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**Festival Tourism in China**

**Dragon Boat Festival and Tourism**

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# Content

Acknowledgement .....	1
Part I. Introduction .....	3
Part II. Literature Review.....	5
2.1 Festival Tourism .....	5
2.2 Festivals in China.....	6
2.3. The development of Festival Tourism in China.....	10
Part III. Festival Tourism through Dragon Boat Festival .....	12
3.1 Research Questions:.....	12
3.2 Background of the Dragon Boat Festival.....	13
3.3 Research Findings .....	17
3.3.1 Field Trips .....	17
3.3.1.1 Field trip to Cicheng .....	18
3.3.1.2 Field trip to Xixi Wetland .....	22
3.3.2 Interviewing travel agent .....	37
3.3.3 Celebrations in Other regions .....	39
Part IV. Existing problems and suggestions .....	42
Problem 1: Lack of Tourism promotion .....	42
Suggestions .....	42
Problem 2: Uneven level between supply and demand .....	45
Suggestions .....	45
Problem 3: Difficulty in stimulating tourists' interests.....	47
Suggestions .....	48
Problem 4: Limited supplier capacity in tourist areas.....	50
Suggestions .....	50
Suggestions for Tourists.....	50
Part V. Conclusion .....	52

Reference .....	54
Appendix: Questionnaire .....	56

# Acknowledgement

It is a distinct privilege for us to introduce our Festival Tourism research project and share our investigation findings in China.

With the rapid development of tourism in recent years, tourists in China have a variety of modern facilities and quality services when travelling at home and abroad. As a country with 5,000 years history and 56 nationalities, China has abundant resources of festivals. Nowadays there is a strong trend of combining festival with travelling to fulfill the increased demands of tourists. In this project, we have chosen one typical festival---- the Dragon Boat Festival and to explore how Festival Tourism is being practiced in our country. Through field trips and interviews of key tourism operators and administrators, we intended our project to identify features and forms of Festival Tourism being practiced in China.

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## **Part I. Introduction**

This report documents the process that we had experienced when undertaking our research on the forms and practices of the Festival Tourism in China. In this project, we visited a series of tourist destinations, conducted a questionnaire, and interviewed key individuals of the travel agency. We chose the Dragon Boat Festival as a case of Festival Tourism. During our research, we picked two places for our field trip. One is Ningbo Cicheng County and the other is Hangzhou XiXi Wetland. Both of them have diversified activities during the festival.

Cicheng is an ancient town with thousands of year's history and culture heritage. We can feel the culture atmosphere of the Dragon Boat Festival, such as culture exhibition, local opera and sachets and so on.

Xixi National Wetland Park is not only an urban wetland and rural wetland. It is also a cultural wetland. Tourists can experience the festival activities such as the dragon boat race in Xixi Wetland.

Apart from the above field trips, we especially interviewed Ms. Pan Huimin, the Vice President from the China International Travel Service about what the travel agency is doing currently.

In the coming sections, we will first discuss the concept of Festival Tourism in China. Then we will describe the Festival Tourism through the case of the Dragon Boat Festival, including our field trips, questionnaire and

interview, followed by the existing problems we found out in our research and we tried to make some suggestions based on these problems.

## **Part II. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Festival Tourism**

Festival Tourism is still a new tourism product in China. There are many definitions on Festival Tourism. The latest one suggests that festival tourism includes festivals, rallies, fairs, expositions, sports and cultural life, etc. It has various sizes, a specific theme and hold regularly or irregularly in the same region in a particular time, it can attract large number of tourists outside the region unlike conventional life line of people, events and programs (Lian, 2004). Festival Tourism could be divided into traditional festival and modern festival according to its origins and activities involved. Traditional festivals are passed from generation to generation based on rich cultural heritage. On the other hand, festivals are planed entirely in line with market demand, based on local characteristics or consumer behavior (Huang, 2004). Based on Lian and Huang theories, a new concept of Festival Tourism was brought up by the two scholars. Festival Tourism, a kind of festival activity that has tourism value and has gotten certain tourism benefits, can bring significant economic, cultural and social benefits in a short period of time under a successful operation. Among these benefits, cultural function and economic function are enormous. Culture is the soul of the festival and the economy is the life of the festival. These two aspects are interrelated.

Festival Tourism is a special tourism product. Generally speaking,

festivals could fall into a national cultural festival or a reasonable extension of regional culture. The uniqueness means that it will not be repeated within a certain area and not easy to replicate in other regions, either.

Festival Tourism plays an important role in the current tourism activities. Most people will especially travel to attend a festival. Therefore, festival tourism activities can be arranged in a reasonable time so that it can help the area be one of top destinations. In the local culture, the Festival Tourism has played an active role to enhance urban functions and shape tourism image to attract tourists.

## **2.2 Festivals in China**

There are many definitions about festival. People have different understandings about the meaning of festival. Among all the definitions, one of the most generally accepted is that festival is an event, usually and ordinarily staged by a local community, which represents and celebrates some unique aspect of that community (Wikipedia, 2011)



Map of Chinese nationalities

China is a country with 56 nationalities. Han is the biggest nationality with 1.2 billion populations and it occupies 91% of total population in China. Followed by Zhuang nationality, it has the population of 17 million, and it is also the biggest ethnic minority. The second biggest minority nationality is Man nationality and the population is 11 million. Therefore, Han culture carries a main part in Chinese history. Despite the diversity of nationalities, some festivals are celebrated in the whole country.

<b>Names of festivals</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Main activities</b>
<b>Spring Festival</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> day of 1<sup>st</sup> lunar month</b>	<b>Fireworks, firecrackers, lion dance, lantern exhibition</b>
<b>Lantern Festival</b>	<b>15<sup>th</sup> day of 1<sup>st</sup> lunar month</b>	<b>Lantern parade and lion dance</b>
<b>Tomb Sweeping Day</b>	<b>104 days after winter solstice</b>	<b>Sweeping tomb, offering food, joss paper accessories, wine, libation to the ancestors</b>
<b>Dragon-Boat Festival</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> day of 5<sup>th</sup> lunar month</b>	<b>Dragon boat race, eat dumplings wrapped in lotus leaves <i>Zong zi</i>, drinking realgar wine</b>
<b>Double Seventh Day</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> day of 7<sup>th</sup> lunar month</b>	<b>The festival for lovers</b>
<b>Mid-Autumn Festival</b>	<b>15<sup>th</sup> day of 8<sup>th</sup> lunar month</b>	<b>Eating mooncake, family union meal</b>
<b>Double Ninth Festival</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup> day of 9<sup>th</sup> lunar month</b>	<b>Autumn outing and mountain climbing, some Chinese also visit the graves of their ancestors to pay their respects</b>
<b>National day</b>	<b>Oct 1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Seeing the ceremonial raising of the national flag, setting off fireworks</b>
<b>Winter Solstice Festival</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> or 22<sup>nd</sup> of December</b>	<b>Eating Tangyuan (glutinous rice flour is mixed with a small amount of water to form balls and then cooked and served in boiling water.)</b>
<b>Congee Festival</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> day of 12<sup>th</sup> lunar month</b>	<b>People usually eat Laba congee, which is made of mixed grains and fruits</b>

The list of traditional festivals celebrated in Han nationality

Among those, the four grandest festivals in China are Spring Festival, Mid-autumn Festival, National Day and Dragon Boat Festival.

