





Editada por el Instituto de Estudios Avanzados de la Universidad de Santiago de Chile

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A HISTORICAL FAIR AS A FORM OF CULTURAL TOURISM AND PLACE OF MEMORY

Desarro

Desarrollo sostenible: Una feria histórica como forma de turismo y lugar de memoria Desenvolvimento sostenível: Uma feira histórica como forma de turismo e lugar de memória

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Vol. 12, N° 34, 82-94, enero 2025 ISSN 0719-4994

Artículo de investigación https://doi.org/10.35588/w5k02816

Recibido

10 de noviembre de 2023

Aceptado 29 de diciembre de 2023

Publicado Enero de 2025

Cómo citar

Dadyrova, A. Mukhtarova, G., Mogilnaya, A. and Izhanov, B. (2025). Sustainable Development: A Historical Fair as a Form of Cultural Tourism and Place of Memory. *RIVAR, 12*(34), 82-94, https://doi.org/10.35588/w5k02816

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to investigate the features of the sustainable development of tourism and place of memory in the Eurasian region with the help of fairs. The research paper examines the impact of the fair phenomenon on the countries of the Eurasian region, within the framework of the concepts of sustainable development of the tourism industry. In the study, special attention was paid to the functions of the local population and administration in the productive growth and sustainable development of fair tourism. For that, a survey of the population of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the topic of attitudes to fair events as part of the sustainable development of tourism in the country was carried out. The survey revealed a positive trend in the respondents' attitude to fairs in Kazakhstan as a tool in the development of sustainable tourism.

KEYWORDS Culture, intercultural relations, fair, trade, traditions.

RESUMEN

El objetivo del artículo es investigar las características del desarrollo sostenible del turismo y los lugares de memoria en la región euroasiática mediante la ayuda de ferias. El trabajo de investigación examina el impacto del fenómeno ferial en los países de la región euroasiática, en el marco de los conceptos de desarrollo sostenible de la industria turística. En el estudio se prestó especial atención a las funciones de la población y la administración local en el crecimiento productivo y el desarrollo sostenible del turismo justo. Para ello se llevó a cabo una encuesta de la población de la República de Kazajistán sobre el tema de las actitudes hacia los eventos feriales como parte del desarrollo sostenible del turismo en el país. La encuesta reveló una tendencia positiva en la actitud de los encuestados hacia las ferias en Kazajistán como herramienta para el desarrollo del turismo sostenible.

PALABRAS CLAVE Cultura, relaciones interculturales, feria, comercio, tradiciones.

RESUMO

O objetivo do artigo é investigar as características do desenvolvimento sostenível do turismo e os lugares de memória na região euroasiática mediante a ajuda de feiras. O trabalho de investigação examina o impacto do fenômeno feiral nos países da região euroasiática, no marco dos conceitos de desenvolvimento sostenível da indústria turística. No estudo prestou-se especial atenção às funções da população e a administração local no crescimento produtivo e o desenvolvimento sustentável do turismo justo. Para isso efetuou-se uma enquete da população da República de Cazaquistão sobre o tema das atitudes relacionadas aos eventos feiriais como parte do desenvolvimento sustentável do turismo no país. A enqueste revelou uma tendência positiva na atitude dos participantes sobre as feiras em Cazaquistão como ferramenta para o desenvolvimento do turismo sustentável.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE Cultura, relações interculturais, feira, comércio, tradições.

Introduction

The progressive growth and sustainability of fair production opened up new opportunities for the development of various crafts, which, in turn, contributed to the prosperity of the local population. In the context of discussions on sustainable development worldwide, there is a growing research interest in regional cultural heritage and artefacts from the historical past and the place of memory. Investigating the diverse forms and types of the Eurasian region's historical and cultural past is necessary. In this regard, it is extremely important to study the legacy of fairs that functioned in the Eurasian region and how such celebrations continue to affect the tourism industry in 2023.

The attention and relevance of studying the sustainable development of tourism from the side of fair events are due to the exclusivity of their impact on the cultural and economic situation of the Eurasian region both in the past and in the 21st century. In turn, it is important to investigate the phenomenon of fairs in certain countries of the Eurasian region, which are in close socio-cultural connection, namely, in Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan. In this regard, the problem of the study is the investigation of fairs as a source of valuable information not only about economic and social achievements and successes in monetary relations between the countries of the region, but also about the culture of folk festivals, intercultural dialogue, communication, gastronomic tours to the region.

