

The Convergence or Divergence of Pilgrimage and Tourism in Modern China

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ABSTRACT

Mountains have been attraction centers throughout the history of China as both pilgrimage and tourist sites because they are not only sanctified by Chinese religions but their natural beauty also attracts people. In this paper, I will problematize the application of the western construction of separation of 'the secular' and 'the religious' to the practice of pilgrimage in Modern China as well as offer a new perspective to better understand the practice of pilgrimage in Modern China. Accordingly, the scope of this paper is limited to pilgrimage in Modern China starting with the end of the Cultural Revolution (1969-1979).

Keywords: Chinese Religious, Modern China, Secularism, Pilgrimage

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INTRODUCTION

Mountains have been attraction centers throughout the history of China as both pilgrimage and tourist sites because they are not only sanctified by Chinese religions but their natural beauty also attracts people. In this paper, I will problematize the application of the western construction of separation of 'the secular' and 'the religious' to the practice of pilgrimage in Modern China as well as offer a new perspective to better understand the practice of pilgrimage in Modern China. Accordingly, the scope of this paper is limited to pilgrimage in Modern China starting with the end of the Cultural Revolution (1969-1979). However, in the background section, I will briefly talk about the main characteristics of the Chinese forms of practice over the history in order to truly understand the practice of pilgrimage in Modern China. What particularly happened during the Cultural Revolution was that the state demolished religious sites, banned religious activities and severely punished people who resisted these changes. After the Cultural Revolution (1979), the state revitalized religion, restored old religious sites and promoted them as cultural and national entities as well creating the new secular pilgrimage sites. After the background information about Chinese pilgrimage, I will explain two major theories about the relationship between tourism and pilgrimage and examine the practices of pilgrimage from different sites. In terms of the modern day practice of pilgrimage in China, I basically discuss two interrelated issues. First, the structural separation of 'the secular' and 'the religious' confuses the practice of pilgrimage in Modern China. Second, considering pilgrimage and tourism as universally structured entities confuses the understanding of these terms because it causes us to search for the similar characteristics of pilgrimage and tourism everywhere regardless of the social, political and economic conditions of the different places and times. As a result, the neat separation of pilgrimage and tourism is not possible because of the impossibility of the making a distinction between 'the secular' and 'the religious' as examples of pilgrimage practices, given later in this paper, will demonstrate. As for social contexts of Modern China, the availability of fast and safe means of transportation, the commodification of sacred sites, secularization of pilgrimage sites, and the state's intervention in restoring and promoting religious sites to unite the local and national identity lead to collapse the borders of pilgrimage and tourism.

Taking religions as sui generis entities problematizes the understanding of pilgrimage because it ignores the formative influences of political, economic, and cultural factors on religions. Since the government played an important role in the reconstruction and promotion of religious sites after the Cultural Revolution, the concept of pilgrimage will be better understood by analyzing the social contexts of China. To explore the role of government in the practice of pilgrimage in Modern China, I will draw on Asad's theory of the relationship between power and religion. Asad (1983) explains that "power constructs religious ideology, establishes the preconditions for distinctive kinds of religious personality, authorises specifiable religious practices and utterances, produces religiously defined knowledge" (p.237). In agreement with Asad, Yu (1992), considering Chinese pilgrimage, states that "[j]ust as political patronage could influence the changing fortunes of pilgrimage sites, the economic activities that went on as a byproduct of pilgrimage might very well be one of the determining factors in the longevity of a site" (p.200). Furthermore, Asad asserts that "there cannot be a universal definition of religion, not only because its constituent elements and relationships are historically specific, but because that definition is itself the historical product of discursive processes" (Asad, 1993, 29). Accordingly, I argue that there will not be a true understanding of pilgrimage without taking account of the social, political and economic conditions of Modern China. I will dedicate the rest of the paper to further examine the applicability of the above-mentioned theoretical frame on pilgrimage practices in Modern China. After looking at the cases of Mount Tai (泰山), Dazhai (大寨), and Jinggangshan (井冈山), I will in detail examine the Mount Putuo (普陀山) pilgrimage practice by particularly using the data of the recently conducted survey on identifying the profiles of its visitors.

