Making Religion, Making the State
in Modern China: An Introductory Essay

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AN ASTOUNDING REVIVAL of religion has occurred in China since the late 1970s. China now has the world's largest Buddhist population, fast-growing Catholic and Protestant congregations, expanding Muslim communities, and active Daoist temples.[1] According to state statistics there are 100 million religious believers, 85,000 religious sites (churches, mosques, temples), 300,000 clergy, and 3,000 religious organizations. Buddhism has more than 13,000 temples and monasteries and 200,000 monks and nuns, while, additionally, Tibetan Buddhism has over 3,000 monasteries, 120,000 lamas, and 1,700 living Buddhas. Daoism has 1,500 temples and 25,000 masters. In Islam there are 30,000 mosques, 40,000 imams, and 18 million believers. Catholicism has over 4,000 churches, 4,000 clergy, and 4 million believers. Protestantism has 12,000 churches, over 25,000 meeting places, 18,000 clerics, and 10 million believers (Information Office of the State Council 1997).[2]

These statistics on the revival of religion in China, which is ruled by a communist party that is avowedly atheist, stimulate various interpretations. They could be seen as signifying the victory of religious believers over the state. Attempts by the Chinese Communist Party (Party) to eradicate religion during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) failed; belief can never be conquered by political ideologies such as communism. The statistics could also be seen as part of the Chinese state control of religion; they are inaccurate numbers based on officially registered religious sites. Many of these religious sites are fronts for tourism and museums and contain few

"real" temples and churches, while the numerous unregistered churches that are thriving are not visible in the state's official statistics.

We see the statistics in a rather different way, which is the main theme of this volume. The statistics reflect the state representation of the extent of religion in China today in terms of the state's definition of "modern religion" as well as the efforts of believers, clergy, and worshippers to accommodate the modern definition of religion. Our point, therefore, is that the situation of religion in China is not simply a history of conflict between state and religion but rather processes of interactions among multiple actors that comprise the making of modern religion and the modern state over the course of the past century.

To understand these processes, it is fruitful to briefly leave the Chinese context and think about the state and religion in the broader context of modernity. Recently, some arguments have been raised about the concepts of modernity and religion. It has been argued that "religion" is a modern concept that is seen most sharply in colonial interactions from the late nineteenth century (Asad 1993; van der Veer 2001). Talal Asad's discussion is in the context of Christianity and Islam while Peter van der Veer focuses on India and England. In these interactions colonizers presented ideal images of themselves as modern because state power was separate from religion. The state was defined as the political authority and religion as individual belief. To enlightened elites in non-European countries, "being modern," therefore, required the simultaneous reform of indigenous practices to appear as "religion" and the institutionalization of religion as a category within the state's constitution and administration.

In this volume, we maintain that this happens not only in the context of colonized regions, but also in Asian countries that have struggled against colonization and to create their own modern state. In this struggle they have been pursuing an enlightened "modern" civilization of their own design by changing their frameworks of thought, ideology, and political systems. Thailand, Japan, and China have been on this historical track since the late nineteenth century. Stanley Tambiah has described how Thailand's King Chulalongkorn modernized the monarchical state and centralized the Buddhist temple and clergy system to support this new state power. He renewed the mutually supportive system of legitimation of the king and Buddhism as the central core of political authority and model of the modern Thai polity in the new, modern context (1977). Yoshio Yasumaru has described how Japan's new Meiji state system broke down the old religious social and cultural bases that were an historical amalgam of Buddhism and Shinto to create a new ideology of "state Shintoism," which led to the formation of new religious sects, such as Tenrikyō (1987, 2002). In China, Charles Brewer Jones traces the changing organization

of Buddhism in Taiwan from community halls to national associations, a change that was both a response to pressures from the Japanese colonial and Chinese republican states, and a way for Buddhists to work with these centralizing state powers to secure recognition for Buddhist activities (1999).

