**New vector of China – Russia tourism on cross-border territory.**

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**Introduction**

5-10 years ago there was a tendency of Blagoveshchensk residents to visit border town Heihe for weekends. People chose weekend tourism for entertainment and shopping, visiting Chinese bath, restaurants, night clubs, karaoke and other resources. They had money to spend and time to relax. Heihe started to develop to attract more tourists, creating new tourist programs and ways of entertainment. Chinese businessmen heavily invested in tourist sector – hotels, restaurants, trading malls, resorts and etc. A small village quickly turned into a flourishing city. What's happening nowadays? Today the vector is changing.

**Aim and objectives of the project**

Describe changing tendency of China – Russia tourism on cross-border territory, depicting influential factors and growth points.

**Methodology and data**

Articles research, custom statistic information, interview.

 **Results**

Inbound tourism in the Amur region sets new records - in August, the number of Chinese who daily cross the border at a crossing point Blagoveshchensk - Heihe, has reached 800 people a number of guests willing to spend money on sightseeing, shopping, entertainment. Tourism industry representatives of the Amur region are ready to offer them their services and create a comfortable environment.

According to government plans, by 2025, the Amur region should take up to 2.5 million Chinese tourists a year. Tourist boom in China gives today a favorable situation: a push of developing tourist facilities and infrastructure. Over the past few years, the annual increase of Chinese tourists abroad is 20 percent, and since last year, they took the first place in the ranking to enter Russia. Also they hold the leading place for money spend.

Talking with travel agency representatives the following reasons were clarify:

*Reasons for tourist growth*

1. Income growth of middle class of Chinese
2. Universal location (Blagoveshchensk – Heihe)
3. Currency rate of ruble and yuan.
4. Visa-free channel

This year, visa-free channel from China has attracted 69 thousand Chinese tourists. In comparison with the previous year, this flow doubled. Tourist flow from Russia fell down three times, up to only 9 thousand Russians. Expensive yuan closed the gate to China.



**Rating of Amur region among other subjects of the Russian Federation**

1. **Moscow** — 231,1 thousand of people\* (2014 — 107,1 thousand of people, growth of 115 %);

2. **Primorye** — 115,5 thousand of people (2014 год — 65,9 thousand of people, growth 75 %);

3. **Amur region** —  63,6 thousand of people (2014 год — 41,7 thousand of people, growth 52 %).

\**Number of Chinese tourist attracted by the territories for the period of 10 months of 2015.*

**One more interesting fact,** Chinese entrepreneurs found profitable acquisition of Chinese products in Russia than in the homeland of production - reported china24news.com. The main reason is that due to the fall of the ruble value the price of the same Chinese goods on the Russian territory are cheaper than in China. A simple comparison of prices of online stores shows that Blagoveshchensk became a city with a very attractive commodity prices. For example, Louis Vuitton bag in Russia cost a little more than half of China's price tag. The most popular products are smart phones, shoes, bags and watches.

It’s also should be mentioned, that most preferable are short two or three days visit, That gives opportunity to Chinese guests for time to meet with the regional center attractions: museums, monuments, churches, shopping malls, jewelry salon and confectionery factory. So, vector has changed the other way.



Shopping tours boom influences also on economic activity, as food products are considered to be tasty and of high quality among Chinese, they are eager to buy products of regional food producers – confectionary, dairy products, meat products and etc. That fact re-orients Russian food seller entrepreneurs to the Chinese market as there is a great demand of Russian food quality products. The other years they were oriented on the needs of domestic market.



In 2013 in the Far East region survived the flood, thousands of dwellings were destroyed by water, and hundreds of families became homeless. That facts has decreased the number of tourists in that period. Sometimes tourists have time to go to the nearby village, where local folk clubs present programs and for Chinese businessmen tourist companies organize trips to more distant areas of the region - on a fishing trip on the reservoir Bureyskoe or sightseeing HydroStation and Spaceport.

Many tourists travel from southern China from the “concrete jungle”. They do not have any clue about how to grow fruits and vegetables. For them, our rural life, gardens are exotic.



Recently, the rural population in China was more than urban - about 70 to 30 percent. Currently urban residents has increased, there are about 60 percent of the total population. China managed to raise generation that has never seen how vegetables are growing. According to the interview with Chinese tourists and travel agency representatives following tourist point were given:

*Popular places to visit*

1. Historical attractions
2. Russian food restaurants
3. Shopping malls
4. Eco places (agricultural tourism, nature parks, folk entertainment, etc.)
5. Spaceport “Vostochni”
6. Places and objects of communist past

*Directions of tourism tours development:*

1. Shopping tours
2. Eco tours
3. Old people tours
4. Visiting spaceport tour
5. “Red places” tours
6. Agriculture tours
7. Folk tours
8. Amur region history tours
9. Gastronomic tours

Locally all the tours are divided into 2 big groups, so called – “Small tourist circle” and “Big tourist circle”, depending on the interesting tourist objects distance.

“Small tourist circle” together with basic tourist programs includes horse riding, aerospace museum, off-road jeep traveling, crafts and souvenirs. The next route “Big tourist circle” increases in popularity, and includes fishing, hunting and sport shooting. Program “China Friendly” helps Chinese people to feel like at home, suggesting set of measures for comfort environment.

In conclusion, it should be admitted that at present the tourist situation on the bordering towns are quite beneficial, but at the same time controversial. On the one hand, it’s high time for investment in tourist infrastructure, but on the other hand, Chinese economic slowdown raises new questions.

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