

THE ROLE OF FAMOUS TRAVELLERS IN DEVELOPING TOURISM

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Abstract: The current article aims at providing general information about the famous travelers of the east and west who contributed to develop travelling and tourism a lot and left real tourist guide-books for the future development of tourism. The article deals with the factual life information of the two travellers, Ibn Batuta and Marco Polo, and their travels to eastern countries as well as China. And the article proved the role of the two travelers in the development of travelling and tourism.

Key words: Travelling over the world, tourism, relations, development, pilgrims, discoveries, tourist guide-book, contribution, east and west.

As it is known to everybody tourism is considered one of the most significant branches of modern industry in all countries of the world. Tourism really plays a great role in the development of political, economical and cultural relations of the countries. By the help of tourism people of all times developed commerce, business and trade, exchanged ideas and spread their religions, improved culture and art, they also increased the living standards of life while visiting different places. Tourism has a long history and it began to be developed in early years of mankind. The history of the tourism is connected with land and water travels of various famous explorers and travellers of the world. Such travellers and explorers founded tourism and developed it not realizing themselves.

We know from the history that travelling to different places and travelling over the world was interesting to people. People wanted to travel to distant countries, to learn their languages and to see new places which interested them a lot. The curiosity of the people to see and discover something new helped to develop and increase travelling as well as tourism. A lot of famous travellers and explorers such as Ferdinand Magellan, Christopher Columbus, James Cook, Vasco da Gama, Roald Amundsen discovered new continents, islands and lands and made great contributions to develop travelling by using water ways. And other travellers such as Ibn Batuta from Morocco and Marco Polo from Venice contributed a lot to develop travelling and tourism on land.

Because of such travels demand for learning foreign languages increased sharply and new travel and science books that heightened people's interests to travelling, began being created. Reading such books not only interested people to see and discover new places but also developed political and cultural relations between countries. Western Europe and eastern countries set up good relationships with each other and it helped to grow economic, political and cultural relations between the countries of the west and east.

The greatest traveller of the east, Ibn Batuta travelled all over the Arabian Peninsula, he was in Egypt, Iran, Mesopotamia, Russia, China, India and most African countries. One of the most important of his destinations was his travel to Central Asia.

Travelling around the region, Ibn Batuta enjoyed the hospitality of the Order of Asia and stayed in Zaviya (Sufi tenements) where itinerants, especially pilgrims, were warmly welcomed. In the autumn of 1333 Ibn Batuta arrived in Khorezm.

Ibn Batuta also visited the Emir whose house, along with the sumptuous feasts, he described in detail. He also emphasized the priority of his new acquaintances and the extravagant gifts they lavished on him: a large sum of money, a sable overcoat and a beautiful stallion.

Then he made his way to Bukhara. Medieval Bukhara was one of the most famous cities in the Islamic world, and many Arabian geographers described its splendour. However, Ibn Batuta saw Bukhara in a sorry state.

The next city Ibn Batuta visited was Samarkand. It is one of the largest and most beautiful cities, Ibn Batuta writes, and remarks with bitterness that most of Samarkand was turned into shambles.[1]

From Samarkand the Moroccan traveller set his feet to Termez, which was a large city for that time, with beautiful buildings and market-places and an abundance of orchard and vineyards. After Central Asia Ibn Batuta travelled in Iran and Afghanistan, China and Africa. He spent about eight years in India.

Scholars believe that the Moroccan traveller died in 1377. It is very likely that he was buried near Tanjer where he was born. Anyway, it is there that tourists are shown his grave.[2]

It is important to mention that the Moroccan traveller Ibn Batuta described all places where he went and people and wonders that he saw with his own eyes and created the real set of tourist guide-book "The Travels of Ibn Batuta" and made his great contribution to develop tourism between eastern and Middle Asian and African countries.

Another important traveller, Marco Polo (1254-1324), is probably the most famous westerner traveled on the Great Silk Road. According to one authority, the Polo family were great nobles originating on the coast of Dalmatia. Niccolo and Maffeo had established a trading outpost on the island of Curzola, off the coast of Dalmatia; it is not certain whether Marco Polo grew up there, Venice was the centre for commerce in the Mediterranean. Marco had the usual education of a young gentleman of his time. He had learned much of the classical authors, understood the text of the Bible, and knew the basic theology of the Latin Church. He had a sound knowledge of commercial French as well as Italian. From his later history we can be sure of his interest in natural resources, in the ways of people, as well as strange and interesting plants and animals.

Marco Polo excelled all the other travelers in his determination, his writing, and his influence. His journey through Asia lasted 24 years. He became a confidant of Kublai Khan (1214-1294). He traveled the whole of China and returned to tell the tale, which became the greatest travelogue.

In 1260 two Venetian merchants arrived at Sudak, the Crimean port. The brothers Maffeo and Niccolo Polo went on to Surai, in the Volga river, where they traded for a year. Shortly after a civil war broke out between Barka and his cousin Hulagu, which made it impossible for the Polos to return with the same route as they came. They therefore decided to make a wide detour to the east to avoid the war found themselves stranded for 3 years at Bukhara.

Although the Polo brothers blazed a trail of their own on their first journey to the East, they were not the first Europeans to visit Mongols on their home ground. Before

them Giovanni di Piano Carpini in 1245 and Guillaume de Rubrouck in 1253 had made the dangerous journey to Karakorum and returned safely; however the Polos traveled farther than Carpini and Rubrouck and reached China.[3]

The most brilliant of the Polos Marco, after spending his 17 years in his hometown, went to China with his father, Nicollo and his uncle Maffeo. Pope Gregory X sent them to visit Kublai Khan, the emperor of China. Kublai Khan liked Marco Polo and he especially enjoyed Polo's stories about many lands. And Kublai Khan gave Marco a job and sent him on diplomatic missions. He also made him the governor of Yangzhou, an important trading city.

When Marco Polo went back to the Venetian Republic, he talked to people about his life in China. Few believed his stories. In 1298 Marco was taken prisoner by Genoese- great rivals of the Venetians at sea- during a skirmish or battle in the Mediterranean. He was then imprisoned in Genoa, where he had a fecitous encounter with a prisoner from Pisa, Rustichello, a fairly well-known writer of romance and specialist in chivalry and its lore, then a fashionable subject. While he was a prisoner in jail, he dictated stories about China to Rustichello in jail. The man wrote down the stories and the stories became the book, "Il milione" ("The Million") known in English "The Travels of Marco Polo". Each chapter of the book covers a specific region of China and gives the information about military, farming, religion and culture of a certain area. The book was translated into many languages of the world.

Marco got out of jail in 1299 and went back to Venice to join his father and uncle. Then he became rich and got married, and with his wife had three children. Marco Polo died in 1324, almost at the age of 70[3].

Marco Polo's travel book was one of the most important books of that time that encouraged many travelers and explorers to discover new lands and make discoveries. Even Christophor Columbus read Marco Polo's travel book and made his mind to travel to such an interesting Asian country, India by crossinng oceans.

In conclusion it is important to mention again that travelers such as Ibn Batuta and Marco Polo made great contributions to develop travelling and tourism between the countries of the east and west. The books they wrote and left us really increased the interests of the people to see new lands and try unforgettable adventures and made them be keen on travelling to distant countries. These travelers also helped to spread new inventions from China and Asian countries to Europe and Africa. They created warm friendly atmosphere and respect between the nations of Europe, China, Central Asia and Africa by developing travelling and tourism.

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