

RECENT CHINESE RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS ON RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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Since the publication of a paper on a similar topic by this author three years ago,¹ a number of new books and articles, as well as new trends, have emerged in the Chinese studies of religions. Some of these new developments not only seem significant to the academic advancement of the discipline, but they also shed new light on the freedom of faith, as well as Chinese intellectual activities at large. All these new trends seem quite worthwhile for a new survey. It might be recalled that this author used the phrase, "An Incomplete and Imbalanced Picture", as a subtitle for the previous paper, as the two adjectives clearly indicate the limited nature of the paper. To a certain extent those two words are still applicable to the present survey though the meaning differs somewhat between the two publications. The main difference is that the present work concentrates more on academic publications and does not touch any religious life, as the previous paper did. Although it is impossible to have a complete list or review of all periodical publications on the subject, as far as the main trends of the research and academic debates are concerned, this paper is more complete than the previous one.

For example, the scope of this paper finds that books and representative articles of various religious traditions, as well as general studies of the discipline, are covered; whereas only Buddhism and religious Taoism have been the subjects of the previous review. A survey of the general studies of religions seems an important new addition as this may reflect on the future scholarship in China. The paper will be divided into two sections. First it will review Buddhist and Taoist studies, updating the previous survey. And second, it will discuss the recent researches of other traditions, as well as the general trends of the field, apart from Buddhism and Taoism. This would, however, exclude Confucianism and Taoist philosophy, as Chinese scholars have classified those two under the umbrella of 'philosophy'. Apart from this theoretical problem, the large numbers of publications and the complicated problems involved in these two subjects require more space for an accurate survey. Moreover, some surveys on the subject, such as Taoism, have been published.²

Judging from the number of publications, it seems that Buddhist Studies has still retained its leading role in religious studies. Major projects continue and are published more or less on schedule although some delays have taken place. Two major projects under the editorial leadership of Ren Jiyu are good examples. The *Zhonghua Dazang-jing (Hanwen bufen)*³ has begun publication. At the time of the writing of this survey, ten volumes have so far been published. According to the announced schedule, four volumes should have been published in 1984, and 10 volumes per year thereafter. It seems that the completion date of this monumental work of an estimated 220 volumes will be behind schedule unless the printing capacity of the press is increased. Apart from the delay of publication, the editorial work is also narrower in scope than scholars would like to see.

The published volumes presented to readers are not punctuated, nor is this a modernized edition, but photographic reproductions of early Chinese editions of the Buddhist Tripitakas. According to the pre-publication prospectus of this project, this new edition of Chinese Buddhist scriptures will use the *Jinzang* as the basic copy for reproduction. The *Jinzang* is a reproduction of the *Kaibaozang*, made during the Northern Song period. The *Jinzang* itself was printed during 1148-1173 A.D. Apart from the *Kaibao* edition, this collection also includes a number of Buddhist scriptures that were printed in the later ages of Chinese history. Centuries after its publication, the *Jinzang* was discovered in Zhaocheng in Shanxi province in 1933. Out of nearly 7,000 *juan* of original copies, 5,380 are still extant. The *Zhonghua dazang-jing: Hanwen bufen* will be divided into two series: the Regular Collection (*zhengbian*) and the supplementary (*xubian*). The Regular Collection uses *Jinzang* as the basic texts for reproduction, and some works which have been omitted in *Jinzang* will be added from other collections, such as the Korean Edition. The reason for choosing the Korean Edition as the principal source for supplement is that both the Jin and the Korean editions were based on the same source: *Kaibao zang*. Apart from these two editions, some other additional works from Chinese editions will be used, if there are special works comparable to, but excluded from, the aforementioned two editions. The Supplementary Collection would select the remaining scriptures from other editions of the Tripitaka, in Chinese, but exclude the works that have already been included in the Regular Collection. These include the Stone Scriptures from Fangshan (engraved between A.D. 628-ca. 1640), to the *Wanzi Xuzangjing* (originally printed in Japan during the 19th century and reprinted in China in 1912). According to

the editor's estimate, this new collection will include 4,200 works in 23,000 *juan*. Although this is a photographic reproduction, without modernized punctuation and footnotes, there are collated notes at the end of each chapter, except for the text of which no other edition is available. The editors hope that the whole project will be concluded in 1993.