The tourism industry was investigated by Nurtazina et al. (2018), who claim that today tourism is one of the most promising and dynamically developing business areas in the world. Due to the rapid development of the tourism industry in Kazakhstan, it is important to thoroughly investigate this area, relying on event tourism, in particular, fairs held in the country.

Kanatuly et al. (2021), studied the prospects for the development of national tourism, noting that Kazakhstan has a large number of opportunities for the development of various types of tourism such as cultural, educational, ecological, extreme, business, and recreational. Therefore, it is necessary to study the place of event in the overall picture of the tourism industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Lebedeva and Taizhanova (2021) draw attention to agricultural events that attract tourists that attract tourists, namely, agricultural fairs, where tourists and guests, among other things, can purchase various agricultural products and other locally produced goods. Notably, fairs of this kind are of great interest among the population. It is important to investigate the impact of agricultural fairs on the overall picture of the tourism industry within not only Kazakhstan, but also the Eurasian region as a whole.

The fair was one of the first bases of cultural development and can be considered as one of the first types of emotional representations in the history of mankind. The Koyanda Fair was the first fair of the Eurasian region, which functioned on the territory of Central Kazakhstan, near the Talda River, since that time the foundations of the multi-vector development of the region were laid. It is necessary to consider in more detail the influence of fairs on the development of tourism on the example of the Koyanda Fair in the past and similar phenomena today. It is important to note that, according to Aguinis et al. (2023), the tourism industry creates an influx of income for the region, as well as employment opportunities for the local population, which contributes to the development of local infrastructure and economic



growth. In this regard, there is a need to investigate the impact of tourism on the development of the Eurasian region in 2023.

The purpose of the study is to consider the main characteristics of sustainable tourism development, as well as the role of fairs as a kind of stabiliser of social and spiritual attitudes that have developed in society, contributing to the peaceful coexistence of different peoples and cultures.

Materials and methods

The study, which considered the sustainable development of the tourism industry of the Eurasian region through fairs, is based on the basic scientific rules of historicism, while using a typological, descriptive method of scientific research, a culturological approach, a survey, and an analytical method. Based on the use of a culturological approach in the paper, it was possible to investigate the process of development of the tourism industry in the Eurasian region in the context of sustainable development, in particular, under the influence of fairs. Using the typological method of scientific research, it was possible to study the history of the development of the fair as part of event tourism in the Eurasian region. Using the descriptive method, the main characteristics of sustainable tourism development and the basic provisions of event tourism, which fit into the framework of fair festivals, were considered. The survey method allowed considering the opinion of residents of Kazakhstan about the relevance and integration of fairs into the modern realities of the 21st century. Using the analytical method, the results of the survey were investigated and the overall results of the study were compiled. The following methods of data collection and processing were also used: documentary and archival analysis, a review of primary sources and secondary sources (articles, newspaper essays), analysis of visual materials (photographs), accompanied by links to announcements about fair events of the beginning of 2023 in the countries of the Eurasian region and scientific literature.

In research work on the sustainable development of the tourism industry in the Eurasian region, in particular resorting to the organisation of fair events, a survey of the residents of the city of Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan was carried out. The survey was conducted between January 16, 2023, and February 6, 2023. This survey involved 200 people (139 women and 61 men) who were living in or travelling through the city of Astana at the time of the survey. The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 68 years (women 18-68 years, men 18-64 years). 54 people (19 women and 35 men) refused to take this survey due to personal beliefs and other reasons. Respondents answered questions related to the development of the tourism industry in the Eurasian region, and in particular, about fairs and exhibitions in the Republic of Kazakhstan. After the completion of the collection of responses of the conducted survey of residents of the city of Astana of the Republic of Kazakhstan, an analysis of its results was carried out.

Data (announcements) were collected on fairs and exhibitions relevant at the beginning of 2023 in the countries of the Eurasian region, in particular, in the Republic of Kazakhstan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, and comparative work was carried out in relation to the use of fairs as a tool in the development of sustainable tourism in the countries mentioned earlier. The final stage of the study was to summarise the results of the research work. It was also possible to formulate ways of learning for future researchers on the sustainable development of the tourism industry in the Eurasian region through the use of trade fair events.