Background: Pilgrimage in China

In this background section, I will give introductory background information about the main characteristics of Chinese pilgrimage which will be a basis for the practice of modern day pilgrimage. Buddhism and Daoism are major religions in China because of both their long history and the large number of followers who represent the Chinese culture (Zhang et. al., 2007, p.106). Accordingly, most of the Chinese sacred places were associated with either Buddhism or Daoism because these were the institutionalized religions

supported by the rulers and elites in the Imperial China. There are the famous Five Peaks (五嶽 wuyue) which are associated with Daoism as pilgrimage sites: Mount Heng (衡山), Mount Tai (泰山), Mount Heng (恆山), Mount Hua (華山), Mount Song (嵩山) (Digital Dictionary of Buddhism.) According to Zhang et. al. (2007), however; there are 107 famous Daoist mountains in addition to the Five Peaks (p.105). At the same time, there are four famous mountains (四大名山 sida mingshan) which are associated with Buddhism: Mount Putuo (普陀山,) Mount Emei(峨眉山,) Mount Wutai (五臺山,) and Mount Jiuhua(九華山) (Digital Dictionary of Buddhism).

One of the primary characteristics of the pilgrimage sites is the manifestation of the power of a deity which makes a place “numinous” and “efficacious,” (靈 ling) (Naquin & Yu. 1992, p. 11). This notion is consistent with Eliade’s understanding of hierophany which is the manifestation of the sacred. Naquin and Yu state that the main objective of pilgrimage is to commune with the resident deity of a mountain or temple (1992, p.11). For example, Mount Putuo, which is the residence of Bodhisattva Guanyin (觀音) the Goddess of Mercy, is specifically visited on her birthday in order to make contact with her. It is also possible for one to witness Guanyin’s apparitions during his/her visit to Mount Putuo. At the same time, the practices of the visitors to Putuoshan display different ways of communing with the resident deity. For example, burning joss sticks, participating in xuyuan and huanyuan, throwing coins at incense burners, and tying wind chimes on trees for good luck are the most practiced. Turner (1973) also points out that xuyuan and huanyuan 許願還願 are two major events in the Chinese pilgrimage. Xuyuan 許願 is to make a promise to come back to the pilgrimage site to pay homage to the resident deity once his/her wish comes true (p.197-198). Huanyuan 還願 is the second part of the contractual pilgrimage and it is to come back the pilgrimage site to thank for the resident deity because the wish comes true (Turner, 1973, 197-198).

Pilgrimage sites are mostly identified with mountains in China. Though Naquin and Yu state that “[n]ot all pilgrimage sites or sacred places in China were mountains, but they were the prototype and most typical sort” (1992,

p.11). Even the Chinese term for going on pilgrimage is to “pay one's respect to a mountain and to offer incense” (朝山进香 chaoshan jinxiang) (Naquin and Yu, 1992, p. 11). Mountains are also associated with the realms of other worldly beings; therefore, people follow a particular procedure “to obtain blessings and avert calamities” (Naquin & Yu, 1992, p. 12-14). With regards to the motivations of Chinese pilgrims, Naquin and Yu (1992) enumerates that “[t]hey might go to seek a vision of the deity, perform a penance, ask for heirs or cures, or pray for good health and long life for themselves and their family members” (p.12). Mountains additionally attracted imperial rulers. For example, Qin Shi Huang (秦始皇) (259 BCE- 210 BCE), who was the first emperor of the unified Chinese state, visited “a host of sacred peaks to legitimize his rule” and performed the fengshan rites at Mount Tai which were conducted only by imperial rulers (Naquin & Yu, 1992, p. 13).

With the development of Buddhism, a new type of pilgrimage was introduced to China which is the relic-centered pilgrimage. The relics of monks including ashes and personal articles became attraction centers and people paid homage to them because they regarded them as the manifestation of sacred. The Buddha's finger bone which is placed at the Famen Monastery (法门寺) is one of the famous Buddhist pilgrimage sites.

The Convergence or Divergence of Pilgrimage and Tourism?

On the debate of the relationship of between pilgrimage and tourism, there are mainly two approaches. The first approach is that pilgrimage is a form of tourism. The other approach is that pilgrimage is neatly separated from tourism. After explaining the two opposing perspectives of the relationship between pilgrimage and tourism, I argue that the neat separation of pilgrimage and tourism or the secular and the religious problematizes the notion of pilgrimage in Modern China. Not only do I explain the arguments of each approach in depth, but I will also discuss that the polarization of the concepts of pilgrimage and tourism confuses the understanding of pilgrimage in Modern China.