Spring Festival is regarded by the Chinese people as the grandest and most important annual festival, because it is a time when all family members get together. Spring Festival is also known as the Chinese New Year, same as Christmas in western countries. The festival falls on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> lunar month (usually in late January or early February), and ends with Lantern Festival which is on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of that month. People put up couplets on doors and the content is about good wishes for a bright future and good luck for the New Year. They also like to paste Chinese character of “fu”, which

means “Happiness” on doors. On the day of New Year’s Eve, Lion dancing and other traditional performances are arranged in parks and streets wherever in city or town. At night, every family member sits around the table for the most luxuries dinner in the end of a year. After dinner, Letting off the fireworks is one of the major activities to celebrate the festival. People all go outside to enjoy the beautiful fireworks.

The Mid-Autumn Festival, which is celebrated on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month in Chinese lunar calendar, is the second grandest festival after the Spring Festival. The Festival is also called Moon Festival because the moon is at its roundest at that time. On that day, the family get together to appreciate the bright full moon, eat moon cakes at night and express their strong yearning to their hometown and other family members who live far away.

The third important festival for Chinese is National Day, which is celebrated on Oct 1<sup>st</sup>. It is a public and statutory holiday. The festival carries different meaning to Chinese people. In 1949, The People's Republic of China was founded and China became an independent country. On that day, there are a lot of celebration activities held by the government, especially the National Day Parade in Tian’an Men Square. At night, there are also Fireworks Show and National Day Concert. These activities are usually live broadcasted in the whole country.

Dragon Boat Festival is also widely celebrated, which will be discussed later.

## **2.3. The development of Festival Tourism in China**

There are three important periods of Chinese tourism development. In 1979, our late Chairman - Deng Xiaoping, decided to promote tourism as means of opening up policy, and China started to develop its tourist industry. Many hotels were built and the number of the guest houses was also increased. More historic and scenic spots were renovated and opened to tourists, and the professional guides and other service personnel were trained. The development was really fast that travel income had reached 283.192 billion RMB (44 billion in U.S.dollar) in 1999. And Chinese citizens, especially urban citizens, got much more free time with the 5-day work week system and the new national holiday system, introduced in 1995 and in 1999 respectively. The 7-day holiday of the Spring Festival and National Day is named "Golden Week" in tourism industry. Also, there are some other short breaks like Tomb Sweeping Day and International Labor Day add up to over one-third of the whole year. That means Chinese people have more chances for travelling. Traditional festivals were brought back with modern activities. Tourism industry developed into a mature stage and tried to get a higher stage. In the last two decades, the number of China's inbound tourists' had increased 14.54%, beyond the global average 4.29% (China National Tourism Administration, 2010). There is no doubt that it's a big success for China's tourism. Meanwhile, according to the information from the National Tourism Administration, tourism products like festivals will be still growing up in the 21st century. China has

abundant festival resource with its 5,000 years history and a vast territory. There are 56 nationalities and each of them has its own vibrant activities owing to their beliefs and customs. Especially the 55 minority nationalities, the festivals are unique and attractive to tourists. What's more, traditional festivals compose important and rich part of Chinese culture. Domestic tourism turned out to be a new growth point in many areas of China. It makes a significant contribution in promoting regional economic growth, improving local economic structures, driving the development of related industries, enhancing employment and activating domestic demands.

In recent years, the festival tourism is certainly a spotlight in the development of tourism in China. In 2008, there are more traditional festivals listed as statutory festivals, such as the Tomb Sweeping Festival, the Dragon Boat Festival, the Mid-Autumn Festival and so on.

The emergence of a newly rich middle class and an easing of restrictions on movement by the Chinese authorities are both fueling this travel boom. The world is on the cusp of a sustained Chinese tourism boom. As an important part of tourism industry, festival tourism will have a better prospect. (Ataland, 2011)

## **Part III. Festival Tourism through Dragon Boat Festival**

Among all these festivals in China, we choose the Dragon Boat Festival as the case to explore how festival tourism is being developed in China, especially with this widely celebrated “Dragon Boat Festival”. The Dragon Boat Festival is one of the top 3 traditional festivals together with the Spring Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival. Since 2008, it is listed as a statutory holiday and gradually become a popular holiday due to the 3-days holiday. Tourists could have a long weekend out of the city. Therefore, it is a traditional holiday as well as a new tourism peak period.

### **3.1 Research Questions:**

After our discussion, we agreed on these questions, which are related with different stakeholders such as:

1. How do tourists' attractions promote the festivals?
2. How do the travel agencies think of Festival Tourism and what do they do?
3. What do tourists think about the Dragon Boat Festival?
4. Which positive effects and negative effects are brought up by the Festival Tourism?

During our field trips, we took many photos of the spots and the activities

of the Dragon Boat Festival. We talked to tourists about the Dragon Boat Festival. Apart from making field trips, we also surf Internet and did library research about the development of Festival Tourism in China. We also designed questionnaires to seek 50 tourists' views on Festival Tourism. We also interviewed the manager from the China International Travel Service to gather information about how travel agencies have been promoting Festival Tourism.

### **3.2 Background of the Dragon Boat Festival**

The Dragon Boat Festival is also called Duanwu festival. It is on the 5th day of the 5th lunar month every year in Chinese calendar. The main activities of the celebrations include eating *Zong zi* (rice dumpling), drinking *Xionghuangjiu* (realger wine) and racing dragon boats. The festival is also celebrated in countries which have significant Chinese populations, such as in Singapore and Malaysia.

