

**The Consumption of European Cultural Tourism –
An Indicator of Asian Socio-economic Development
and a Quest for Distinction**

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ABSTRACT

Travelers from Asia offer a potential alternative target for some of the traditional European tourist markets that have stagnated owing to the economic crisis. A remarkable recovery of the Japanese market as well as an exponential growth of the Chinese and Korean markets, in addition to the high spending power of Thai and Chinese tourists, have created a highly positive scenario for the tourism industry in Austria. This paper uses Vienna as a case study to exemplify the rise of Asian tourism in Europe. Tourism statistics, media reports, and materials of destination marketing organizations were analyzed to provide an evaluation of trends and growth of Asian outbound tourism to Vienna. By comparing and contrasting two major tourist markets—Japanese and Chinese—in Vienna, the current study highlights characteristics of consumption of Vienna's cultural tourism products by these Asian tourists. The authors argue that the sophistication of tourist consumption of European cultural attractions is in line with stages of socio-economic development of Asian countries.

Keywords: distinction, socio-economic development, Asia, cultural tourism