The delay in printing has also occurred in the publication of Ren's other multiple volume project: *Zhongguo Fojiao shi* ("A History of Buddhism in China"). Since the appearance of volume 1 in 1981, only the second volume has been recently published.⁴ It covers the period of the Southern and Northern Dynasties (265-589 A.D.) At the time of this survey, the author had not yet seen the latest volume and was therefore not in a position to assess the achievement. Since Tang Yongtong's monumental work covers the period, it will be interesting to see how the new history differs from Tang's work.⁵ In this connection, one may compare Ren's work with the history of Buddhism in China, written by Shigeo Kamata, a well-known Japanese expert on the subject, of which three volumes have been published to date.⁶ A preliminary comparison of the Chinese and Japanese projects clearly indicates the different styles of scholarship in the two countries. Kamata gives more attention to the historical problems and sources of the subject; while Ren pays more attention to Buddhist ideas and their relation to the Chinese religions. It seems that Kamata concentrates on history, while Ren and his colleagues give more attention to the history of ideas and their relation to, and comparison with, the Chinese native religions. One should not forget that Kamata has already made it clear that volumes 4 and 6 of this forthcoming history will concentrate on doctrinal problems. This indicates that he considers the periods of the South-North Dynasties and Sui-Tang to be important to the doctrinal development of Chinese Buddhism. Both works are essential to students of Chinese religions. As far as the first volume of Ren's work is concerned, it is more detailed than Tang's history of Buddhism during the Han to the Three Kingdoms period. However, Tang's main achievement is on the history of Buddhism during the Southern and Northern Dynasties, and this is the reason why the second volume of Ren's book, covering the same period, will be of great interest to scholars.

The serial publication edited by Lou Yulie et. al., *Zhongguo Fojiao sixiang ziliao xuanbian* is also in progress.⁷ So far the four parts of the second volume have been published in their entirety. Although no notes are given, the selections on Buddhist documents from Sui-Tang periods, and the introductory notes to the

material are very valuable to students of Chinese Buddhism. The division of works in volume 2 is as follows: part 1 is concerned mainly with *Tiantai* Buddhism with the selection of Sanlun master Jizang (549-623) as a secondary item. Part 2 is reserved for the selected writings of the five *Huayan* patriarchs. Part 3 consists of writings by the leaders of *Weishi*, the *Pure Land*, and writings by the Buddhist historians such as Daoxuan(596-667) and others. Part 4 deals with the documents of the *Chan* school of Buddhism. Appended to this section is a collection of imperial documents on Buddhism, including government orders, etc. The works attributed to the Tang emperors include Taizong, Gaozong, Wu Zetian and Xuanzong.

Among original research works, Fang Litian has published his recent work, *Huiyuan jiqi Foxue*.⁸ This work exclusively concentrates on the life and doctrines propounded by the famous Chinese monk of the 4th-5th century A.D. The book comprises ten chapters, which cover all aspects of Huiyuan's life as well as his beliefs and teachings. A chronological table of the monk's life and age is appended at the end. The book has another welcome feature: the Index.

Zhongguo Foxue lunwenji is another publication,⁹ which contains twenty articles on various aspects of religion, by Ren Jiyu, Ji Xianlin, Huang Xinchuan, Shi Jun, Fang Litian, Guo Peng and others. These articles were originally presented at a Buddhist Symposium held in 1980. Some views expressed therein still reflect the state of ideology prevailing at that time.

