CHINESE GEOTOURISM AND GEOPARKS: SELECTED CASES

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Dr Young Ng MH
Geotourism Standing Committee, Geological Society of Australia

OUTLINE

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2. Geotourism & geoparks in China
3. Selected cases
4. Challenges & conclusions

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1. BACKGROUND

Geotourism

'Geotourism as tourism which focuses on an area's geology and landscape as the basis for providing visitor engagement, learning and enjoyment' (GSA 2015).

Geoparks

'Single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development' (GGN 2017).

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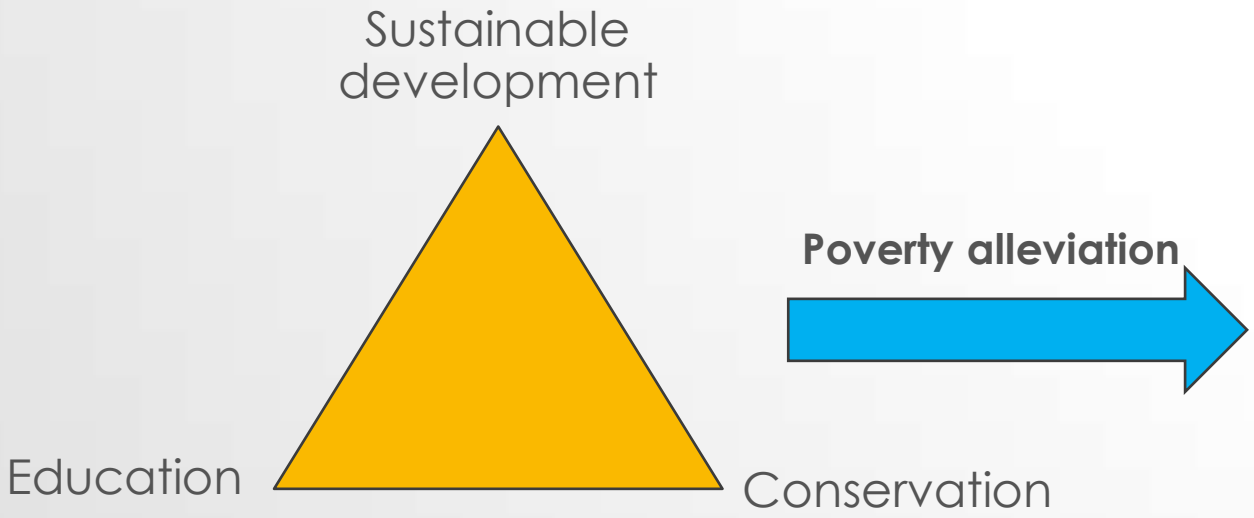
2. GEOTOURISM & GEOPARKS IN CHINA

- Geotourism and geoparks in China = poverty alleviation
- Geoparks are venues of geotourism activities
- Geotourism supports geoparks to achieve the objectives of conservation, education and sustainable development



Poverty alleviation

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ECONOMIC IMPACTS

- Visitors: average 420,000 per geopark per year, continue to grow at 5 – 7% per year (MLR 2017)
- New business and job opportunities: created direct and indirect jobs 15,000 jobs
- Generating revenue – a Chinese geopark is estimated to generate: USD 26 million or AUD 34 million per year

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GROWTH OF NATIONAL GEOPARKS IN CHINA

- A national rural poverty alleviation policy
- Average 12 new national geoparks per year since the year 2000

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3 Levels of Geopark

Global Geopark

National Geopark

Provincial Geopark

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世界地质公园网络中国成员分布图

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CHARACTERISTICS OF CHINESE GEOPARKS

- Mostly located in relatively poor areas with not little resources
- Sizes: 100 – 5,000 sq km
- 95% apply an entry fee ranging from USD15 or AUD20 to USD36/ AUD40 per adult
- Highly visible gates and signs
- Staff: 200 – 1,500 full time
- Regular public and school activities
- National and international networking (sister park relationship)

- A comprehensive interpretation system – geopark guides, museums, interpretive panels, classrooms, audio-visual rooms, display galleries, QR codes, web information, books, pamphlets
- Managed by county and city governments, under the supervision of the Department (provincial level) or Ministry (national level) of Land and Resources
- Operated on a financially self-supporting basis, with occasional funding from local or central government on special projects

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3. SELECTED CASES

- Danxiashan UNESCO Global Geopark, Guangdong
- Yandangshan UNESCO Global Geopark, Zhejiang
- Leiqiong UNESCO Global Geopark, Hainan & Guangdong