Results

The sustainable development of tourism in Kazakhstan proclaims respect for the specific socio-cultural characteristics of the host communities, ensuring the viability of dynamic development processes considering the benefits for all stakeholders. Tourism is one of the most encouraging sectors of the world economy, and will also play a dynamic role in the development of a "green" economy that fits well into modern travel conditions. It is also important to note that in recent decades the tourism sector has been considered as a development tool in countries with growing economies (Terkenli et al., 2022).

The definition of "sustainable tourism development" and its basic principles were defined by the World Tourism Organisation in the late 1980s. It means creating and maintaining a functional tourism industry in a particular location while ensuring that the industry is as sustainable as possible. It is important to note that sustainable tourism implies four main principles: environmental sustainability, cultural sustainability, economic sustainability, and preservation of the standard of living of the local population (Omurzakova et al., 2022). Therefore, in conditions of sustainable development, the value function of fairs can be considered as promoting the preservation and dissemination of traditions, for example, the performing arts of various regional schools.

Tourism can be of various kinds, for example, business, event, religious, cultural, recreational, or educational. Business tourism is inherently one of the most profitable and diverse types of tourism, however, it is often a stimulant for the development of other sectors of the economy, since the state and prospects of development in different regions of Kazakhstan are very different from each other. In those regions of the country where business tourism is not the leading one, there is a need to take appropriate measures to develop the region in the event industry, and to improve state policy and the functioning of the relevant coordinating bodies (Shahini et al., 2023). The measures taken by the states of the Eurasian region contribute to the successful development of event tourism, in particular the fair, by continuing to lay a favourable platform for sustainable development for the concerned participants of the fair and its organisers, observing a holistic approach and developing tourism.

The fairs of the Eurasian region served not only as a place of trade, but also played a significant role in social interaction and cultural cooperation. It is also important to note that the productivity of small-scale tourism enterprises, which used common comparable approaches, can be considered a predictor of the development of sustainable tourism (Stepanchuk et al., 2017). Since the fair is one of the ancient forms of sustainable tourism development and has become the focus of the most important and productive factors of this phenomenon, as a result, the fair itself unknowingly laid the foundations of sustainable development and fulfilled the basic principles of balanced growth (Table 1).



Functions of the fair in the sustainable development of tourism	Explanation of the functions of the fair in the sustainable development of tourism	
Creation of an environmentally friendly zone	Choice of the fair venue has always been the central regions.	
Unlimited resources for sustainable development	In the case of a fair on the territory of the Eurasian region, there is interaction and cooperation between people such as Kazakh, Central Asian, Chinese, and Siberian merchants who traded in silks, carpets, oriental sweets, bread, koumiss, and cattle.	
Information function (a place of communication and news exchange)	At the fair, residents of cities and villages of different countries exchanged news, and also communicated with trade and art figures.	
Stimulating architectural and technological development	On the example of the Koyanda Fair – due to the fair, the appearance of Koyanda has changed significantly. Around 1875, the fairgrounds were set up, shops were opened, and yurts were erected. In 1885, a post office was opened at the fair, and by 1889, a telegraph was launched.	
Stimulating cultural exchange and the development of art	At the fairs, both well-known and new artists of various arts performed.	

Table 1. Main functions of the fair in the Republic of Kazakhstan
Tabla 1. Principales funciones de ferias en la República de Kazajastán

Source: own elaboration. Fuente: elaboración propia.

Thus, it is important to note that the fair can be considered not only as a place of development of economic space, but also as a place of cultural exchange. The fair has always been a place of celebration, joy and fun, it stimulated a sense of unity, team spirit, happiness, and cordiality between people. The fair will continue to be a venue for major art festivals in 2023, which attract participants from all over Kazakhstan and from foreign countries. Acquaintance with the historical and cultural sights of Kazakhstan gives tourists the opportunity to get acquainted with the rich history of the Eurasian region, as well as to see a diverse palette of national and cultural attributes of this region, which will allow them to better understand the mentality and worldview of the people living there. Modern programmes for the development of the tourism industry work to expand and popularise the sustainable development of tourism in the Eurasian region, which contributes to improving the quality of local residents and the culture of the region as a whole (Lakomý and Alvarez-Galvez, 2022). It is important to note that the stable space of the historical fair grew out of the elementary fair trade, which had a great impact on the development of the Eurasian region. In this paper, a statistical study was conducted using a survey of residents of the city of Astana (Table 2).