The chapters in this volume examine the processes of the making of "religion" and the "state" in China's modernity up to contemporary times. They share an historical awareness that "religion" is a category that came to China in the late nineteenth century as part of modern state formation. They focus on the processes of politics as seen in the negotiations and interactions of actors to control discourses, representations, and resources to fit situations and practices into the modern category of "religion." They illustrate this with ethnographic observations from fieldwork and other primary sources derived from specific locales and contexts. These issues are primarily discussed in the context of the five religions that are officially recognized as "religion" by the Party—Buddhism, Catholicism, Daoism, Islam, and Protestantism—as well as the Black Dragon King Temple and qigong.

Approaches to State and Religion in China

The issue of state and religion has been a growing topic among social scientists specializing in China (e.g., Dean 2003; Gladney 1991; Eng and Lin 2002; Fan 2003; Flower and Leonard 1997; Hillman 2005; Jing 1996; Lozada 2001; Madsen 1998). Many studies see state and religion in dichotomous frameworks of antagonism and conflict. Dichotomous frameworks are useful for elucidating a situation in order to highlight specific tendencies. But this very simplification often obscures complexities of the reality. In this section we contrast assumptions of extant dichotomous frameworks with our institutional framework of multiple actors and political processes. We claim that our framework is a closer approximation of the reality of state and religion in the space of the reviving religions in China.

One dichotomous framework emphasizes reoccurring patterns of state control over religion throughout Chinese history (Bays 2004; Hunter and Chan 1993; Overmyer 2003; Yu 2005). Daniel Bays writes that "one finds little new about today's pattern of relations between the state and religion in China. Government registration and monitoring of religious activities . . . has been a constant reality of organized religious life in both traditional and modern times" (2004: 25). Oft noted similarities include: legitimating selective rituals by applying negative and positive dichotomies—"orthodoxy/heterodoxy" in the dynastic period and "religion/superstition" in the modern era; labeling proscribed religious activities as

crimes of "disloyalty" then and "unpatriotic" now; controlling religions through dedicated state bureaucracies—the imperial Bureau of Rites and the communist State Administration for Religious Affairs (*Guojia zongjiao shiwu ju*).[3] Historical similarities in state ideologies toward religion are noted by Anthony Yu. He argues that the Party's categorical definitions of legitimate and illegitimate beliefs are similar to the "imperial state . . . mentality . . . [of a] cultic obsession with state power and legitimacy propped up by a particular form of ideology" (2005: 145).

Another dichotomous framework emphasizes the Party's fight to maintain control over the rapidly expanding religious activities (Hunter and Chan 1993; Leung 1995; Overmyer 2003; Potter 2003). Jason Kindopp writes, "The government's external constraints and internal manipulations conflict with religious groups' own norms of operation, beliefs, and values. . . . Religious faith commands an allegiance that transcends political authority, whereas the Communist Party's enduring imperative is to eliminate social and ideological competition" (2004: 3, 5). The Party eliminates competition by such measures as: co-opting clergy and believers into state-approved religious associations; confining religious activities to such registered sites as churches and temples; recognizing only clergy trained in state-approved seminaries; vetting sermons and monitoring the foreign contacts of religions. Within these state constraints religions still manage to thrive. They forge new networks and activities outside of the state that are the seeds of a nascent civil society (Madsen 1998). Other believers reject state-controlled religious activities and, despite threats of violence, participate in "underground churches" that are unregistered by the state (Bays 2004; Hunter and Chan 1993: 66–71). These arguments constitute a key perspective within Western scholarship on religion in China. It is undeniable that parts of these arguments overlap with the neo-liberal activist agenda of foreign media, human rights groups, governments, and some scholars to "advance religious freedom in China" (Hamrin 2004). They criticize the Chinese state for persecuting religious believers and violating their human rights (Spiegel 2004) and are confident that religious freedom will grow because of the "collapse of communist ideology," the people's "spiritual hunger," and so on (e.g., Aikman 2003; Chan 2004). Unconsciously or otherwise, the influence of this tendency also directs some scholarly analysis toward certain questions and conclusions.