The first approach to the relationship between pilgrimage and tourism is that tourism is a kind of pilgrimage and it is not even possible to distinguish one from another. One of the supporting theories is that both pilgrims and

tourists share the same physical facilities such as the same infrastructure, means of transportation, and financial resources. In other words, “from the perspective of tourism, pilgrims and tourists are structurally and spatially the same or forms of one another” (Olsen & Timothy, 2006, p. 6)

Another argument is that there is a historical affinity between pilgrimage and tourism. Digance (2006), for example, argues that “the medieval pilgrimage was the first example of mediaeval tourism” (p.36). Likewise, Kaelber (2006) associates the beginning of secular travel with the medieval pilgrimage with the commercialization of pilgrimage (as cited in Oakes & Sutton, 2010, p.9).

Graburn (1989) also describes tourism as a sacred journey in which people leave their ordinary life to experience the non-ordinary which is symbolically sacred, in reference to Durkheimian notion of sacred which is the non-ordinary experience (p.28). In other words, tourism is a sacred journey “in the sense of being exciting, renewing, and inherently self-fulfilling” because the goal of the touristic journey is “symbolically sacred and morally on a higher plane than the regards of the ordinary workday world” (Graburn, 1989, p.28).

With regards to the generalizations about tourists, Olsen and Timothy (2006) argue that the portrayal of tourists as pleasure-seeking hedonists leads to the separation of pilgrimage and tourism by placing pilgrims as goal-oriented people as opposed to tourists (p.6). In other words, “we speak of types of tourists rather than whether or not one motivation is more important than another in defining tourist” (Olsen & Timothy, 2006, p. 7). Olsen and Timothy (2006) accordingly bring forth a new category by classifying tourism as religious, business, education, health, and so on (p.7). In conclusion, Bremer (2005) summarizes the major arguments of the first perspective by bringing forth three approaches: “the spatial approach (pilgrims and tourists occupying the same space with different spatial behaviors), the historical approach (the relationship between religious forms of travel and tourism), and the cultural approach (pilgrimage and tourism as modern practices in a (post)modern world” (as cited in Olsen and Timothy, 2006, p.3).

The other opposing approach is the fact that pilgrims are different than tourists. This approach mostly emphasizes the differences between pilgrims and tourists in terms of their motivations and practices. Tourists who are motivated by pleasure, education, curiosity, and relaxation distinguish from pilgrims who are religiously or spiritually motivated. De Sousa (1993) for example describes pilgrims as religious devotees (as cited in Olsen & Timothy, 2006, p.7). Cohen (1996), as a strong supporter of this approach, explains that a pilgrim “whose journey is to a center of his world” distinguishes from a tourist “who travels away from center to a periphery” (p.47). Furthermore, Cohen (1996) separates pilgrimage from tourism in terms of its obligatoriness, itineraries, patterns of demeanor and its relations with co-travelers (p.56-58). Nevertheless, Cohen (1996) is aware of the role of secularism in blurring between “pilgrim-tourists, who travel toward the religious, political, or cultural centers of their cultural world, and traveler-tourists, who travel away from them into the periphery of that world” (p.59).

Considering the two different approaches, I consider that the conceptualization of pilgrimage deriving from the social, political, and economical hallmarks of Modern China becomes an appropriate way in the explanation of the relationship between pilgrimage and tourism. Accordingly, I argue that the borders of pilgrimage and tourism are collapsed due to the discursive nature of ‘the sacred’ and ‘the secular’ in practice. Even though I partially agree with the first approach about the relationship between pilgrimage and tourism in Modern China, I actually argue that the particular social conditions of modern day China lead to blur the borders of ‘the sacred’ and ‘the profane.’ There will not be a general theory that explains the practice of pilgrimage everywhere. For example, it is not possible to truly understand the practice of pilgrimage in Mecca or Mount Athos with the same framework that is used in China. As for the second approach, it is problematic to identify people as ‘not pilgrims’ who are participating in religious activities but they are not spiritually motivated to visit a pilgrimage site. For example, despite the fact that many people in Mount Putuo have been in a temple at most several times, they participate in pilgrimage practices.

Pilgrims or Tourists? Dazhai, Mount Tai, Jinggangshan

On the discussion of the relationship between tourism and pilgrimage based on the abovementioned theoretical framework, the discursive practices of Dazhai, Mount Tai, and Jinggangshan demonstrate that political, economic and social conditions of Modern China have a significant effect on the formation of pilgrimage.