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- Area: 290 sq.km
- Population: 35,086
- Staff: 587
- Visitors: 2.7 million (2015)
- Ticket revenue: CNY 78 million
  (USD 12/AUD 15 million)
- Total revenue: CNY 698 million
  (USD 103/ AUD 139 million)

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长老峰游客中心
Elder Peak Tourist Center

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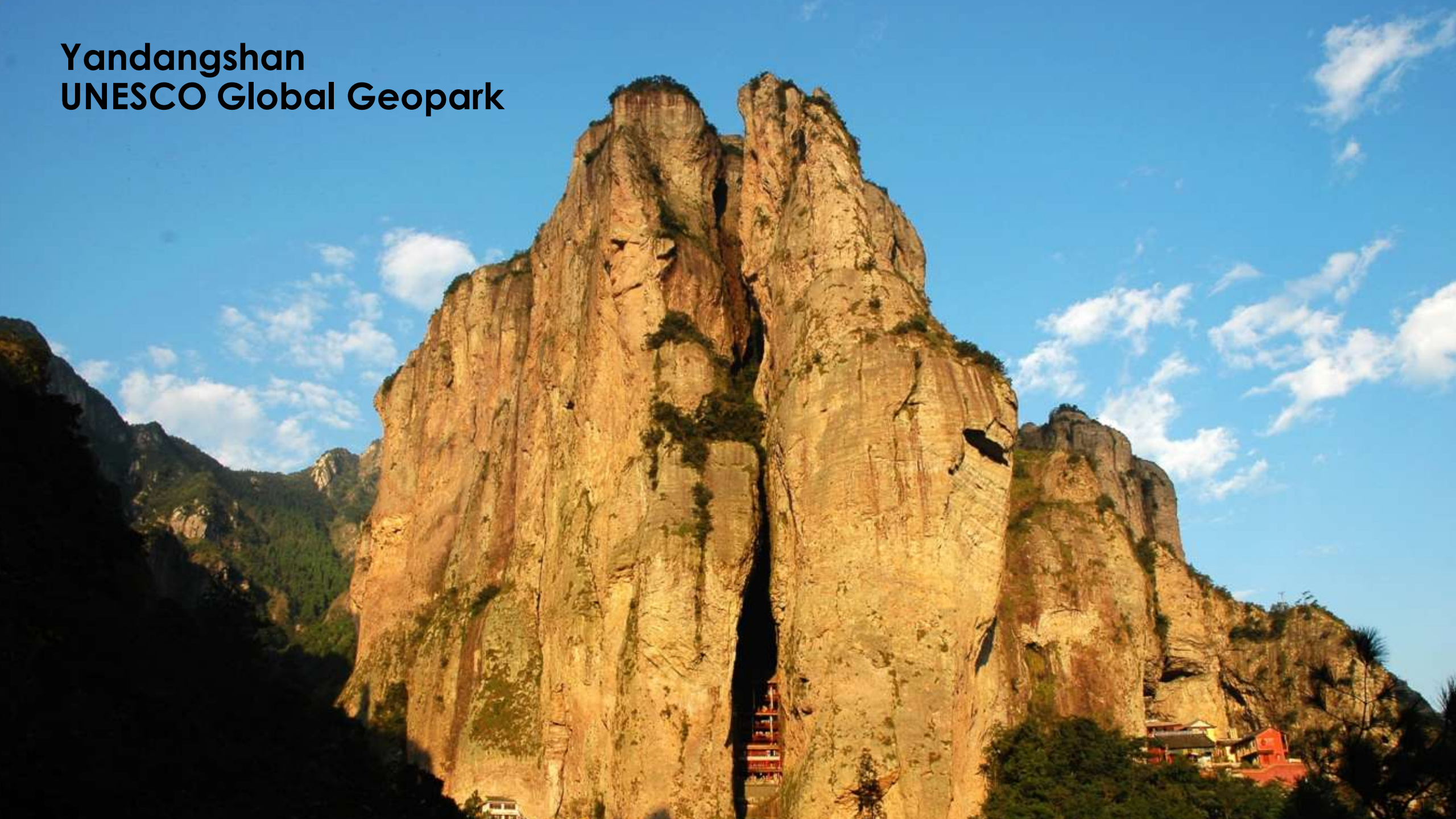
Yandangshan
UNESCO Global Geopark