Chinese studies of Buddhism have opened up some new ground. *Tangdai wenxue yu Fojiao* by Sun Changwu,¹⁰ and *Fojiao yu Zhongguo wenxue*, by Zhang Zhongxing, are two representatives of this tendency.¹¹ Both works concentrate on the relations between Buddhism and Chinese literature, the former being more substantial. Shi Cun's *Yinming shuyao* is an introduction to Buddhist logic.¹² Although this is a small book, it is quite useful, even for advanced students. Similarly, another small book, *Fayuan tancong*, written by an elder statesman of Buddhism, Zhou Shujia, is also a delightful work.¹³ It is aimed at popular readers. It touches upon various topics of the Chinese Buddhist establishment, such as monastic architecture, management, rites, pilgrimage centres, arts and monuments, scriptures, popular *bianwen*, arhats and Chinese Buddhist priestly dress, etc. The great value of this book is its reliability and accuracy. A number of articles and books on Buddhism in Tibet and Inner Mongolia have been published. Wang Furen's *Xizang Fojiao shilue* is one such book.¹⁴

Apart from the books on Buddhism, there are other books on Chinese philosophy, which include some substantive contributions to Buddhist studies. Of these, the two series of *Zhongguo gudai chuming zhexuejia pingzhuan*, volume 2, and its supplementary (*xubian*) volumes 2-3, make good contributions to the studies of some eminent Buddhist thinkers.¹⁵ Feng Qi's book on the development of logic in ancient Chinese philosophy, *Zhongguo gudai zhexue de luoji fazhan*¹⁶ may be regarded as another good example in this direction. Most of the second volume of this work concentrates largely on Buddhist and Neo-Taoist contributions. Like most of the historical surveys, this work covers a long period of history, from the beginning of Chinese philosophy until the thought of Dai Zhen (1723-1777). As a consequence of this broad coverage, there is no discussion of the characteristics of Buddhist logic and its special contribution to Chinese philosophy. Nevertheless, since there are only a few works published on this subject, the publication of Feng's work is still very valuable.

There are a few modernized Chinese Buddhist scriptures that have come out during the last few years. Of these, the publication of the new edition of *The Buddhist Record of the Western World*, edited by Ji Xianlin and his colleagues, is the best example.¹⁷ This new edition includes a 138 page introduction by Ji. The work is a joint project by a number of eminent scholars such as Fan Xiangyong (for textual collations), Yang Tingfu (for technical terms), Zhang Guangda and Geng Shiming (for Central Asian history), Zhu Jieqin and Zhang Yi (on Indian history), Jiang Zhongxin (on Sanskrit and Pali terms); and Ji himself directed and shared the work throughout its progress. This is the first scholarly and modernised Chinese publication of this important historical record on Buddhism, India and Central Asia which is carefully and expertly collated, annotated, punctuated, indexed with references from Chinese, Indian, Japanese, and European research works. One would be happy if more classical texts were published in this scholarly manner. This work has a sister volume, *Datang xiyuji jinyi*, which is a modern Chinese translation of the Buddhist record.¹⁸ The work is carried out under the direction of Ji and his colleagues from Beijing University and the Institute for South Asian Studies in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. This is another high quality and scholarly production. Other works of a similar nature are Daoxuan's (596-667) *Shijia fang zhi*, ed. by Fan Xiangyong,¹⁹ *Tanjing jiaoshi* by Guo Peng,²⁰ *Hua yan jinshizhang jiaoshi* by Fang Litian,²¹ and *Wudeng huiyuan* in 3 volumes edited by Su Yuanlei.²² The works by Fan and Su are punctuated, edited with annotations, whereas the other two have

some additional works. More works of this kind are expected in the near future as the aforementioned works belong to a series of publications. Of these serial publications, the series of *Zhongguo Fojiao dianji xuankan*²³ directly focuses on the subject, and *Zhongwai jiaotong shiji congkan*²⁴ includes the works related to Buddhism, Islam and Christianity.