Question	Yes	No	
Have you attended fairs and exhibitions in the past?	100%	-	
Are you planning to attend fairs in 2023?	63%	37%	
Is it relevant in 2023 to hold such events for the sustainable development of the tourism industry in the country?	82%	18%	
What alternative or accompanying fair options of the event tourism sector is more relevant in the 21st ctntury?	Concerts, performances	Exhibitions, ecotourism, development of the museum sphere	
	26%	74%	

Table 2. Survey resultsTabla 2.Resultados de la encuesta

Source: own elaboration. Fuente: elaboración propia.

Respondents (200 people) answered questions regarding attendance of fairs and exhibitions in Kazakhstan and their attitude to this type of sustainable tourism development in the country. Analysing the results of the survey, all 200 respondents (out of 200 respondents) have attended fair events in the past (school fairs; charity fairs; as accompanying events on holidays). However, by the beginning of 2023, only 126 survey participants plan to visit the fair in the near future and 74 respondents do not plan such a holiday (however, they do not exclude an unplanned visit). In turn, 164 residents of Astana agree with the opinion that the fair has great potential in the sustainable development of the tourism industry, but 36 of the people surveyed disagree with this statement. As an alternative (or related events) to the fair in the field of sustainable tourism development, 52 survey participants suggested concert activities and staging of performances. However, 148 respondents claim that in Kazakhstan, an alternative to traditional fairs is exhibition activities, ecotourism and the museum sector.

According to the completed survey, the following can be stated. Most of the respondents have a positive attitude to the sustainable development of the tourism sector offered by the fair. All respondents were participants of fairs in the past and most of them are planning to attend such events in the near future. Many of the respondents tend to say that fairs are an urgent area that contributes to the development of tourism in the country. However, exhibitions, ecotourism, and museums are relevant for many citizens of Kazakhstan in terms of the country's tourism development. In the 21st century, the fair has lost its former influence, however, it continues its tourist mission in the territory of the Eurasian region. In 2023, many events in the event tourism sector are planned. Starting from February 2023, many exhibitions and fairs are planned in different cities of Kazakhstan (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Planned fairs and exhibitions in the Republic of Kazakhstan for the beginning of 2023 *Figura 1. Ferias planificadas y exhibiciones en la República de Kazajastán a principios del año 2023*



Source/fuente: World Expo (2023).

The role of the fair in the new conditions of sustainable tourism development in Kazakhstan is undergoing significant changes from year to year. It can be observed that the establishment of stable interregional ties was facilitated by systematic, organised development under the control of the central and local administration and management. In addition, the fair in the new realities of sustainable development has broken many stereotypes: domestic goods are not inferior to foreign goods, numerous participants of the fair can establish a constructive dialogue not only in trade and commodity-money relations, but also form a new culture of conversation, communication, and means of transmitting new information to each other. Fair development in Kazakhstan satisfies the internal and external needs of the broad masses of the population. It is being formed as a unique market space that meets new challenges and realities with different optics: cultural events, mass performances, lite-rary evenings, poetry contests, and musical performances.

Several countries from the Eurasian region have been selected for comparison: (i) In Kyrgyz Republic the planning of only one tourism event was tracked, namely Bishkek Fashion & Textile 2023, which will be held in Bishkek on the Dordoy Bazaar on March 10, 2023; (ii) In Republic of Armenia, like Kyrgyz Republic, one event is planned for the beginning of 2023 on May 19th, 2023, "Expo Food & Drinks 2023" in Yerevan in the Yerevan Expo Centre.

Thus, it can be argued that the development of the tourism industry when using fair events in the countries of the Eurasian region is most relevant for the Republic of Kazakhstan, unlike the examples of Kyrgyz Republic and Republic of Armenia.



