

Visiting pasts, developing futures: international conference explores relationships between tourism and cultural heritage

Posted on Friday 8th March 2013

Academics and professionals working in the fields of heritage and tourism from across the world will convene in Taipei, Taiwan this spring for a five-day conference focusing on the changing ways in which cultural heritage is used, represented and interpreted within the development of international tourism.

Delegates from over 60 countries will present over 200 papers during the conference exploring the many complex and challenging relationships which exist between heritage and tourism. Running from 5 – 9 April 2013, the conference has been organised by the Ironbridge International Institute for Cultural Heritage (IIICH) at the University of Birmingham and National Taiwan University, the country's leading University

Presentations will cover a wide range of issues including: tourism at World Heritage Sites; the growing recognition of intangible heritage; community engagement with heritage; the interpretation of colonial heritage; tourist experiences at museums and expressions of national and local identity through heritage.

The event is supported by the Taiwan Ministry of Culture, Taipei City Government, the National Taiwan Tourism Bureau, National Central University of Taiwan and National Taipei University of Education. The conference is also supported by the ICOMOS International Committee for Intangible Cultural Heritage and the ICOMOS International Committee on Cultural Tourism – both of whom will have sessions at the event.

The IIICH is a unique partnership between the University of Birmingham and Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust. The latter manages the World Heritage Site of Ironbridge, recently rated the second most highly recommended UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the world according to TripAdvisor.® The Institute through its international and interdisciplinary research and its Postgraduate programme of study is committed to exploring the changing values of heritage and how this impacts on development and is well placed to bring this global conference together.

Professor Mike Robinson, Chair of Cultural Heritage and Director of the IIICH said "All around the world the importance of cultural heritage is being recognised - for reasons of local and national identity but also for reasons of tourism and wider development purposes. The overwhelming response we have had to this conference demonstrates the global interest in the issues raised. We have a long standing commitment to exploring and examining the rich and complex heritage of the East Asia region and are delighted to be working with colleagues at National Taiwan University and the heritage and tourism organisations of Taiwan to better understand the relationships between tourism, tourists and tangible and intangible heritage."

Dr Hui-Mei Chen of National Taiwan University commented "It is a great pleasure and an honour to extend a warm invitation to the delegates of Visiting Pasts, Developing Futures International Conference in the beautiful city of Taipei - a city with a rich history and cultural heritage. We are also very pleased to be working with our friends at the University of Birmingham to organise this conference. We strongly believe that this meeting will provide an opportunity to advance communication between the fields of tourism and heritage and allow academics and professionals from around the world to exchange knowledge and ideas. We cordially invite you to join us at this historic and unprecedented congress."

Notes to Editors

For more information on attending the conference please visit: <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/iaa/departments/ironbridge/news/2012/cfp-conference-2013.aspx> (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/iaa/departments/ironbridge/news/2012/cfp-conference-2013.aspx>)

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