The veneration of Mao Zedong with the Buddha at Dazhai is an interesting case of the blurring of the borders of pilgrimage and tourism. Dazhai (大寨), as “a model of rural development, revolutionary spirit and collective power,” was promoted as touristic site during the Cultural Revolution by the state. The Chinese were amazed at the economic success of Dazhai, and three hundred thousand tourists visited there each year. After Dazhai’s enormous fame as a model of rural development, the Dazhai people also built a huge Buddhist temple at Tiger Head Hill in which the statues of Mao Zedong and Sakyamuni Buddha were stood alongside (Olsen & Sutton, 2010, p.2-3). The conviction of a monk from the temple which is “there is no fundamental conflict between worshipping Mao Zedong and belief in Sakyamuni” illustrates the blurring of the borders of the secular and the spiritual (Olsen & Sutton, 2010, p.3). Even though Mao Zedong is not a religious figure at all, he is revered and treated as if he was as religious figure by the Dazhai people. The notion of revering Mao Zedong with the Buddha is certainly the results of the social, political and economic conditions of Modern China.

Furthermore, Oakes and Sutton (2010) discuss that the polarizations of the concepts like the spiritual and the secular are the Western ideology (p.2). Accordingly, the categorization of the terms like ‘the secular’ and ‘the spiritual’ makes it problematic to understand the notion of pilgrimage and tourism in China (p.2). For example, the display of Mao Zedong’s statue as well as the treatment of the statue as a religious object at Dazhai will not be explained with the Western ideology of neat separation of secular and religious.

The secularization of Mount Tai is another example demonstrating that the political and economic conditions of Modern China lead to the blurring of

the borders of pilgrimage and tourism. Mount Tai (泰山 Taishan) is one of the famous five Daoist pilgrimage sites (wuyue 五嶽). However, “[o]ver the past sixty years the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has attempted to appropriate the sacred space of Mount Tai in a variety of ways. Officials have sought to both secularize and revolutionize the space, and, in conjunction, to stamp out the remnants of what they saw as superstitious practices” (Dott, 2010, p.44-45). Dott (2010) mentions several adjustments which have been carried out by the Chinese Government: the building of a Communist monument in 1946, and the construction of tombs in commemoration of notable warlords and Communist party members such as Feng Yuxiang, Fan Mingshu (p.36). Furthermore, the print media gives more emphasis on the secular features of Mount Tai such as “emperors, poets, and famous literati” but downplays the religious worship on the mountain (Dott, 2010, p. 39-40). As a result, the planned secularization of Mount Tai to create a revolutionary and cultural site leads its religious importance to be overshadowed. For example, many people who make it to reach the summit of Mount Tai, where the Jade Emperor shrine is placed, do not visit the shrine (Dott, 2010, p.38). They enjoy with landscape, sunrise as well as take several pictures as a proof of being at the summit of Mount Tai. However, they do not give the same importance to visit the Jade Emperor Shrine, which has been associated with Mount Tai for a long time (Dott, 2010, p.38).

To identify whether one is either pilgrim or tourist in Modern China is complex because the social, economic, and political conditions of Modern China render this kind of categorization impossible. For example, The popular religious practices that the visitors engage in at Jinggangshan (井冈山), which is supported and promoted by the CCP as a “revolutionary holy land,” and “revolutionary memorial site” is another case demonstrating that the borders of secular and religious are blurred (Rioux, 2010, p.79). After Jinggangshan was constructed as a “revolutionary memorial site” to educate “patriotism and nationalism” for Chinese people, popular religious practices became common in the form of mystifying Mao Zedong and praying to him for “prosperity, a sick family member, college admissions, a job promotion, or other like reasons” (Rioux, 2010, p. 88-95). This site in nature is not religious at all because there are not any affiliations with any religion, nor any religious drives to attract people. However, there are very similar

practices that people engage in religious sites. When an old lady worships Mao Zedong in Jinggangshan, the strict borders of 'the religious' and 'the secular' are corrupted. Accordingly, the categorization of the visitors as pilgrim or tourist and religious or secular is not possible. The case of Jinggangshan agrees with the idea that "the social contexts within which tourist and religious practices occur render it impossible to speak of 'the tourist' as a stable social category conveniently separated from other aspects of daily life (such as the spiritual)" (Oakes, Sutton, 2010, p.4).

The abovementioned three case studies establish that pilgrimage in Modern China will not be properly understood unless one analyzes the role of government in promoting religious sites as cultural and national entities. Pilgrimage's economic benefits also appeal to both the national and local rulers which result in commoditization of religious sites. For example, Xiuzhen Daoist Temple, Wuzhen (乌镇), which is one of the oldest religious sites in the city, run by a tourism agenda (Svenson, 2010, p. 211-230). The tourism agenda restored the temple and hired the Daoist priests. The symbolic religious practices and even unorthodox Daoist rituals like fortune telling are seen as a tool of making money (Svenson, 2010, p.224-225).