The Dragon Boat Festival is believed to have originated from ancient China. There are a number of sayings about its origins as a number of folk traditions and explanatory myths connected to its observance. But the best known of these relates to the suicide of Qu Yuan – a famous poet and patriot in ancient China. In Chinese history, the period of 400 B.C. to 200 B.C. was called Warring States Period. There were 7 individual kingdoms, Qin, Chu, Qi, Yan, Zhao, Han, and Wei. The 7 nations contended with each other for

hegemony. Wars were continued year after year. Qu Yuan was a scholar and minister to the King from the southern Chu during the Warring States Period. He is a wise and erudite man. Qu Yuan was trusted by King and did much to assist the King in governing the state. When the Qin Kingdom gained in strength from reform and invaded the other 6 kingdoms, Qu Yuan suggested an alliance with Qi kingdom in order to resist Qin kingdom. However, this was rejected by some of the ministers as they could see that they would lose some of their power and privileges. They made false accusations against Qu Yuan that were believed by King. So the Emperor gradually alienated Qu Yuan and eventually sent him into exile. In his exile, he spent much of this time collecting legends and rearranging folklores while travelling the countryside, producing some of the greatest poetry in Chinese literature and expressing love for his state and his deepest concerns for its future. His works, the *Lament (Li Sao)*, the *Nine Chapters (Jiu Zhang)*, and *Wen tian*, are masterpieces and invaluable for studying ancient Chinese culture and understand the people's life at that time. In the years that followed, King of Chu state was deceived by the Qin into thinking that they could live together in peace. However, he was detained by the Qin State for years until his eventual death. In 278 BC, upon learning that the Chu State had been defeated by the Qin, Qu Yuan, in great despair and distress, ended his life by drowning in the Miluo River. Legend has it that villagers carried their dumplings and boats to the middle of the river and tried to save him, but were unsuccessful. In order to keep fish and evil spirits

away from his body, they beat drums and splashed the water with their paddles. They threw rice into the water as a food offering to Qu Yuan and to distract the fish away from his body. Since then, people started to commemorate Qu Yuan by racing dragon boat and eating zongzi on the anniversary of his death, the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month in lunar calendar.

There is also another moved legend about Cao'e, who was a girl from Zhejiang. She was lived in Eastern Han Dynasty (23-220 A.D.) Her father fell into the river and his body could not be found for days. Cao'e was only 14 years old at that time and loved her father very much. She believed that it was her duty to find her father's body and then give him a decent funeral. She walked along the bank day and night, seeking and crying her heart out. Half of the month passed, on May 5<sup>th</sup>, she jumped into the river and miraculously came back with her father's body in her arms. People all said that the god was moved by her filial piety. To commemorate her bravery and filial piety, people built temples for her and celebrated Dragon Boat Festival ever after.

In addition to the legends of the Dragon Boat Festival, the celebration activities are also very dynamic and colorful. There are 3 most widespread activities during the Dragon Boat Festival.

*Zong zi* is a traditional Chinese food, made of glutinous rice stuffed with different fillings and wrapped in pyramid shape using bamboo or reed leaves. People steam or boil before eating. The shape of *Zong zi* ranges from being relatively tetrahedral in northern China to cylindrical in southern China in

ancient time. It is said that the local people, worried that the fish would eat Qu Yuan's body so they threw lumps of rice into the river to feed the fish. This is said to be the origin of *Zong zi*. Gradually, people eat *Zong zi* instead of throwing it in the river.

Except eating *Zong zi*, drinking realgar wine is another custom. Realgar is Chinese herbal medicine. In Chinese medicine books, it's said that it could treat 100 kinds of poisons insects' bites. Although it looks a bit superstitious of drinking realgar wine to keep the doctor away, it is good for your health.

Dragon boat racing is the most popular activity on that day. In legend said, it was raining on that day when Qu Yuan committed suicide. The local people paddled out on boats to scare the fish away and to retrieve Qu Yuan's body. This is said to be the origin of dragon boat racing. A typical dragon boat ranges from 50-100 feet in length, with a beam of about 5.5 feet, accommodating two paddles seated side by side. Modern dragon boat racing is held in different regions to celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival. It also becomes a popular sport. But why the racing boat has the image of the dragon? Dragons are legendary creatures in Chinese mythology and folklore in art. Dragons are long, scaled and serpentine creatures with 4 legs. Different from western dragons usually represent evil, it traditionally symbolizes efficiently and auspicious power, especially control over water, rainfall, hurricane, and floods. It is also stands for the emperor. In Chinese history, the emperors of various dynasties also call themselves "true sons of the dragon" because it

has the image of authority. Only emperor can use this symbol. The dragon was worshiped by the ancestors and it is firmly bearded in the minds of the Chinese people. So we often describe ourselves as “descendents of the dragon” proudly.



The Chinese Dragon

*(<http://www.nipic.com/show/3/73/cdc07e8b4a32d27f.html>)*

### **3.3 Research Findings**

#### **3.3.1 Field Trips**

During our research, we picked two places for our field trips. One is Ningbo Cicheng County in our city and the other is Hangzhou XiXi Wetland. Both of them have diversified activities during the Dragon Boat Festival.

### 3.3.1.1 Field trip to Cicheng



Cicheng County in Ningbo

Ningbo has a very long history. As early as 7,000 years ago, our ancestors lived here and created the splendid *Hemudu* culture. Ningbo is also well-known for its ancient town. Cicheng is one of them, located in the northwest of our city. It is about 14 kilometres far from the city center. The

county deposited deep historical and cultural heritage because of thousand years of history. The traditional architecture including a large number of residential buildings is preserved. It is very famous for tourists who like ancient architecture and culture.

The Dragon Boat Festival is one of the 3 grandest festivals. It is also called “DuanYang” in county of Ningbo. The old is very particular about the Dragon Boat Festival. This year’s Dragon Boat Festival, the ancient town of Ningbo Cicheng prepared a series of colorful exhibitions and activities. They could be not only inheriting and promoting the culture of Dragon Boat Festival, but also encouraging making festival items.



Culture exhibition



Chinese ancient painting

Folk festival is the essence of Chinese culture and it is also the characterization of the Chinese cultural values. Chenghuang temple in Cicheng held an exhibition about dragon boat festival’s culture. Through ancient painting, modern prints, clay, the paper-cut and cloth product of folk

culture art, it present the abundant connotations of dragon boat culture. Meanwhile, when the Dragon Boat Festival coming, there is a splendid opera shown in the god temple opera such as “*playing the leading role*” would be showed. It’s the distinguishing feature for Cicheng.