Shijie zongjiao yanjiu still stands out as the leading periodical in the academic study of religions; and Buddhism also remains the leading subject as far as the number of articles is concerned. Some studies published in this periodical are quite solid research, some with new material. Other studies may not be so new to international scholarship but quite new to the scholars in China. The *Fayin*²⁵ published by the Buddhist Association of China has been expanded from a quarterly into a bi-monthly periodical, but the space for scholarly research is still very limited. It seems that the scope will remain the same as this is the official organ of the Association. News and policy directions along with short studies on Buddhism run side by side.

Compared with Buddhist works, the recent publications on religious Taoism still look weaker in number. Recent work, significant to the subject, is led by Wang Ming and Qing Xitai. Wang's *Daojia he Daojiao sixiang yanjiu*, is a collection of his published papers, past and recent, along with a few unpublished papers.²⁶ The study of *Taiping jing*, *Yinfu jing*, *Huangting jing*, as well as papers on Ge Hong (283-363 A.D.), Dao Hongjing (456-536 A.D.) and legendary Li Hong, are essential to scholars of Taoist religion. It is, therefore, a very useful and convenient volume. After a delay of some time, Wang Ming's *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi*, revised edition has been published.²⁷ A number of new editions have been added to the list of collations, and this work seems to be one of the standard editions. As this work is part of a large project, *Xinbian zhuzi jicheng* (New Editions of Collected Works of the Philosophers),²⁸ more works on Taoist texts can be expected in this series.

The second volume of *Zhongguo Daojiao sixiang shigang*, by Qing Xitai²⁹ was published after a period of delay. Because of his preoccupation with other research projects, this volume is a collective accomplishment. Apart for Qing, his colleagues Ding Yizhuang, Zhao Zongcheng, Zeng Zhaonan and others, also took part in the second volume. This volume covers the period from Sui to the Northern Song period, and involves many new topics.

The volume comprises three chapters (5th-7th) on the relationship between religious Taoists and the politics of these dynasties, the doctrinal development and inter-religious relations with Confucianism and Buddhism. Of these chapters the one on doctrinal development is more substantive and has, rightly so, the largest share of the space: about one third of the volume (pp.514-744). The Taoist thinkers discussed here include Sun Simiao (ca. 581-682 A.D.), Cheng Xuanying (7th century), Wang Xuanlan (626-697), Sima Chengzhen (646-735), and another seven Taoists who lived during that period. As far as the philosophical development is concerned, the book contributes new knowledge to the understanding of the tradition. The non-philosophical aspects, many of which are the main achievements of the religion, are outside the scope of this new book. One would like to see Qing's new project, the history of Taoism in general, materialise in the near future.

The two major compilations reported in the previous survey, namely *Daozang tiyao* and *Daojia jinshi lu*, are not yet on the market. Like some other academic publishing programmes, their appearance seems delayed by the limited printing capacity.

A recent book by Cheng Yishan entitled *Zhongguo gudai yuanqi xueshuo*³⁰ focusses on the concept of *yuanqi* or "primordial breath". Since the concept is one of the principal ideals in Taoist cultivation for immortality, the Taoist contribution should be an essential part of the book. However, at the time this survey was taken the author had not received the book and therefore, was not in a position to make a judgment on it.

Among the periodicals which made major contributions to Taoist studies, *Daoxue huikan*, the official organ of the Taoist Association of China and *Zongjiao xue yanjiu*, published by the Institute for Religious Studies of Sichuan University, are still the main publications. *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* mentioned above has also published a substantial number of articles on various topics of Taoism. Apart from these specialized periodicals, some university and provincial publications often turn out good articles in religious studies in general, and Taoism in particular. Those periodicals which contained research articles on Taoism during the last two years,³¹ include the Journals from Normal University of Hebei, Normal University of Tianjin *Sixiang zhanxian*, *Zhongguo zhexueshi yanjiu*, *qiusu*.