In accordance with the commoditization of Xiuzhen Temple, Chan and Lang (2011) enumerate two important factors that lead the local rulers to restore the religious sites and promote them: "economic development" and "local cultural aggrandizement" (p.138).). In addition to Chang and Lang, Goossaert and Palmer (2011) highlight two important factors underlying the local rulers' and the state's support of religious festivals and sites: unifying identity and culture (259-262). For example, the city government of Jinhua 金华 hosted the celebrations of a famous deity's birthday in the form of "folk cultural festival" (Chan and Lang, 2011, p.140). It is surprising that the atheist ruling held a religious festival and participate in its ritual celebrations; nevertheless, the deity's birthday takes the form of a folk cultural festival (Chan and Lang, 2011, p.140-141) At the same time, the cult of the Yellow Emperor and the Mazu cult are the very example of the government's support of religion for the purpose of unifying cultural and national identities (Goossaert and Palmer, 2011, p.260-261).

Guanyin Pilgrimage at Mount Putuo

Avalokiteshvara, who is adapted to the Chinese culture as a female deity by taking the name of Guanyin (观音), is such a well-known deity that many Chinese have her statue at their altar. Mount Putuo (普陀山, Putuoshan) which is associated with Guanyin (观音) is one of the four famous Buddhist sacred mountains (四大名山 sida mingshan). The authority and authenticity of Mount Putuo, as the home of Guanyin, come from Avatamsaka Sutra (The Flower Ornament Scripture) (Cleary, 1993). In addition to its religious importance, Mount Putuo's natural beauty attracts many visitors. After describing the natural and religious features of Mount Putuo, I will examine the kinds of pilgrimage practices and their leading motivations in reference to the Wong's survey, which was conducted among those who visited Mount Putuo in 2009 and 2010. Accordingly, I will argue that the availability of various means of fast and safe transportation, the commodification of religious sites and objects, the promotion of religious sites as cultural and national heritage lead to blurring of the borders of pilgrims and tourists.

Considering the four famous Buddhist Mountains (四大名山), each mountain is associated with a bodhisattva. For example, Mount Wutai is the home of Bodhisattva Manjusri (Wenshu 文殊), Mount Emei is the home of Bodhisattva Samanrabhadra (Pu xian 普賢), Mount Jiuhua is the home of Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha (Dizang 地藏), and Mount Putuo, which is the subject of this section, is home of Bodhisattva Guanyin. Comparing the other three sacred mountains, Mount Putuo's size is relatively small. However, Mount Putuo has 28 Buddhist monasteries, nunneries and shrines in which 1089 monks and nuns stay (Wang, 2011, p.72).

The Chinese government played a significant role in the transformation of a pilgrimage site to a tourist attraction center by using print media as in the case of Mount Tai. The following excerpt from *Buddhism's Four Mountain*

Sanctuaries in China (中国佛教四大名山, Zhongguo fojiao si da mingshan) (2000) clearly emphasize the natural beauties and features of Mount Putuo.

Mount Putuo stands five kilometres east of the Zhoushan Island 舟山, Zhejiang Province 浙江. Mount Putuo is the narrow strip of an isle in the Zhoushan Archipelago. It is 8.6 kilometers long north and south, 3.5 kilometers wide east and west, 12.5 square kilometers in area, and 30 kilometers in circumference. The Foding Mountain, the peak of the isle, rises to 291.3 meters above sea level. Access to the top of the mountain is by a stone stairway with 1,060 steps. The isle itself is a topographical spectacle, covered with jungle of rocks in unconceivable shapes, and studded with mystic caves and tranquil vales and its buildings shimmer in an ocean of cloud in a most ethereal fashion. The overhanging cliffs poised on the edge of the isle are pounded by waves that surge and ebb over golden beaches. The beauty of the isle is, indeed, fascinating. p.55.

This short description of Putuoshan published by China Travel & Tourism Press (中国旅游出版社, Zhongguo Lüyou Chubanshe) (2000) in Beijing demonstrates how little weight is given to the religious importance of Putuoshan. The approach of this publisher in introducing Mount Putuo is important because the publisher runs under *National Tourism Administration of The People's Republic Of China* (中华人民共和国国家旅游局, Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Guojia Lüyou ju). In fact, the book talks about the Mount Putuo's religious history including the importance of Guanyin for the site. However, the commodification of the religious site and objects as well as the promotion of Putuoshan as national and cultural heritage overshadow the religious importance of it. For example, the following excerpt clearly points to the way of promotion of Mount Putuo by the Chinese state. This excerpt, written by Qiu Lian who lived in the Qing Dynasty, poetically described the twelve attractive features of Putuo.