Local Opera



The list of the opera performance

Except that, making sachet is one of the popular activities in Cicheng, which is made of cinnabar, realgar herbal, spices, with silk cloth, and use 5 different color fine lines to make it in different shape. The smell of sachet can help you dispel the season illness. The meaning of sachet is warding off evil spirits and bringing good luck. It’s a good gift for your family when you do a sachet by yourself. Although it’s a small gift, it delivers a deep blessing. In Cicheng, every spot could set up a place to let tourists do the sachet. In addition, you can use 5 color papers to cut out various lucky patterns. It is another way to meet blessing as well as the meaning of Chinese knots.



Sachets

In ancient china, the tiger was regarded as auspicious animal that can ward off evil spirits. Many parents always let their kids paint tiger, which stands for that they will have a bright future and the whole family is having a peaceful life.

With its long history, the town is known far and wide as the "Most Charming Ancient Town South of the Yangtze River" for its beautiful scenery, city walls and abundant cultural relics. It is a wonderful place for tourists who are interested in traditional local town.

However, during our field trip we still found there are some things that could be improved. For instance, the distance between bus station and tourists' attractions were quite far. The only transportation was the tricycle but it was a bit expensive. We had to wait about 20 minutes to get one and it costs us RMB12 yuan for 15 minutes ride. What's more, 4 of the 6 attractions were located in different places. The directions were not enough and the information was also not very clear. We got lost several times. Another problem was that

there were not enough restaurants. Visitors didn't have many choices for their meals and most of restaurants were quite small.

### **3.3.1.2 Field trip to Xixi Wetland**

Xixi National Wetland Park is the first and only national wetland park in China. It incorporates urban wetland, rural wetland and cultural wetland. It is located at the west part of Hangzhou, Zhejiang province, a total of 10.64 square kilometers (26,300 acres). The park is densely crisscrossed with 6 main watercourses, among which scatter various ponds, lakes and swamps. There are 10 famous view spots. Among them, the top 3 attractions are Autumn Snow, Gaozhuang Villa and Water-Surrounded Fishing village.

Xixi Wetland has a history of more than 1,800 years and an abundant cultural heritage such as the original site of Chinese South Opera, traditional Dragon Boat Contest and the vivid life of a water village, featuring silkworm feeding and silk production. The Xixi Wetland Park also has an extensive history and is located on the southern tip of the longest and oldest canal in the world, the Hangzhou-Beijing Canal.

The Xixi Wetland had so far held dragon boat racing for 4 times since 2008, which was the Olympic Tourism Year. In order to further promote the Xixi Wetland as the leading world-class tourism and leisure spot, Hangzhou Tourism Committee and the local government organized the first International Dragon Boat Race in the Xixi Wetland from June 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>. There were only 12 teams to take part in the Racing. In 2009, the number of the team jumped to 30.

And last year, there were 40 teams participated in the competition.



Xixi Wetland, Hangzhou, China

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011, Hangzhou Xixi Dragon Boat Festival Elite School Dragon Boat Races Activity was held in Xixi. This year, the boat racing activity was carried out on a much larger scale than that of previous years. There are approximately 160 folk dragon boat teams participating in this activity. 6 prestigious universities, namely Beijing University, Tsinghua University, Fudan University, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, and Nanjing University, Zhejiang University made an appointment to compete in boat racing in Xixi Wetland.



The gate of the Xixi Wetland

In order to better understand this dragon boat race, we had two visits to the Xixi Wetland. On May 28<sup>th</sup>, we first went to the park and saw the dragon boat competition rehearsal in the Deep Pool Mouth. The players were practicing hard. There were also many tourists watching the training. After that, we came to the Dragon Boat Museum. In the museum, there were several old but still vivid boats in display. The dragon boat racing photos and brochures are posted on the walls introducing the Dragon Boat Culture and related activities in the Xixi Wetland.



Dragon boat Museum



Dragon boat on display



The Dragon Boat Race rehearsal

The official racing day was on June 6<sup>th</sup>. Unfortunately, it was raining heavily. But when we got the gate of the park, there were many tourism buses and tourists there. Apparently, they did not want to miss the dragon boat race because of the bad weather. The dragon boat racing started at 11:00AM and ended at 1:00PM. The competition was much more intense when you watched on the spot than on TV. The players tried their best to catch the boats which were ahead of theirs. And tourists were standing along the river on both sides. They took umbrellas or wore raincoats to watch the competitive racing, shouting and waving their hands to encourage players.

The number of the tourists on that day is several times more than the number of weekend visits. In Deep Pool, the tourists were packed along the river to watch the competition. Because the space along river bank was limited, tourists were unable to watch the race clearly. More tourists came late, so they could only watch the race from a very far way or even couldn't see the racing at all. And it was very dangerous for some of the tourists stood just by the river

to watch the competition. Although the river was long enough for the boat race, it was not long enough for the spectators.



Dragon Boat Racing

During this period, we talked to some tourists. Most of them said that they came to watch the race and enjoy the atmosphere of the festival. We also met a foreign couple. They said that they liked Chinese culture very much. They never watched a Chinese dragon boat racing. It would be a memorable experience for them. Some tourists said it was a surprise since they didn't know there was dragon boat racing during the festival.

Another feature of this years' festival is that the tourists can not only watch the players racing the dragon boat, but also attend the racing by themselves. If you are interested in the racing, you can make a team to attend the racing. The visitors' center also provides visitors with the festival snack. Besides enjoying the delicious snack, there were other activities for visitors, for instance, painting egg shell, wrapping up *Zong zi* and watching performances.



The tourists are wrapping the *Zong zi*

These activities were very popular among the tourists. However, not every tourist was happy there. For example, each team had only 15 minutes in the boat racing. We gave up when we saw there was such a long queue and would be finished in one hour. Moreover, tourists complained that they were unable to watch the race because of lack of space along the river. When we had a lunch in a restaurant in Xixi Wetland, we waited a very long time for our meal and received unpleasant service as many tourists'.

On the way to park, we saw many advertisements about the event on

both sides of the road. They played an important role in publicity. In the park when the racing ended, we interviewed one worker there. He said that people could get information about the festival from advertisements, brochures and official website. He also said wetland attracted more tourists by holding the racing every year.