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It is a pleasure to see that the Chinese study of religions has expanded its scope and deepened its research. Apart from the

publications on Buddhism and Taoism, some works in other directions have been revived. Of the established religions, books on Islam and Christianity have come to notice, although the number is still marginal. Studies on the religious faiths of minority nationalities of China, such as Shamanistic studies, have made remarkable progress. Other topics, such as atheism, have also received scholarly attention. The debates on religion in a socialist society are a new feature among scholarly discussions. In comparison with the past, recent discussions on the current situation of religion in a socialist society are comparatively free and scholarly. Although some of the writers still use Marxist terminology and lean heavily towards classical Marxist views on religion, they are freer and more spontaneous than the debates in the past. Ancient Chinese religion is another subject that has attracted some scholarly attention. All these new developments are welcome features for the study of Chinese religions.

Among the books in Islamic Studies in China, selections from the articles presented at three conferences are representative of current Chinese scholarship in the field. The books of *Yisilanjiao zai Zhongguo* or "Islam in China", cover the spread and development of the religion in China.³² The other two conferences focussed on more limited topics, namely, Islam in China during the Qing Dynasty; and the conference on Islam in Quanzhou, an important seaport in the East-West trade during the medieval period.³³ Works published by individual scholars or by the research institutes have also revived. Some of these works are general discussions and some on specific topics. Li Ximi's historical survey on Islam,³⁴ the book on the Shi'ah sect compiled by the Institute for Research on World Religions,³⁵ as well as the translation of a Syrian work on the story of the Kuran,³⁶ are representative works in this category. Scholarly publications by individual scholars include Ma Tong's work on the history of relations between Islam and Chinese aristocratic systems;³⁷ and *Zhongguo Yisilan shi cunqao* by Bai Shouyi,³⁸ the well-known veteran expert in the field. The former touches an important aspect of Chinese religious history in general, and Islam in particular. Unless one knows the aspects of medieval Chinese society, many problems related to the ups and downs of certain religions would not be clear. The publication of Ma's work, therefore, is a welcome addition, even though it is only an outline history. Bai's book is largely a reprint of his early books and articles on Islamic history, originally published during the forties and fifties. Some of these early books or papers will stand as the standard Chinese reference on the subject. It is very convenient to have them in one volume. Apart from Bai's own writings, the book also contains a collection

of six articles or statements by other scholars or religionists. They also are important material for historians of the Islamic tradition in China. Pang Shiqian's article on Islamic education, Zhao Zhenwu's account of the 30 years of Chinese Muslim culture, and the autobiographical account of an eminent Chinese Muslim named Wang Jingzhai are included in the appendix.

Fewer books are published on Christianity and most of them are translations. A history of Christianity in China before 1550 A.D., translated by He Zhenhua,³⁹ and another book on Martin Luther's Reformation by Li Pingye⁴⁰ are samples of this effort. Only one original Chinese work on the subject has been published in the last two years, the book by Jiang Wenhan. This is a study of Christianity in pre-modern China, and of the Jews in Kaifeng. A periodical entitled *Zongjiaoxue* was published by the Nanjing Theological Seminary, but had not been seen by the author at the time of this survey.

Compared with other subjects, Chinese studies on the religious life of the minority nationalities are very significant. A number of field works on the tribes and nationalities in southwest China, especially Yunnan and Sichuan provinces, has been published, and most of these publications include religious life as an important component. Besides these general surveys, there are a few books now available to general readers. Two are good illustrations of this achievement. One of them is a study of Shamanism, edited by Qiu Pu.⁴¹ It is a collective work by a group of scholars from the Institute for Nationality Research (Minzu Yanjiusuo) in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The book comprises eight chapters, plus an introduction and a conclusion. The subjects discussed in the book include the origin of religion, the cults of nature, totems and ancestral worship; the system and institutions of shamans, the imprint of social class as well as comparisons between shamanism and ancient Chinese religion. A larger and richer book has been published in Yunnan province, called *Zhongguo shaoshuminzu zongjiao chubian*, edited by Song Enchang.⁴² The book is a collection of 46 articles. It covers surveys and studies of the religious lives of all major nationalities except the Chinese (Hanzu). Geographically, it covers the subjects from Northwest China to Tibet in the southwest; from Inner Mongolia to China's southernmost border with Burma and Thailand; and from Xinjiang to Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. This, as well as the other book mentioned above, will enrich our knowledge of shamanism in China and its relation to Chinese religions, as well as of tribal beliefs. A careful study of the old and new materials