Scenic Spot an Duangu, Famous Mountain in the shape of the Buddha's Finger, Sound of Surging Waves Pounding the Twin Cases, Thousand-Step Golden Beach, Sea of Clouds over the Mountain Crest, Celestial Well at Meicen, Sunrise at Daybreak, Mount Putuo Bathed in Sunset Glory, Divine Cave at Fahua, Bright Sunrays after a Snowfall, Bell Tolling at the Precious

Pagoda, Lotus Poll Bathed in Moonlight (China Travel & Tourism Press, 2000, p55).

The above passage clearly puts more emphasize on the natural beauties of Mount Putuo such as rivers, beaches, boulders, and sunrise. At the same time, one would not need to be motivated by any religious forces, including witnessing the apparitions of Guanyin or his or her wish comes true, in order to visit the pilgrimage site because the natural beauties of it are fascinating enough to attract people.

Yu (1992) points to two important factors in determining sacred places: the apparitions of a deity and the references of the scripture. Mount Putuo has both the apparitions of Bodhisattva Guanyin and the references of Avatamsaka Sutra (Yu, 1992, 190-193). Today one can still witness the apparitions of Guanyin and there are even recently narrated stories of the apparitions of Guanyin (Wong, 2011, p. 64-66). For example, an apparition of Guanyin was experienced by more than 5,000 visitors in the day of the inauguration ceremony of the 33-meter tall Bronze Guanyin Statue in 1997 (Wong, 2011, p.66). In addition to the apparitions of Guanyin, the references of Avatamsaka Sutra provide a basis for the sacralization of Mount Putuo. The Sutra narrates the sermons of Avalokiteshvara at Mount Potuo as well as depicts the physical features of the place where he resided. In fact, there has been the discussion over determination of Potalaka which is the dwelling place of Guanyin. Yu (1992) in detail talked about the process of how Mount Putuo was identified with Potalaka and the factors contributing to this process such as mountain gazetteers, founding myths, visions of Guanyin, ordinary pilgrims, ascetics, and abbots (206-234). However, I will not elaborate on the transformation of the Daoist haven to Chinese Potalaka because it is not the scope of the paper.

Wong's recently conducted survey analyzing the visitors' profiles demonstrates the ambiguity of the terms such as "the secular" and "the religious" or "tourist" and "pilgrim" because of the impossibility of the neat separation of practices that the visitors engage in. In other words, there is not such a categorization of the practices of pilgrims and tourists. Wong conducted his survey for those who came to visit Putuoshan in 2009 and 2010. The sample questionnaire was filled out by 777 people before leaving the Putuoshan. He (2011) explains this survey's objective which is "to

generate a profile of the visitors to Putuoshan on the basis of the reasons for their visit, activities and the strength of their beliefs in Buddhism” (p.116). He used *Exploratory Factor Analysis* technique in the evaluation of the survey results, which “[i]s a variable reduction technique which identifies the number of latent constructs and the underlying factor structure of a set of variables” (Suhr, 2005, p.2).

In terms of the respondents’ religious background, Wong’s survey shows that Mount Putuo is not a pure pilgrimage destination that people search for enlightenment or make their wishes come true. The visitors rank their religiosity as follows “111 (17.3%) respondents did not go to their local temples or monasteries at all, while 529 (82.7%) respondents said that they did. Among them, 398 (62%) respondents said that they only visited their local temples a few times a year while 131 (20%) respondents said that they frequently visited them (more than six times a year” (Wong, 2011, p.123). Accordingly, when those (111) who have not been in a temple or have been a few times (398) participate in burning joss sticks, xuyuan and huanyuan, or any temple rituals, the categorization of them as either pilgrim or tourist will be wrong because of the impossibility of the neat separation of ‘the religious’ and ‘the secular’. Wong (2011) groups the visitors’ motivation into three broad categories: performing xuyuan and huanyuan, seeking enlightenment, and sightseeing (p.124). According to the Wong’s survey (2011) the majority of respondents (n=338; 52.8%) are motivated to practice “xuyuan and huanyuan,” 67 (10.5%) respondents seek to attain enlightenment, 201 (31.4%) respondents identify themselves with “seeing historical and cultural sites” (p.124). As a result, people have various motivations to visit Putuoshan which interestingly does not lead to the separation of activities.