Advertisement of dragon boat racing of Xixi



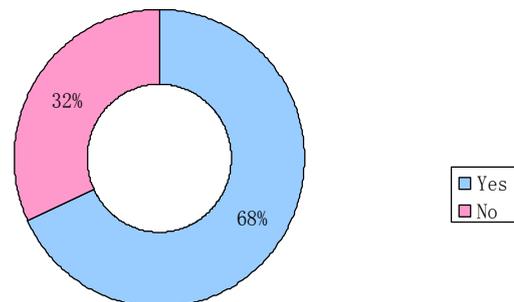
Flag on the dragon boat racing

The Dragon Boat Festival is a nationwide holiday which was combined tradition and fashion, festival and tourism, culture and sports. People in all regions perform similar ways to celebrate the festival.

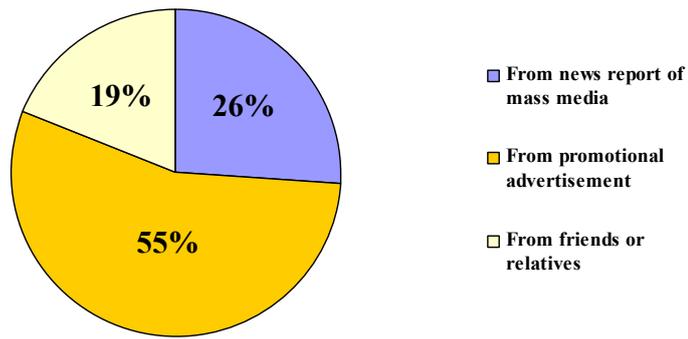
The above is our own observations during our field trips to Xixi Wetland. Apart from this, we also conducted a questionnaire survey to the tourists about this festival in Xixi Wetland.

### Survey Questions

**Q1. Do you know there is dragon boat racing in Xixi today? If YES, how do you know?**



According to the pie chart, we can see clearly that more than half people choose “Yes”, which accounts for 68%. Except enjoy the beautiful scenery, we can get the fact that tourists are specially come to park to watch dragon boat races. The rest part of 32% tourists was coming for fun. However, they came here and found races. It’s also a great surprise for them, many tourists express that they were very willing to join in.



According to the data, 55% people get the source from promotional advertisement. It's the straightest way nowadays to get information. We can get any information and all kinds of advertisement, such as the posters in center square and advertisement in every bus stop. In our case, there are a lot of posters about the event in Xixi Wetland.

Everyone likes to share their life or information on the website, so we get any news or information instantly. At the same time, it acts a strong power as advertising, faster than any media.

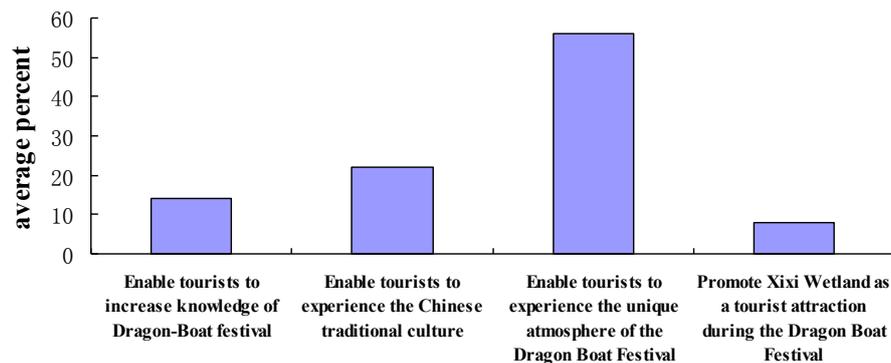
The 2<sup>nd</sup> source is news report of mass media, including newspaper, radio and TV. It enjoys 26% of the answers. The organization used newspaper, TV to promote the event. Although there are new channels coming out every day, newspaper, radio and TV are still the top channels to reach as many as audience.

Words of mouth is the most effective way of communication, it accounts for 19% in all resources. People usually like to share something happening when they chat with their friends and relatives. So it's also an important source

for our tourists. It is the last but not least source.

## Q2. What is your opinion about Xixi's annual dragon boat racing?

Please score each option from 1 to 5.

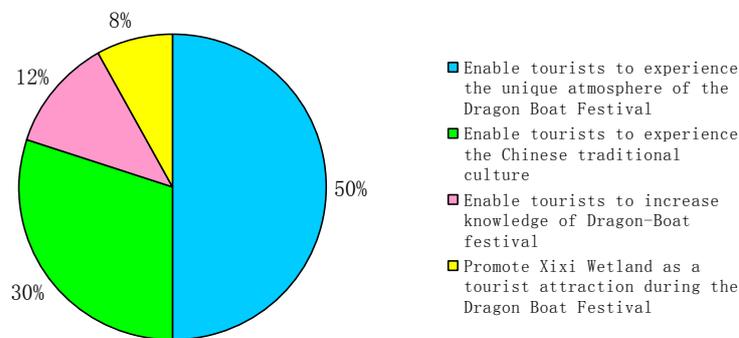


This is a column chart showing the opinions of the participants about holding the dragon boat race in Xixi. Tourists were asked to score each of items according to importance. As can be seen from the chart, experience the unique atmosphere of the Dragon Boat Festival ranked at the first of 56 average percent. Although Dragon Boat Festival is one of the grandest festivals in China, boat races are not held everywhere. Xixi is bore a high reputation in holding boat races. So it attracts large numbers of tourists. One of the participants is an American. He is a foreign teacher in Jinhua city. He was very excited to hear that there was the dragon boat race, and he came to Xixi with his friends on that day. As we all know that Chinese culture is extensive and profound, some visitors come to Xixi in order to learn more knowledge. Many families thought it was a very good education for their kids to learn more outside the textbooks. 14% visitors are curious about the culture of dragon

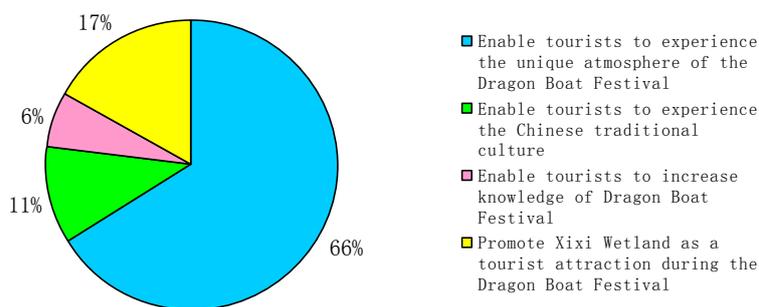
boat, the legend of dragon, the activity of worshipping dragon's head and so on, so it's a rare opportunity to widen their eyes. There also were 8% tourists thought it's meaningful to hold Chinese traditional activities, because Xixi Wetland do some promotion to develop our culture.

