book has been interpreted as geological tourism with focus on geology and its interaction with ecology and culture. It is since the early 1980s that this geotourism has been named 'tourism earth-science' in China. Chinese geologists have been adopting geoscientific methods in exploring tourism opportunities provided by geology and the natural landscape. This book was first published in Chinese in 1991 by Peking University Press under the title of *An Introduction to Tourism Earth-science*. It is the first volume of *China's Geotourism Series*, compiled under the auspices of the Chinese Academy of Tourism earth-science and Geopark Research, Geological Society of China. It summarises the Academy's research findings in geotourism in the past few decades with the objective to enhance the theoretical level of this emerging multidisciplinary subject and to improve its research methods for its long-term development. Such development has far-reaching impact on China's tourism due to the country's extremely rich geodiversity. In retrospect, the decision to publish the Chinese version was made during a work meeting held in Wuhan in 1986 when some members of the Academy drafted the outline of a book to encourage the application of earth-science in tourism. In 1987, the Academy invited its members to write academic papers on theories and methodology of this new perspective of applied geoscience. It has since then been described in Chinese as 'tourism earth-science'.

During the seminar in Mount Tianmu on tourism earth-science, the content of the book was further discussed, amended and enhanced with additional contribution of the research findings of members of the Academy. An editorial board of *An Introduction to Tourism Earth-science* was set up after the seminar to take care of the contribution of chapters. It took another year before the book was finally completed. This book was therefore a collective work of enthusiastic members whom I would like to extend my greatest gratitude to.

The idea of having an English version of *An Introduction to Tourism Earth-science* stems from the rapid growth of global geoparks and geotourism around the globe since 2004. The English version of this book is renamed *The Principles of Geotourism* to provide global readers a definition and theoretical framework of geotourism, which has used and practised in China for over three decades. This book originally contained 11 chapters: Chap. 1 by Anze Chen and Yunting Lu; Chap. 2 by Yunting Lu; Chap. 3 by Erkuang Zhang; Chap. 4 by Qinglian Wang; Chap. 5 by Kang Guo; Chap. 6 by Ninggao Xie; Chap. 7 by Weixin Li and Yunting Lu; Chap. 8 by Yunting Lu and Chap. 9 by Daolong Xing. Two new chapters Chap. 10 on Geopark and Chap. 11 on Prospect of Tourism Earth-science were added by Anze Chen to update the latest development in geoparks and their impact on geotourism. The late Prof. Yunting Lu and I were editors of the original Chinese version while Guangzhen Cui had made final revisions to the book. The editorial board was later joined by Dr. Young Ng who had prepared and edited the English version of the book. On behalf of the editorial board, we welcome any suggestions and comments which will definitely be very helpful for us to prepare for any future modification of the book.

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