There are several differences between these state-control frameworks and the institutional framework of this volume. First, the state-control framework is a two-actor interaction of state and religion, whereas we emphasize multiple actors. These various actors include different levels and agencies within the state, religious associations, clergy, religious adherents, overseas Chinese, foreign religious groups, and such sectors as

tourism, business, education, and philanthropy. Second, the state-control frameworks view the state-religion interaction as inherently antagonistic whereas we see multiple political processes, including competition, adaptation, and cooperation, as well as conflict. Third, the state-control frameworks have an essentialist definition of religion as "individual belief" and see the space of religion as distinct from the state, whereas we view "religion" as a constructed category and its definition as "individual belief" arising through modern state formation. Our analytic concern therefore is not the degree of freedom of religions or whether or not the state respects individual belief but how the various actors attempt to implement the modern category of "religion" and the consequences of this both within religions and in the state.

Another dichotomous framework locates conflict between state and religion in the context of the state's "modern" hegemonic discourses of nation, science, and development (Anagnost 1994; Duara 1995; Feuchtwang 2000; Fulton 1999; Gillette 2000; Xu 1999; Yang 2004). Prasenjit Duara argues that an Enlightenment narrative of history came to China in the late nineteenth century that depicted a universal transition from tradition to modernity. Political, bureaucratic, and intellectual elites sought to build a nation-state to effect the transition. To do so, they marginalized or co-opted so-called bifurcated histories that had alternative representations of the people and history. Popular religion was one such bifurcated history that was suppressed as "superstition" by new laws. "By means of these laws, the nationalist state was able to proclaim its modern ideals, which included the freedom of religion, and simultaneously consolidate its political power in local society by defining legitimate believers in such a way as to exclude those whom it found difficult to bring under its political control" (Duara 1995: 110).

Despite the similar view of "religion" as an imported category of modernity, there are significant differences between this dichotomous hegemony framework and this volume's institutional framework. The key difference concerns agency in implementing "religion." The hegemony framework reduces implementation to the forceful exercise of state power that religions either resist or reactively conform to. In contrast, this volume also sees "religion" as enacted by the religions themselves. For many religious elites, the modern discourse of "religion" is meaningful because they, too, oppose "superstition," advocate the professional training of clergy, and so on. Therefore, we see institutionalization as proceeding not through an imposed state hegemony but rather through interactions among multiple actors in the state and religions. A second difference is the failure of the hegemony framework to question the category of "religion" itself. For example, Duara describes how new state regulations

against "superstition" distinguished it from "proper religion." But he does not explain how a powerful modern concept of "proper religion" was defined, possessed, and propagated in the state and among officials and clerics. In contrast, this volume focuses on the institutionalization of "religion" in both the state and religions through processes that are mutually constitutive. A third difference is the portrayal of the state. Whereas the hegemony framework portrays the state as hegemonic discourses, we also consider its organizational aspects. And whereas the hegemony framework focuses on the violent coercive power of the state, especially through campaigns to smash superstition to implement "religion," we also consider the institutional effects of the routine operation of the state's bureaucratic-legal structures in implementing "religion."

Making Religion, Making the State:
An Institutional Framework

Our starting point is Talal Asad's argument that the modern category of religion defined as individual belief emerged through the politics of modern state formation in Europe. In the seventeenth century, European rulers facing the chaos of the Reformation embraced the political philosophy of secularism. This philosophy defined the state as sovereign and delimited religion as individual belief, thereby supporting rulers' acquisition of political authority. However, to avoid appearing to attack Christianity, rulers made the state the protector of Christianity as individual belief. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries this protection took shape as the constitutional right of individual belief (Asad 2003). Also, during the nineteenth century a theory of religion was created by scholars of philosophy and emerging social sciences who were influenced by the universalism, rationalism, and positivism of scientific thinking. The theory maintained that religion is symbolic meanings expressed through rites and doctrines with generic functions and features distinct from any specific historical and cultural instances. Non-Western belief and religion first became objects of scientific study in the West, and this ultimately led to the scientific study of Christianity as one of the religions and as the ideal type of "religion" (Asad 1993). This modern concept of "religion" and its place in a modern "state" that had emerged through two centuries of tumultuous political change in Europe gradually came to be widely acknowledged and influential.