We also did 2 charts to see any different opinions between local Hangzhou people and non-local people.

What do the local people think?



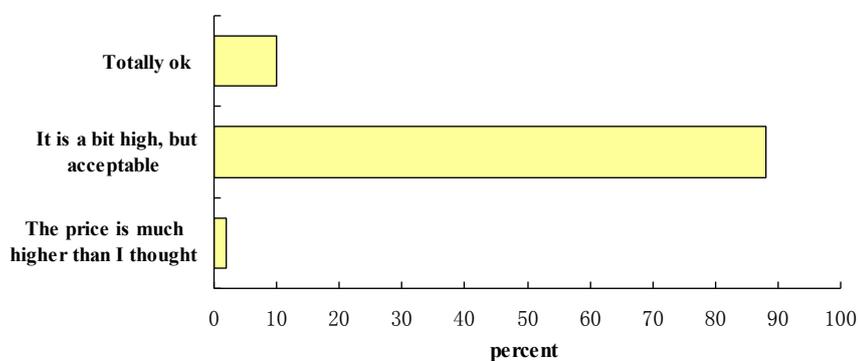
What do the nonlocal people think?



Both of the 2 group visitors consider that experience the unique atmosphere of the Dragon-Boat Festival is the most important for them. It

explains that visitors pay more attention to the live races and other activities. Traditional culture ranks as the second important opinion. There are 4 local families in the sample. It is very convenient to Xixi and experience the festival atmosphere besides watch the races. However, we can get the number from the non-local chart that only 11% visitors choose it for their second order. Nonlocal visitors consider they mainly come to Xixi watch races. However, 17% of visitors thought that promoting Xixi is the following consideration. Some of them came to Hangzhou due to enjoying scenery of the famous attraction—West Lake. They didn't know the event of Xixi until they arrived at Hangzhou. The coincidence made them happy. The event made Xixi more famous among non-local tourists who have little idea about the park. Many of them watched the movie *If You Are the One* before the picturesque scenery was beyond their expectation. One tourist said he would not come to the park if he did not see the poster along the street.

**Q3. Do you think your cost in Xixi is very high? (Including the tickets, food, souvenir, etc)**



As can be seen from the chart, 88% of visitors consider that they can

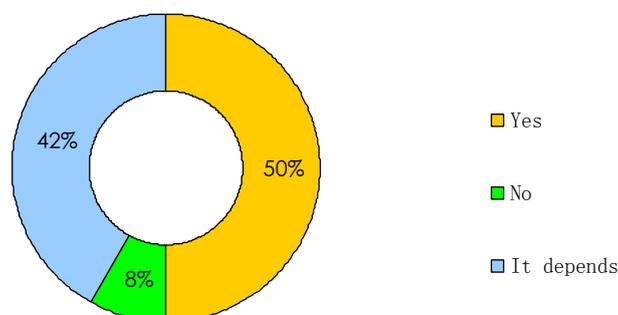
accept the expense, 10% visitors thought the expense in Xixi is totally ok, only 2% people think it is expensive, much higher than they had expected. The expense composes of tickets, food, souvenirs. The ticket of Xixi Wetland is 80 Yuan. 5 people thought it's expensive. But they also said its worthy if there holding some special activities, such as the dragon boat races today. And the rest of 45 people had no problem and acceptable the expense in Xixi Wetland.

One of the tourists said:

*“The restaurant in Xixi Wetland is pretty good, the dishes are very delicious as well as the traditional snacks, I like stinky tofu, qianshi cake and pumpkin cake. Except that, I love the house style of the south of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River. I have not seen the restaurant like this before. I can eat the food and enjoy the picturesque and the price is acceptable.”*

Souvenir stores are also very popular. The local popular souvenirs are silk, fan, wood carving and so on. It attracts many visitors into stores to visit and consumption.

#### **Q4. Do you often travel during the festivals?**



This is a chart which illustrates the respondents' own opinions about the

festival tourism. We can see clearly that half of the respondents would like to take a trip during festivals, and 42% respondents also have possibilities of traveling. The figures lead us to the conclusion that Festival Tourism has a vast development space in the future. Different festivals have different items and activities. It's the main reason that attracts tourists a lot.

#### **Q5. What do you think of traveling during festival?**

45 tourists state their reasons. Following are several opinions of participants.

*"I will take a trip for a certain festival, because in our country, there are many traditional festivals and public holidays. Not only I have several days to travel, but also I can learn more our Chinese culture."* (One local tourist)

*"It depends. I am willing to join in festival trip like Water Sprinkling Festival, unless the festival I'm attracted a lot which has the long history and unique culture. Strictly speaking, I will take a trip with my family. I will carry my kids to join in the festival. They know more western festivals, and lack of the Chinese traditional festivals. Our culture is a big treasure. Learn more, you will be better".* (A tourist from Nanjing)

*"Of course I will take a trip, because I like different culture, I'd like to come to China experiencing the life here, including your culture and festivals. It's full of oriental feelings and a lot of fun".* (A foreign visitor from the United State)

### 3.3.2 Interviewing travel agent

As tourism industry develops, travel agencies are blooming from city to county. A lot of tourists would like to book in travel agencies because it is more convenient and the price is reasonable. As one of tourism product suppliers, travel agencies have the responsibility for promoting Festival Tourism. Therefore, we'd like to find out current practices from travel agencies.

We had Ms. Pan from China International Travel Service for the interview.



In China International Travel Service with Ms. Pan

#### A new tourism product

Ms. Pan told us that Festival Tourism is relatively a new tourism product. It is different from tourism we experienced before. After a long working time, people nowadays prefer to travel during the festival rather than stay at home.

Meanwhile, they have a higher expectation on traveling. They want to relax in the traveling, experiencing different festival atmosphere as well as learning some history and culture about the festival during the travel. That is good for the tourism industry.

### Making effort on E-commerce and holiday plans

The travel agency promotes the Festival Tourism in many ways. As a tour operator, they make a lot of efforts this year on E-commerce operation to keep pace with the trend of festival tourism development. In CITS's practice, it makes E-commerce as an efficient tool between tourists and tourism suppliers. Tourists are able to get information about festival tours and book on the internet directly. It is both good for the tourists and travel agency. Besides this, they always make holiday plans a year earlier. The preparations include purchasing and booking the air tickets and hotel rooms. Entrance tickets of scenic spots are usually in shortage during the festival, so it's important to book in advance. Today, there is also a new tourism hotspot. Traditional festivals are getting popular among foreign travelers. More and more foreign tourists come to China to spend their holidays. At the same time, we could encourage our tourists to travel to abroad. The tour price is also favorable and the tourists could experience foreign festivals and culture. That is also good for the development for Chinese Festival Tourism.