At the beginning of 2023, the fair, as part of the sphere of sustainable tourism development, is the most popular and widespread on the territory of Kazakhstan, since the favourable environmental parameters of the country are one of the indicators of exponential growth of sustainable tourism development. And despite the fact that in the past the fair had a temporary (seasonal) character and a period of growth and a phase of decline in the form of a crisis, in the 21st century the fair managed to overcome the critical situation and continue working and building up new rates and innovations for the Eurasian space. This is conditioned by the fact that the arrival of new goods on the shelves carries an important mission of cultural innovation, since the main consumers of purchased goods, when using new goods coming from abroad, change and adapt their habitual lifestyle, behaviour, and habits to the new.

Summing up the results of this section, consideration of the fair through the prism of sustainable tourism development opens up new opportunities for analysing its role, since the fair occupies a special place in the tourism industry in the territory of the Eurasian region. Since the organisation of time, place, trade, and social events takes place during the preparation of the fair, the fair regime is observed, since the fair creates different platforms for communication, information exchange, and performance. It can be concluded that the fair laid important foundations for the sustainable development of tourism and contributed to the progress of the countries of the Eurasian region involved in trade fair functioning in the past, which continues in 2023 on the territory of Kazakhstan.

Discussion

According to the Akylbekova and Neevina (2018), the main concept of sustainable tourism development is to maintain the natural, cultural, and biological diversity of the visited place, with as little damage as possible from tourist flows. Tourism, in which the concept of reducing air pollution is observed, water and land resources are cleaned and not polluted, and proper waste disposal is observed, can serve as a fair as part of the concept of sustainable development. Analysing the primary sources on the history of the Koyanda Fair, it can be concluded that the Koyanda Fair was a place where a balance of environmental, socio-cultural, economic influences and, most importantly, cultural exchange prevailed between the participants of the fair and local residents.

In turn, Nieuwenhuizen (2022) believes that event tourism and related events, including fairs, attract event organisers with a large number of tourists and the profit from them. According to the researcher, the phenomenon of event tourism, which is used for the development of tourist growth in different regions, can have negative consequences for the local population. However, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that, according to the 2023 study, fairs can be part of the sustainable development of tourism and do not have huge negative consequences for the local population.

Researchers of sustainable development of tourism Grilli et al. (2021) argue that potential tourists are interested in broad aspects of the tourist experience, for which it is necessary to carefully manage the social and environmental resources available. Preserving the original concepts of sustainable tourism development in 2023, the establishment of event events, in particular fairs, continues, which support the interest of tourists and the local population. According to Getz and Page (2016), in order to take a prominent place in the tourist market,



such significant tourist events as large fairs or exhibitions of creativity are necessary, which should be held on a regular or one-time basis. According to the results of the 2023 study, the territory of the Eurasian region is rich in historical places that attract tourist attention, and by supporting cultural attractions with an entertainment programme and the possibility of purchasing souvenirs, the tourist potential of the regional area is also supported. Tastulekova et al. (2018) argue that world fairs and exhibitions are large-scale events due to the fact that they are often lengthy and therefore tend to attract a large number of tourists. According to the study of sustainable tourism development, announcements of fairs and all kinds of events, especially if they last several days, have a great potential to attract travellers.

According to Eslami et al. (2019), the overall quality of life of the local population and tourists seriously affects their support for sustainable tourism development. However, according to the 2023 study, the fact that the fair performs the function of realising the activity of both visiting tourists and the local population causes an increase in the quality of life of the former and the latter. Nurtazina et al. (2015) argue that the active participation of local residents, as well as enterprises and individuals of the tourist region in the management and development of the tourist industry, that is, fairs and other events, increases the quality of the festivities themselves and attract tourists. The regulation of fair activities in the past was very often carried out at all levels of government, since trade agreements were concluded, decrees were issued, commissions were created, and regular analysis and monitoring of the development of fair activities was carried out. In the 21st century, fairs are also actively controlled by local residents and authorities, which has a positive impact on the development of event tourism.