presented in the two works would also help readers to understand ancient and folk religions among the Han people, as there are parallels and historical connections between these traditions. Some puzzling problems in ancient Chinese beliefs still seem to remain as living factors in the primitive and tribal society, and some anthropological problems in the history of religions cannot be fully understood through rational views as recorded in the book of history and philosophy. As the book itself indicates that the collection is the first in this series (*chubian*), more valuable information can be expected in future publications. Among the books on comparative studies of tribal religion, Zhao Lu's study on the myths of the Bai tribe and its relation with Tantrism is an interesting study.⁴³ Unfortunately, the book was not available to this author at the time this paper was being written.

Compared with studies of primitive religions, the books on ancient Chinese religion are much fewer. Only one book by Zhu Tianshun called "A Preliminary Research of Ancient Chinese Religion" has been published.⁴⁴ Although the book deals with various aspects of Chinese religious beliefs from archaic to the Qin-Han periods, it is suitable neither for general readers nor for scholars. It is rather technical for general reading. A lack of references to scholarship in the field and footnotes on documentation, makes the book less useful to the experts in the field. It is a pity that such rich sources as various archaeological reports published during recent years are almost ignored by the authors. Nor is there a comparison with tribal religions, as mentioned in the preceding paragraphs. It seems that Chinese scholars are, at least at the moment, pre-occupied with the 'Great Traditions', whereas the study of early Chinese religion receives much less attention.

The studies of atheistic beliefs in China are mainly contributed by Wang Yousan. He has published an outline history of atheist tradition in China, has edited a conference volume and compiled a collection of ancient Chinese material on the subject.⁴⁵ One would expect that a topic, such as atheism, would receive more favourable attention among scholars in a socialist country. These findings prove that it is not the case.

Among the general histories of Chinese philosophy, which include religious thought as part of the coverage, the works by Feng Youlan and a group of historians lead by Ren Jiyu are outstanding examples. The first volume of Feng's revised version of his monumental "New History of Chinese Philosophy",⁴⁶ covers religious thought during Shang and Zhou as well as the transformation from religion to philosophy during Chunqiu and Zhanguo times. The second volume concentrates on the Classic period; and the

third on the thought of the Han dynasty. Some chapters are relevant to religious philosophy, especially the chapter on the peasant rebellion and *Tai ping jing*. Ren and his colleagues have published two of their projected seven-volume book, *Zhongguo zhexue fazhan she*.⁴⁷ The first volume covers ancient Chinese thought during the pre-Qin times, the second focusses on the Qin and Han periods. As far as the periods and scope of this book and Feng's history are concerned, they are identical in coverage. At the same time the two books are different. Feng's book stresses the principal trends and his own reflections on the philosophy, but rarely refers to other scholars' opinion on the subject; whereas Ren's book is more focussed on the development of Chinese philosophy as well as scholarly opinions and researches on the subject. The chapters on the transformation of religious thought from Shang to Zhou in the first volume, and the religious philosophy in the *lijì* the theology of Dong Zhongshu and Baihu Tong, the development in medical philosophy as well as the transformation from the late Taoist philosophy to religious Taoism, are good chapters for students of Chinese religions. The reference to other researches, and indexes of names and titles found in the book, are a welcome new feature of Ren's book.