## Feedbacks from tourists

The feedbacks from the tourists are very important for travel agency. According to Ms. Pan, most tourists said that it was very good to travel during the festival. They also showed gratitude to the travel agency for providing the great opportunity. Festival is not an everyday thing that they can experience. However, there were also some voices said that they did not get the real relaxation because of crowded tourists during the festival, or low quality facility and services.

## Problems during festivals for travel agency

CITS spent a lot of time trying to comfort tourists when they made complains, but China is a country with a large population, during the festival, there are a lot of people going traveling. However, facilities and tourism resource have limited capacity. The coaches are stuck around attractions and hotels are out of rooms. Except easing relationships between tourists and suppliers, sometimes the travel agency has to raise the price to control the total number of tourists.

### **3.3.3 Celebrations in Other regions**

The dragon boat racing is not only popular in Han nationality. It is also celebrated in many ethnic minorities.



the dragon boat racing every year. Men dress up to take part in the dragon boat racing to show their strong body. On May 24<sup>th</sup> of this year, the dragon boat racing was held in Guiyang city. Different from the other nationalities sitting in the boat, Miao people are standing while rowing. It is a physical game which needs technology, wisdom, courage and teamwork. During the festival, there were also many other eye-catching folk activities



云南民族民间龙舟赛在昆明举行

[http://www.yunnan.gov.cn/h2h/2011/06/03/20110603\\_43b0s.htm](http://www.yunnan.gov.cn/h2h/2011/06/03/20110603_43b0s.htm)

Yunnan is noted for a very high level of ethnic diversity. It has the second highest number of ethnic groups among the provinces and autonomous regions in China. On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011, the first International Dragon Boat Racing was held in Yun County, Yunnan province. There are about 36 teams from 12 towns coming to take part in the dragon boat racing. The dragon boat competition was held for 3 days.

## **Part IV. Existing problems and suggestions**

Festival Tourism in China developed rapidly. It plays a positive effect in integrating regional tourism resources and enhancing the popularity of a tourist destination. While we were doing our field trips, conducting our questionnaire as well as interviewing with Ms. Pan, we collected some good practices of Festival Tourism. However, as every coin has two sides, there are also several places could be improved. China has become one of the world's most-watched and hottest inbound and outbound tourist markets. There is huge potential for festival tourism if we make continuous efforts.

### **Problem 1: Lack of promotions for Festival Tourism**

The first problem is that the tourism promotion is not done well by the tourist's spots. According to our questionnaire result, there were 32% of our sample tourists who had no idea about the boat racing and other activities held in Xixi Wetland.

### **Suggestions**

Firstly, travel agency plays an important role in the tourism industry. During the festival, the hot destinations are usually crowded with tourists. The tourists couldn't enjoy the beautiful scenery or take part in the interesting activities. In Xixi Wetland, there were so many tourists that they could only see

## Wenchuan

around them. The price of the cold destinations is very favorable and could be fresh experience for the tourists. The China International Travel Service we interviewed is working hard on planning more tourism destinations programs. For example, one of popular new routes is Chengdu—Yingxiu--Wenchuan County (relic of the earthquake)--Dujiangyan Irrigation System--Chengdu. We suggest that the travel agency would better come up with more new tourism routes.



This route combined hot destinations like Chengdu city and Dujiangyan, as well as new spot like Wenchuan earthquake relics and debris flow. By this itinerary, visitors could be redirected and new attractions could be promoted.

Secondly, while we were doing library research and internet research, we found a lot of examples showing that regional government attach much importance on the development of tourism industry and are trying to promote Festival Tourism.

Ninghai, a small district of Ningbo city, held the event of *China Tourism Day* opening ceremony on May 19, 2011, which was named by National Tourism Bureau this year. Ninghai was the first place recorded in *The Travel Diaries Xu Xiake*, which was wrote by Xu Xiake, a famous travel writer and geographer of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). The opening ceremony was supported by national and regional governments. It is not only commemorating the famous scholar but also used to encourage people for travelling. (*nbtravel.gov, 2011*)

Not only government, other related departments are doing the same job. For instance, China Railway Bureau usually has more trains operating during festivals. Everyday there is one train from Ningbo to Chengdu. However, when the Spring Festival or National Day comes, there will be two more trains running per day.

According to our questionnaire findings, 32% of our sample tourists did not know about the boat race. Therefore, we suggest tourist's attractions should conduct more promotions about the festival activities. They could put up posters on the bus stations or even paint the advertisement on the bus. TV and newspaper are the common media for people, but more cutting-edge technology could be attached. For younger generation, internet is their first choice. "Weibo" (Chinese version of Twitter) and "Renren" (Chinese version of Face book) are two of popular communication tools as social networks. The following is official Weibo of Xixi. So as soon as it publishes any event

promotion, fans could get it immediately.



Official Weibo of Xixi Wetland

## Problem 2: Uneven level between supply and demand

The second problem is the uneven level between supply and demand. The number of tourists was a lot more than usual during the festival. Roads were congested due to cars and coaches outside the scenic spots, and the parking lot was full even before 9 AM. In the meal time, the direction board is not enough or unclear, and restaurants were far from enough. There are a lot more tourists than the current facilities could afford.

## Suggestions

### Set up more direction boards

For the field trip to Xixi Wetland, although the promotional signs were everywhere, there were no directions on the sign. The direction boards on the way were unclear, and we lost our ways and even end up to some places that were not allowed for tourists. Since there are many rivers in the park, we



Because the space along river bank was limited, tourists were unable to watch the race clearly. More tourists came late, so they could only watch the race from a very far way or even couldn't see the racing at all. And it was very dangerous for some of the tourists stood just by the river to watch the competition. Although the river was long enough for the boat race, it was not long enough for the spectators. We suggest that Xixi set up more places or extend the terrace along the river bank. A viewing platform can be considered as well, which could guarantee the safety of tourists when they watch the racing.

#### **Prepare temporary awnings**

On the dragon boat racing day, it rained heavily. Many tourists didn't take umbrellas or raincoats so they had to find any place with roofs. There were several shops which sold rain gear but either they were far from the racing spot or the price was quite high. We suggest that Xixi could prepare awnings in case the weather is bad. These awnings must be temporary and removable so they may be used again next time. Also the visitor center can prepare some rain gears for rental. Both tourists and the park could benefit from it.