Events are an integral part of world tourism, however, according to Kinal (2022), it is necessary to note the impact on world tourism of the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus. The tourist segment in 2019-2021 experienced massive upheavals due to cancellations or postponements of events, however, tourist events in the Eurasian region, in particular fairs with exhibitions, are rapidly gaining momentum to recover in 2022-2023, after a rather stressful period. This feature, namely the rapid recovery of event tourism after hard times, can serve as another evidence of the sustainable development of tourism and society in general, in particular Kazakhstan, which is confirmed by the results of the 2023 study. Researchers Haisch and Menzel (2023) claim that market designs are part of fair events and have no special differences. However, fairs are very different from ordinary bazaars and markets. The main difference that can be noted as a result of the study is the mass festivities held at fairs, theatrical performances for the general public, and night processions that are not part of the practice in markets and bazaars. In turn, Gibson (2023) draws attention to the important role of international trade fairs in the development of sustainable tourism in countries. It is necessary to agree that, according to the 2023 study, fairs are a significant area of development of the global economy, in particular the Eurasian region, however, the negative impact of Covid-19 on the exhibition and fair sphere reflects the need to develop sustainable tourism as a way to develop the economies of countries in need.

Building on Pierre Nora's concept of *lieux de mémoire* or "places of memory," it can be argued that historical fairs, such as the Koyanda Fair, serve as vital sites of cultural and collective remembrance, as well as urban commemoration (Lakomý and Alvarez-Galvez, 2022). These fairs, particularly situated along the banks of the Taldy River, become more than mere marketplaces; they transform into living commemorations of a region's history. These fairs act as



dynamic arenas where the past is not only remembered but actively brought to life through the gathering of people, the exchange of goods, and the sharing of stories. This makes the Koyanda Fair, and others like it, not just marketplaces but repositories of cultural wealth and testimonies of times gone by. Nora's perspective underscores that these places of memory are not just physical locations but are embodiments of the legacies they represent, making the Koyanda Fair a symbolic custodian of the region's historical and societal fabric.

The diverse perspectives on sustainable tourism and event tourism, particularly focusing on fairs, highlight the balance between economic, cultural, and environmental sustainability. Researchers emphasize the importance of preserving local culture, managing environmental resources, and ensuring the quality of life for both tourists and local communities. The Koyanda Fair exemplifies this balance, showcasing a harmonious blend of cultural exchange and environmental consciousness. The impact of Covid-19 on the tourism industry underscores the resilience and adaptability of event tourism, particularly in the Eurasian region. Furthermore, the concept of "the place of memory" positions the Koyanda Fair not just as a tourist attraction, but as a cultural and historical landmark, preserving collective memory and heritage. This multifaceted approach to tourism underscores the potential of fairs and similar events to contribute positively to sustainable development, cultural enrichment, and economic growth in a balanced and inclusive manner.

Conclusions

The comprehensive research on the role of fairs in sustainable tourism development within the Eurasian region, especially focusing on Kazakhstan, highlights their significant impact on cultural, economic, and environmental aspects. The Koyanda Fair, a prime example, stands not only as a hub for economic and cultural exchange but also as a beacon of sustainable tourism practices. It encapsulates the essence of Pierre Norra's concept of "the place of memory", signifying a cultural and historical landmark that embodies collective memory and heritage. This intertwines with the broader themes of preserving local culture and managing environmental resources responsibly.

The resilience and adaptability of event tourism, particularly in the face of challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic, are noteworthy. This resilience not only indicates the sector's ability to recover but also its potential to contribute significantly to the sustainable development of society. Fairs in Kazakhstan and the broader Eurasian region have demonstrated their capability to adapt to modern needs while preserving their historical and cultural significance.

Furthermore, the research indicates a positive public perception towards fairs, underscoring their relevance in contemporary society. They serve as platforms for intercultural dialogue and exchanges, fostering a sense of community and shared heritage. The surveys conducted reveal a strong inclination towards maintaining these events as integral parts of the cultural and tourism landscape, reinforcing their value in sustainable tourism development.

In conclusion, the study establishes fairs, particularly the Koyanda Fair, as pivotal elements in the sustainable development of tourism in the Eurasian region. Their multifaceted nature—encompassing economic stimulation, cultural exchange, environmental consideration, and historical preservation—positions them as unique and invaluable components of the region's tourism strategy. As the world moves towards more sustainable practices, the role



of such events in preserving cultural heritage and promoting sustainable tourism becomes increasingly crucial. Their continued evolution and adaptation will likely play a significant role in shaping the future of tourism and cultural preservation in the Eurasian region and beyond.

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