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- Area: 299 sq km
- Population: 9.12 million
- Staff: 1,260
- Visitors: 10.4 million (2016)
- Ticket revenue: CNY 149 million (USD 22/AUD 29 million)
- Total revenue: CNY 1.04 billion (USD 158/AUD 207 million)

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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Yandangshan UNESCO Global Geopark

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- Area: 3,050 km^2
- Population: 3.4 million
- Staff: 836
- Visitors: 2.2 million (2015)
- Ticket revenue: CNY 39.7 million (USD /AUD million)
- Total revenue: CNY 198 million (USD 36/AUD 30 million)

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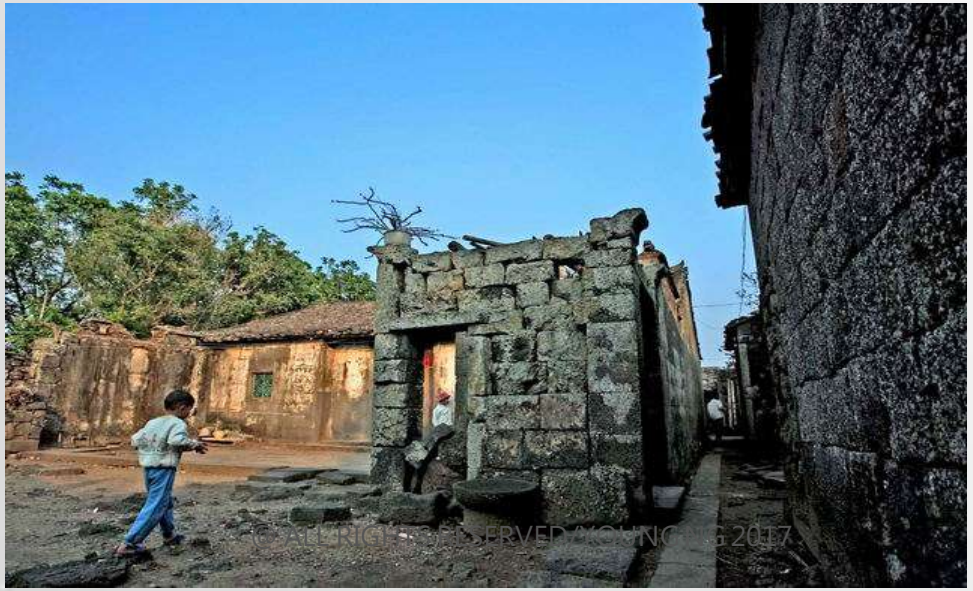

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5. CHALLENGES & CONCLUSIONS

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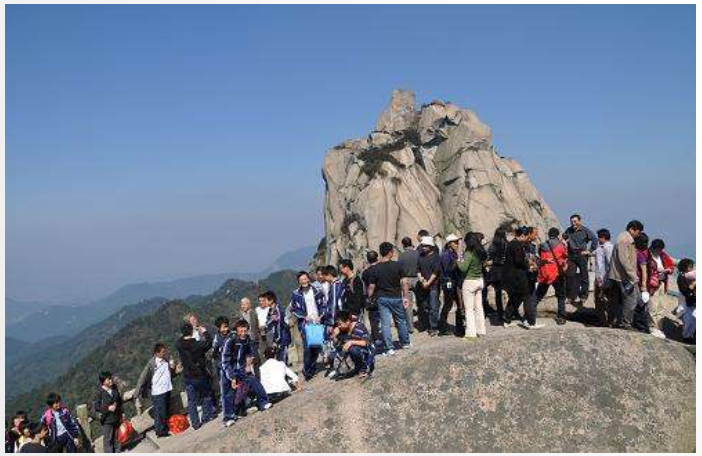
CHALLENGES

- High demands for infrastructure and tourism facilities
- Visitor management
- Environment and heritage protection
- Recruiting young people to work in remote parks



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CONCLUSIONS

- Geotourism and geopark approach adopted in China is proven to be economically effective in improving the livelihood of people in poor and remote areas
- Geotourism and geoparks are not just only about rocks, they also includes ecology, culture and history of an area.
- Foreseeable improvement in the remote, poor areas particularly in Central, NW and SW regions of China
- Opening up tremendous business and academic research opportunities
- Utilizing and revitalising existing geo-resources (geology, natural & cultural landscapes)

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THANK YOU!

Dr Young Ng

Geological Society of Australia

Email: 2901792603@qq.com

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