A number of books on religion at large have been published, but most of them are for the general public rather than for academic research. The books by Huaizhu, Yan Zhenchang and Zhang Wenjian are good examples.⁴⁸ There is a book of more serious nature under the title of *Zongjiao, Kexue, Zhexue* ("Religion, Science and Philosophy").⁴⁹ The book was compiled by the theoretical research team of the Institute for Research in World Religions and published from Henan in 1982. However, this author has not yet seen a copy, nor has any book review of it been available. Under normal situations, the book should stand as an authoritative guide to most religionists on the mainland, but the mood among Chinese intellectuals has changed fast during the last few years. Therefore, no one knows where it stands now. If one wishes to understand the mood among scholars in religious studies, one has to look to periodical articles for some indications.

The indications of a new direction in religious studies in China may be seen from a Symposium held in Beijing, during December, 1984. The Symposium commemorated the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Institute for Research of World Religions. Ren Jiyu, the Director of the Institute, addressed the Symposium and called for new research in religious studies in accordance with the new historical period. He admitted that in the past, Chinese stud-

ies in religion had been affected by 'Leftism' and had thus failed to discuss some very important problems. He also stated that simplistic copying of Marxist theory does not work. One has to study new problems, make new conclusions, produce substantial research works. These things are possible only if scholars dare to search for the new, and advance with courage. Among the problems that need scholarly attention, Ren has listed a number of questions. In the past most people said that religions supported the ruling class and thus became the ideology of society. Can one now say that religion is the superstructure of the socialist society? Again, it was often said that religions possess a high degree of class characteristics. Is this true when the old ruling class has now been eliminated in the socialist society? What is the place and function of religion in a socialist society? Is there a socialist religion or not, etc?⁵⁰

Substantive discussion on some problems raised by Ren were produced in the next year. Some discussants have presented their views and some authors have impressed readers by their works, namely, Jiang Wenxuan from Guangxi, Xiao Zhitian and Yan Boming from Shanghai, and Zhang Ji'an from Beijing.

Jiang discussed two basic problems: 1) the root of the existence of religions in a socialist society, 2) conditions and reasons for the existence of religions.⁵¹ Jiang argues that the existence of religions in a socialist society is a fact deeply rooted in the long history of the country. Some of the reasons include an inadequate supply of the material needs of the people, the complexity of the class struggle within and without society, and man's dream for salvation. He branded the last item as an epistemological problem. From this historio-social analysis, Jiang concludes that religions inevitably exist in China. He further pointed out that religion will not merely hold its position, but even development is possible. This possibility is based on the following conditions: a) religions continually reform themselves and are thus useful to Chinese society; b) there are various weaknesses in the application of Chinese government policies which provide conditions for religious influence. Jiang has provided some new materials to support his argument. In one place he used the statistics of a certain town which lists 39 new recruits to Christianity during August, 1984. Of these 39 new recruits, 12 are male and 27 are female. Their occupational classification is as follows: 24 workers (including 5 retired), two teachers (one retired), 5 domestic workers and 8 unemployed youths. The number from the working class is predominant and the time of recruitment is quite recent. This fact seems more convincing than any of the ideological cliches.

Xiao's article on "The Problem of Coordination between Religion and the Socialist Society in China"⁵² comprises four parts: the definition of terms, the bases and conditions for coordination, the process and demonstration of coordination, and continuous efforts for coordination to promote the 'four modernizations.' The article points out that the cooperation between religious organizations and the Chinese government during the last four decades has already proven that coordination between the two is not only possible, but a reality. The unity of religious believers and the people who do not believe in religion is another fact. Based on socialism and patriotism, some of the religious teachings of the doctrine — faith, morality and practice — are concurring with socialist life. The article considers that the correction of leftist policy on religion is the most urgent problem of today.

