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# Constructionism and culture in research: Understandings of the fourth Buddhist Festival, Wutaishan, China

Chris Ryan <sup>a</sup> ... Huimin Gu <sup>b</sup>

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## Abstract

This paper offers an interpretation of competing legitimacies at the 2007 4th Annual Wutaishan Buddhist Festival in Taihua, Shanxi Province. It suggests how spectacle, entertainment and performance spaces are condoned arenas of challenge and usage by mainstream and peripheral groups. The paper also discusses the methods employed in the framing and nature of interpretation, and possesses its own tension as the different cultural perspectives and voices are heeded. It concludes that the festival exists as a multi-layered event involving economics, politics, faith, entertainment and prestige “each of which creates its own set of interpretations contextualised in the evolving state of Chinese tourism. The paper is partially a response to the work of Hollinshead, Phillimore & Goodson and O'Dell that claim a need for a more reflexive voice in the tourism literature as a means of understanding the tourist experience. Its premises are

based on thinking derived from multiple sources including symbolic interaction and Buddhist thought.



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## Keywords

Festivals; China; Buddhism; Constructionism; Culture; Reflexivity

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