In the late nineteenth century, colonialism and capitalism spread the modern categories of "religion" and "state" to other parts of the world. To enlightened elites in Asian countries, these two categories appeared as necessary components of the doctrine of modernity. "Religion" was

one of the categories that, alongside "market," "nation," "rational bureaucracy," "police," "education," "science," and so on, was considered necessary in a modern state. These categories were visible in aspects of modern towns and capital cities, such as Shanghai, Tokyo, and Delhi, as well as in such sites as city halls, banks, schools, post offices, railroad stations, police stations, clock towers, and churches. Both on large and small scales, these were the accoutrements that symbolized modernity. But for non-Western elites churches were ambiguous and had to be replaced by non-Christian "modern" sites such as temples, mosques, or shrines. This is because, while non-Western enlightened elites voluntarily accepted modernity, they rejected the idea, in their history and thought, of being conquered by Christianity. They also quickly realized that religions other than Christianity could support the essential ethos of their own non-Western ethnic and national identities that they were creating as the foundation of their modern states. While they wanted modern religion, it had to be neither Christianity nor "unscientific" and "irrational" "superstition" that could hinder their efforts and make them appear as backwards. Elites worked to define modern "religion" in scientific terms to exclude "superstition" and to delimit religion in secular terms as individual belief. This took institutional form in constitutions, laws, and policies that defined religion and its place in the centralizing state.

Since the early twentieth century Chinese political, bureaucratic, religious, and intellectual elites have struggled to position the idea of modern religion in the state ideology. In pursuit of this goal they both attacked religion and destroyed temples that were not considered "modern," and promoted "modern" religious activities and organizations acknowledged by the state. This has been occurring through the efforts of successive political authorities to create their own modern definitions of "religion" and position them as a constitutional right and administrative category within the state system. The positioning of religion is not simply an issue of religion itself but reflects the elites' total idea of the state system that they wish to create. Even now the Party has a very strong awareness of "socialist modernization" and "religion." It now claims that the existence of religion, alongside capitalism, is a part of the necessary Marxist historical process of the transition to communism.

This volume seeks to explain the processes of institutionalizing the modern concept of religion in the state and in religion. The processes by which situations are adapted to the modern definition of religion are political, as explained by Talal Asad.

True, the "proper domain of religion" is distinguished from and separated by the state in modern secular constitutions. But formal constitutions never give the whole story. On the one hand, objects, sites, practices, words, representations,

even the minds and bodies of worshipers, cannot be confined within the exclusive space that secularists name "religion." They have their own ways of being. The historical elements of what come to be conceptualized as religion have disparate trajectories. On the other hand, the nation-state requires clearly demarcated spaces that it can classify and regulate: religion, education, health, leisure, work, income, justice, and war. The space that religion may properly occupy in society has to be continually redefined by the law because the reproduction of secular life within and beyond the nation-state continually affects the discursive clarity of that space. (Asad 2003: 200–201)

The politics of modern "religion," therefore, is constituted by ongoing negotiations, among multiple actors, including state officials, intellectuals, religious adherents, and businesspersons, to adapt religion to the modern state's definitions and rules even as they are continuously being transgressed. Religions can accommodate the state institutions as modern "religion" in order to ensure their existence in the new order while the presence of religion in state institutions shows that the state is a modern, enlightened state that acknowledges religion.