Another veteran scholar of Chinese philosophy, Yan Beiming, also discusses the problem of religious morality in the socialist period.⁵³ Yan considers that moral restraint, taught by most religions, has a great control over its believers. Any study of the motives and effects of religious morality must be based on the analysis of whether actual benefits are received; empty words alone cannot explain any problem. In Yan's view, the principal contradiction in today's China no longer is the conflict between religion and society. In fact, the teaching to do good and to eliminate evil, to observe the law and obey the discipline, etc., by various religious traditions, not only is a good motivation, but also has a good effect on society at large. He regards these compatibilities to be bases for coordination between religion and socialism. He condemns the artificial and simplistic classification of theism versus atheism, or science versus superstition, etc., and considers them to be extreme views of the leftists. He concedes that religious morality is lower than communist morality. But this will pass out in the future. Yet at the same time, the end of religion passes through the process of development and selective elimination during the stage of socialism. He considers that Communist morality does not include religious morality nor is the latter a supplement to the former. Under the circumstances, religion is still capable of playing a positive role in today's China.

Zhang Ji'an has made a preliminary enquiry as to the place of religion in the socialist period.⁵⁴ The article starts with the classic Communist view of religion as stated by Marx, Engels and Lenin; and then discusses the transformation of religion in China. He points out that political support of socialism, religious reformation after the establishment of the People's Republic and the socialist reformation in the economic system of the country are the

main and important points of religious transformation. In the subsequent sections of the article, the author continues his enquiry into the social roots of the existence of religion in a socialist society and asks whether religious thought could become a component of the superstructure of socialism. The final question concerns the basic religious policy of the Chinese government in the socialist period. As far as the social roots for the existence of religion are concerned, this paper concurs with others. Can religious thought become a component of and merge with socialism? The answer is 'no'. Because the author of the paper considers all religious ideas to be based on the "old tradition", although with minor modifications here and there, the basic stand has never changed. Socialist ideas are aimed at establishing a new social structure through the destruction of the old establishment. The basic positions of religion and socialism are, therefore, incompatible. He argues that freedom of religious faith is a basic policy in a socialist society. This is a fact one should respect and the situation cannot be ignored. He agrees that there will be a contradiction between the religious believer and those who do not believe in religion; yet he considers this contradiction to be secondary because both sides concur in political and economic interests. What should the basic policy on religion be?

The author of this paper proposes the following points: a) freedom to choose or not to choose a religion; b) the government should support all normal religious practices, but be watchful and suppress unlawful activities performed under the cover of religious practice; c) encourage religious organizations and individuals to play positive roles in public works; d) analyse religious phenomena from the Marxist viewpoint, and thus educate the youth; e) criticize religious ideas that are incompatible with Marxist views through scientific analysis and research, but at the same time, never handle the treatment of criticism in a stormy manner as if it were a political campaign, nor unlawfully harm other people, as has occurred during the Cultural Revolution.

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When the study of religion in China during the past two or three years is reviewed as a whole, some impressions become clear. In the first place, the Chinese contribution to the study of Buddhism still overshadows other areas. But the scope of coverage is much enlarged. A number of works of Islamic research are a welcome feature, while the study of Christianity is much less prominent. The most valuable contributions are the publications on minority

religious beliefs. These new works provide worthwhile reading for scholars in the area of religious studies. In the judgement of this author, this kind of publication is significant not only for the understanding of tribal religion, but also to give more insight into ancient Chinese religion as well as other related subjects such as anthropological, sociological and comparative enquiries. The discussion of the place and the future of religion in a socialist society is a new development in Chinese studies of religion. Whereas there is a general consensus on the existence of religious faiths in a socialist society, scholars are rather cautious about the future of religion. However, all participants are agreed about the value and contribution of religion to the socialist construction at the present. In other words as far as the present stage of Chinese society is concerned, the evaluations are positive. This clearly indicates that the extreme leftist views on religion can no longer hold their ground in academic circles. However, even among the scholars who have engaged in the current discussions, one still finds the distinction between "soft" and "hard" expressions toward religion. Nevertheless, the study of religion is no longer regarded as a 'black cat' in China.

NOTES

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