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China boasts a time-honored travel culture. Through travels, Chinese people walk through space and time by putting themselves back in nature and history. They evade reality and yet again embrace it after finding their true selves in nature. The tradition of travelling is carefully recorded in many literary works, thus enriching China's travel culture. In ancient China, travels can be boiled down to official trips and recreational tours. People set out for official trips when they are appointed to fill a post far away by the imperial court. Whether they are promoted or demoted determines their itineraries and feelings. Hence, parting sorrow is prevalent in Chinese seeing-off poetry, while the agony of not being able to achieve one's ambition is often implied in essays presenting arduous trips as well. In contrast, recreational tours carry more casualness. During the trips, travelers visit renowned and spectacular mountains, waters and historic sites to meditate on and build attachments with nature and the past. Therefore, Chinese poems, essays and paintings themed on natural beauty are often characterized by a careless and unfettered mindset. Whatever the moods, it is doubtless that travelers reshape their personalities when travelling, and that literary works created during travels shed a light for us on historical affairs and enable us to relate to the authors.

Official trips always begin with seeing friends off, hence parting sorrow features prominently in the history of Chinese literature. Seeing-off parties cannot go without wine and poems, thus poets would take the opportunity to express their parting grievances, wishes and encouragement. The well-known *The Song of Weicheng* written in the Tang Dynasty (618-907A.D.) is a great example of a Chinese seeing-off poem. After the party, however, travelers' departure signifies not only separation but also chances of a reunion. Therefore, the grievance of separation is often accompanied by the joy of knowing new friends and the expectation of seeing old pals as well. Travels grant opportunities for imperial officials on the road to know people of the same hometown, school or age, thus expanding their interpersonal networks and helping create new friendships.

In the Tang Dynasty, there emerged a number of poets who travelled across China for

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years. They are either like Du Fu, bottlenecked and frustrated by the officialdom, or of the same ilk as Li Bai, who defied the selection of imperial exams and hoped to gain fame and power through connectivity. A lot of Tang poets spend years travelling around. Du Fu, for instance, travelled for at least two decades in his life. After years of rootless self-examination, the poets left a dizzying array of travel poems demonstrating their talent and sentiments.

Apart from official trips, which feature imperial officials taking natural beauty as an outlet for their anguish, ancient Chinese also take tours simply for fun. The most typical traveler of this kind is Xu Xiake (1587 -1641 A.D.). Starting travelling at the age of 22, Xu's footsteps can be found in more than 16 provinces and regions in China, including today's Jiangsu, Shandong, Shanxi, Hebei, Henan, Shaanxi and Anhui. His trips are documented in *The Travel Diaries of Xu Xiake*, which stands out among other travel literature because of its detailed geographic records from an ecological and geological perspective.

People-to-people exchanges and shipping technologies also led to an influx of overseas travelers into ancient China by sea and land. Therefore, travelers from abroad also play an important role in China's travel culture, among whom, merchants and missionaries have the largest social and cultural influence. In Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368 A.D.), Italian traveler Marco Polo visited China and lived in multiple Chinese cities for nearly 20 years. His *Book of the Marvels of the World* documents numerous countries in the 13th century, among which the description of China is particularly comprehensive and detailed. The book's popularity enabled the world to know about ancient China's prosperity, thus attracting more overseas travelers with fantasies and ambitions to the country.