### **Problem 3: Difficulty in stimulating tourists' interests**

The third problem is that the traditional festival like Dragon Boat Festival is gradually losing interests of new generation. During our field trips to Xixi

Wetland, there were more elder tourists than young people. In our questionnaire, one participant wrote that dragon boat festival had nothing new except the boating racing. So it is a challenge for attractions preparing new activities every festival to keep the current tourists and appeal potential tourists.

## **Suggestions**

Dragon boat racing and wrapping up *zong zi* were the spotlights in Xixi this year. Tourists were able to do more than watching, they could take part in these activities. However, because the activity only lasted for an hour, there were only 15 lucky teams had chances to wave the paddle. So we suggest that the Xixi should extend time such as half a day for more tourists to experience the dragon boat racing. As far as we saw, tourists were enthusiastic about these activities. They may come back next year to experience the exciting race. And wrapping up *Zong zi* is welcomed by families and kids. Other DIYs like making sachets could be organized as well. Sachets means good luck and is also a good gift for your family if you make a sachet by yourself.

In order to appeal tourists, more interactive activities like above should be planned. In Xixi Wetland, elders above 60 years old and kids under 12 years old were not recommended to race boats due to safety consideration. To fulfill their expectations, building a dragon boat model could be a great idea. For the kids in particular, they can learn about the structure of the dragon boat and paint it after they complete the whole work.



Dragon boat models

Besides this, Confucius Temple is a famous attraction in Ningbo Cicheng County. It is the most well-preserved Confucius temple in the eastern of Zhejiang province at present. Besides this, it is also well known as thousands years' of Confucius Culture. It served as lecture halls since ancient time. Today, there are still some speeches or courses held here time to time. We suggest that the Cicheng County may invite some scholars to give themed lectures during the festivals. The lectures could cater for different group of tourists, for instance, festival origins and legends for children, and they can even dress in ancient costumes.



Lectures in Confucius Temple

<http://www.cicheng.org/Actives5/page/Pcontent.aspx?type=2>

## **Problem 4: Limited supplier capacity in tourist areas**

This problem of overwhelmed capacity leads to another issue, tourists getting unsatisfied during the trip. The service quality of hotels and restaurants was lowered due to the huge amount of tourists. We heard a lot of complaints during the field trips. For example, the meal was not as good as usual. The waiters were not helpful, and sometimes, the cashier gave the wrong change.

### **Suggestions**

Service quality is a key element in tourism service, so the quality should not be lowered in any circumstance. During our field trips, we waited a very long time for our meal and received unpleasant service as many tourists'. To make sure the standard of hotels and restaurants in the spots during the festival, inspectors could be arranged as tourists by tourism bureau. Some regulations and penalties also should be established to alert service providers.

### **Suggestions for Tourists**

China is a country with large population. Tourists are travelling in the same festivals. That is why the tourism will be in a short supply. But we have abundant festival resource in China. People could travel in different festivals and still have a wonderful experience, which could reduce a lot of pressure from the suppliers' sides.

Also, as Ms. Pan mentioned that we could encourage our tourists to

travel abroad to experience festival of another culture. For instance, plenty of tourists will especially come to Yunnan for the Water-Sprinkling Festival. In 2011, there were 6 million tourists attend the festival. In order to avoid the crowds, tourists could be recommended to go to Thailand where there is a same festival celebrated there -*The Songkran Festival*. It's also celebrated in April as a national festival. Especially for the current tourists who are more sophisticated than before. It will be a culture exploration journey.

## **Part V. Conclusion**

Generally speaking, tourism industry is considered as “sunshine industry” in China because the industry has been expanding at an unprecedented speed since 1980s. It is predicted that by the year 2020, China is going to be the largest tourism destination country, and the fourth largest tourists generating country. The festival tourism is one of the important parts in tourism industry. Our case study gave us much confidence in the development of festival tourism in China. Cicheng and Xixi Wetland are two stops of our field trip. Cicheng is a small county famous for its beautiful scenery, city walls and abundant cultural relics. Tourists indulged in the culture exhibition, local opera, sachet and other festival activities. We also had two visits to Xixi Wetland, at the first time, we saw the dragon boat competition rehearsal, there were still some tourists watching the training. At the second time, we watched the dragon boat racing. It was very intense to watch on the spot than on TV. The tourists were also very satisfied with the festival activity and said that they would come back next year. Tourism suppliers like travel agencies and scenic spots are making efforts to keep current tourists and appeal potential guests. From our questionnaire, we got that more and more people would like to go travelling for a festival. They want more than sight-seeing during traveling, that is what festivals can offer to the tourists. Governments and tourism bureaus also offer a series of preferential policies to promote the festival tourism.

Although festival tourism in China still has much to be improved, we believe that with our understanding and continuous efforts, festival tourism will become an essential part in the industry.

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# Appendix: Questionnaire

Dear friends,

We are the students of Ningbo Polytechnic. Our major is international tourism. We are currently doing a research about festival tourism. We hope you can help us filling out this questionnaire and let us know what you think about festival tourism in China. Thank you!

## Section 1: interviewee's data

1. Gender: \* Male \* Female
2. Age: \* under 20 \*21-40 \*41-60 \*61 or above
3. You are from: \*Hangzhou Local \*Other regions of Zhejiang province  
\*Other areas out of Zhejiang province \* Foreign countries

## Section 2: Questions (Please "√"the proper answer, above some options you can choose more.)

1. Do you know there is dragon boat racing in Xixi today?

\*NO \*YES

If YES, how do you know?

A. From news report of mass media (newspaper, TV, radio, internet, etc)

B. From promotional advertisement

C. From friends or relatives

2. What is your opinion about Xixi's annual **dragon boat racing**? Please score each option from 1 to 5.

1- Not important at all	3-important	1	2	3	4
2- A little bit important	4-very important				
Enable tourists to increase knowledge of Dragon-Boat festival					
Enable tourists to experience the Chinese traditional culture					
Enable tourists to experience the unique atmosphere of the Dragon					

Boat Festival				
Promote Xixi Wetland as a tourist attraction during the Dragon Boat Festival				

3. Do you think your cost in Xixi is very high? (Including the tickets, food, souvenir, etc)

- A. Totally OK
- B. It is a bit high, but acceptable
- C. The price is much higher than I thought

4. Do you often travel during the festivals?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. It depends

5. What do you think of traveling during festival?

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Thanks for your participating!