	Factor			Mean	SD
	1	2	3		
How important is it to come to Pu-Tuo to relax?	0.807	0.043	0.101	5.99	3.11
How important is it to see somewhere different?	0.804	0.167	0.041	4.96	3.21
How important is it to see something of Chinese cultural tradition?	0.785	0.353	0.025	6.03	3.21
How important is it to go sightseeing?	0.739	0.075	0.134	6.56	2.94
How important is it to visit cultural sites and historical buildings?	0.586	0.455	0.151	5.65	3.14
How important is it to spend time with family/friends/relatives?	0.493	0.266	0.185	5.52	3.55
How important is it to eat seafood?	0.484	0.260	0.015	2.58	2.48
How important is it to seek Buddhism spiritual enlightenment?	0.149	0.815	0.252	4.24	3.39
How important is it to attend Buddhism pujas in the monasteries?	0.254	0.806	0.263	2.93	2.84
How important is it to learn more about Buddhism from monks and nuns?	0.294	0.803	0.153	2.56	2.45
How important is Pu-Tuo as a sacred land for my faith?	0.109	0.759	0.408	4.93	3.51
How important is it to huan yuan?	-0.018	0.315	0.879	7.36	3.12
How important is it to hsu yuan?	0.002	0.269	0.871	6.07	3.81
Percentage of variance explained	30.5	19.9	8.9		
Eigenvalue	3.96	2.58	1.16		
Cronbach Alpha Coefficient	0.79				

Table 1: Reasons for visits- Factors and Mean Scores (Wong, 2011, p.127)

Table 1 establishes that the appreciation of natural beauty, cultural heritage, and spiritual seeking is overlapped even though people primarily relate themselves to different motivations. Table 1 exemplifies people's various motivations to come to Putuoshan. However, Wong (2011) develops three broad factors from the Table 1: the factor one is "general sightseeing," the factor two is "belief in Buddhism" and the factor three is "xuyuan and huanyuan" (p.128). When comes to practice, the grouping of the people is problematic because people who identify themselves with sightseeing highly participate in xuyuan and huanyuan. In other words, "[t]he high importance of xuyuan and huanyuan is not inconsistent with [sightseeing] as some visitors may very well have an interest in culture and at the same time also seek divine intervention in their lives in one way or another (Wong, 2011, p.128). Therefore, from the perspective of the structural approach of pilgrimage and tourism, the pilgrimage practices of Putuoshan will be seen as problematic and confusing because of defying the odds.

	Factors			Mean	SD
	1	2	3		
How important is it to recite Buddhism holy mantras?	0.897	0.103	-0.344	2.56	2.45
How important is it to discuss Buddhism theory with monastic members of Pu-Tuo?	0.888	0.142	-0.349	2.36	2.32
How important is it to meditate?	0.875	0.138	-0.390	2.75	2.64
How important is it to attend morning pujas in monasteries?	0.831	-0.006	-0.357	2.89	2.86
How important is it to purchase history books of Pu-Tuo in order to know more about the place?	0.728	0.302	-0.080	2.37	2.28
How important is it to practice the every 3- steps-one-kneels and prays along the way to monasteries?	0.564	-5.35	-0.35	4.43	3.60
How important is it to bum joss sticks to Bodhisattva of Compassion for blessings?	0.190	-0.827	-0.008	7.82	2.99
How important is it to hsu yuan and huan yuan inside monasteries/ nunneries?	0.241	-0.801	-0.164	7.51	3.16
How important is it to make donations to monasteries/ nunneries?	0.421	-0.707	0.181	5.60	3.43
How important is it to throw coins/ money to incense burners for good luck?	0.330	-0.662	0.503	5.08	3.47
How important is it to tie wind chimes on trees for good luck?	0.513	-0.542	0.526	3.44	2.94
How important is it to eat seafood?	0.183	-0.095	0.751	3.04	2.70
How important is it to see boulders, caves, beaches and natural scenery?	0.117	0.048	0.740	5.69	3.23
How important is shopping at Pu-Tuo?	0.331	-0.040	0.665	1.98	1.97
Percentage of variance explained	37.9	14.4	11.5		
Eigenvalue	5.31	2.01	1.61		
Cronbach Alpha Coefficient	0.85				

Table 2: Importance of Potential Behavior- Factors and Means Scores (Wong, 2011, p.130)

One of the main issues relating to the main theme of the paper which is the ambiguous practices of pilgrims is inferred in the Table 2. Wong (2011) uses the exploratory factory analysis to investigate what kinds of activities people mostly do during their visit to Putuoshan (p.129). Of various practices which the visitors engage in, Wong (2011) establishes three broad categories. The first one is “Buddhist practices” including reciting mantras, mediating, attending pujas. The second one is “folkloric and auspices practices” including burning joss sticks, participating xuyuan and huanyuan, throwing coins to incense burners for good luck, and tying wind chimes on trees for good luck. The third one is “sightseeing and leisure activities” including eating seafood, seeing boulders, caves, beaches, natural scenery, and shopping at Putuoshan (p.30).

