

WESTERN SOCIETY'S HERITAGE IN FOCUS BY ASIAN VISITORS

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Abstract

Increasing Asian visits to the sites of Western Culture have placed in the foreground of discussion how is the Western heritage presented in guidebooks. Yearly more than 10 million Asians visit Europe; the number of tourists originating in the Far East has in particular increased in East Central Europe. If the tourism industry would focus on demands of visitors from Asia (Austria: 980,000; Hungary: 320,000; Croatia: 251,000; Slovenia: 101,000), they would have to focus on the enlightenment of natural and cultural heritage, including Christian faith. Major cathedrals in nation-state capitals have outstanding works of religious art. Guidebooks are providing general directions and information. Visitors of Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist faith should receive information beyond the basic Christian-centered description. The analyses of the description of four Catholic cathedrals in East Central Europe in 12 popular guidebooks (Lonely Planet, DK Eyewitness Guides, Rough Guides) clearly demonstrates that the in-depth religious contents in the available travel literature, written in English, are minimal.

Keywords Asian Tourists, Christian Art, Guide Books, Tourism, East Central Europe

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