Wong argues that the factor one is truly “Buddhist practices” and the factor two is “folkloric and superstitious practices” whose practitioners have “elementary level of understanding Buddhism” (p.124, 131). However, I do not agree the exclusion of the second category from the Buddhist practices. Wong (2011) describes the practices of the second category as “superstitious and folkloric” and even further states that these do not reflect the true Buddhism (p.124-131). However, people who engage in these practices assume the active power of the Bodhisattva Guanyin, and they also believe that they can contact Guanyin with these practices. Since one can talk about the various practices of pilgrims such as seeking enlightenment or practicing xuyuan and huanyuan, the categorization of practices as true or superstitious is against the objectives of pilgrimage studies. Therefore, distinguishing these activities as “superstitious and folkloric” from the so called real Buddhist activities problematize the true understanding of pilgrimage.

One of the results of the survey supporting the thesis of the paper is the fact that people who primarily come to Putuoshan for sightseeing and visiting historical and cultural places (Table 1) highly participated in burning joss sticks and xuyuan and huanyuan (Table 2). For, example “the five activities receiving the highest mean scores are burning joss sticks (7.82), xuyuan and huanyuan (7.51), seeing boulders and natural scenery (5.59), making donations (5.60) and throwing coins (5.08)” (Wong, 2011, p.131). This result is seemingly contradictory because people who have been in a temple at most several times (509 people out of 640) and identify themselves with seeing “historical and cultural sites” (201 people out of 606) highly participate in religious activities. If one actually examines this case from the structural point of view, he/she will describe it as contradictory. Otherwise, people’s practice at Putuoshan will not be seen as ambiguous if one becomes aware of the social contexts of Modern China.

Conclusion

In this paper, I engaged with the idea of pilgrimage in Modern China through the two distinct but interrelated points of view. First, there cannot be a true understanding of pilgrimage unless one first considers the social, political, and economic conditions of Modern China. Second, the polarization of ‘the spiritual’ and ‘the secular’ can confuse the

understanding of pilgrimage practices because of the application of Western-constructed theory to the Chinese case without regarding Chinese social contexts. In order to fully engage with the practice of pilgrimage in Modern China through aforementioned concepts, I draw on Asad who emphasize on the active role of power in the formation of religions. Therefore, I closely analyzed the roles of political, social, and economic factors in the development of new pilgrimage sites as well as reconstruction of the old pilgrimage sites which simultaneously is reflected in practices and activities of pilgrims.

Before investigating different case studies from China, I both gave introduction about main the characteristics of pilgrimage and summarized the major existing theories about the relationship between pilgrimage and tourism. There are the two major approaches to the relationship between pilgrimage and tourism. The first one is that pilgrimage is a kind of tourism. With regard to the historical, functional and structural similarities, Diagence (2006,) Kaelber (2006,) Graburn (1989,) Bremer (2005) argue that the neat separation of pilgrimage and tourism is not possible. The other opposing approach asserts that pilgrims and tourists are structurally different from each other because they have different identities and motivations. As Cohen (1996) claims that one goes to periphery of his or her world another goes to the center of his or her world. However, I elaborate on the blurring of the religious and the secular which leads to collapse the borders of pilgrimage and tourism.

In addition, I closely examined the different pilgrimage sites to explore the relationship between pilgrimage and tourism in Modern China. After analyzing pilgrims' practices in old restored pilgrimage sites such as Mount Tai and Mount Putuo and the new invented pilgrimage sites like Dazhai and Jinggangshan, I argue that it is not possible to think of pilgrims and tourists as two distinct categories. The application of the separation of the secular and the religious to the Chinese pilgrimage sites complicates pilgrim's practices. Considering the active roles of social, economic and political conditions of Modern China, I developed the following factors in the formation of pilgrimage in Modern China: the availability of fast and safe means of transportation, the commodification of sacred sites, secularization of pilgrimage sites, and the governments' intervention in restoring and promoting religious to unite the local and national identity.

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