The common focus of this volume's chapters is the institutionalization of religion through political processes. We define institutions as rules that "constitute community, shaping how individuals see themselves in relation to others, and providing a foundation for purposive action" (Sweet, Sandholtz, and Fligstein 2001; see also Powell and DiMaggio 1991). We emphasize formal institutions, mostly in the state, that are codified in constitutions, laws, and policies, although the chapters also consider such informal institutions as networks, practices, and ideas in society as dynamically interacting with formal state institutions.

Institutionalization is the process by which situations adapt to institutions. These processes are political because "institutional symbols and claims can be manipulated and their meaning and behavioral implications contested, [and] any activity . . . can carry multiple meanings or motivations" (Friedland and Alford 1991: 255). Therefore "some of the most important struggles between groups, organizations, and social classes are over the appropriate relationships between institutions, and by which institutional logic different activities should be regulated and to which categories of persons they apply" (Friedland and Alford 1991: 256). Institutionalization is also unpredictable: "Once institutions—rules and procedures—are in place, they can be exploited or developed in ways that the founding powers did not foresee and cannot control. Other actors . . . apply, interpret, and clarify the rules in ways that alter the context for subsequent action" (Sweet, Sandholtz, and Fligstein 2001: 13). In this volume we take up the challenge of examining the process of implementing institutions of modern religion, and how this constitutes organizations, communities, thought, and ideology within and beyond the state.

Institutions of Modern Religion in China

Institutions of modern religion were foreshadowed in the New Policy Reform (*xinzheng*) in the final years of the imperial state. In 1904 a project to turn local temples and shrines into schools for promoting the education of the ordinary people was proposed but not fully implemented. In the Republic of China, established in 1912, initiatives were launched to establish local self-government and other modern institutions, such as the police, banking, and educational systems during the term (1912–16) of Yuan Shikai, first president of the Republic of China. These reforms drew on advisors and models of modernity, most of which reflected the Japanese achievements in the Meiji era. One model was "religion," which was referred to by the new Japanese term of *shūkyō*, pronounced *zongjiao* in Chinese. This model distinguished religion from "superstition" (*mixin*) in a dichotomy of "primitive/modern." Yuan Shikai used it as part of his efforts to modernize Chinese society by eliminating those aspects that he saw as backward. The label of "superstition" became an institutionalized term in the *Regulations for the Supervision of Monasteries and Temples (Guanli simiao tiaolie)* issued in 1915. This distinction between "religion" and "superstition" was furthered imposed during the Smashing Superstition campaign in 1929. However, coterminous with this campaign, the Nationalist Party issued the *Standards for Preserving and Abandoning Gods and Shrines* that characterized Buddhism and Daoism as "pure faith" and gave them legal protection. This shows the fluidity and contextuality of the boundary between superstition and religion.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 the Party developed a comprehensive modern definition of religion. Religion was scientifically defined as having universal features, such as a logical theosophy, scriptures, a professional clergy, and fixed religious sites. The five aforementioned religions were acknowledged as fitting this definition. Their followers were covered by the constitutional right of freedom of belief in the 1954 constitution, which declares: "citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy the freedom of . . . religious belief" (Luo 1991: 12). An administrative bureaucracy to control religion was created that reflected the distinction in the state between the Party, which is responsible for ideological development and policy formation, and the government, which is responsible for policy implementation and enforcement. In 1954 the Bureau of Religious Affairs, precursor of the current State Administration for Religion Affairs, was established as a central ministry under the State Council (*Guowuyuan*), the highest level of government, and local offices were created. Its main task was to develop and implement a comprehensive state policy toward religion. The state also established

representative associations for each of the five religions. These associa-
tions were under the authority of the United Front Work Bureau (*Tongyi
zhanxianbu*), the Party organ that supervises all non-Party social groups.
The task of associations included: communicating state religious policies
to their members and reporting their thinking and activities to the state;
mobilizing members in such state campaigns as the elimination of corrup-
tion, identifying spies, and increasing production; supporting state diplo-
macy toward predominately Buddhist countries (Welch 1972).

These institutions of religion, the Party maintained, fully accorded
with the Party's modern ideology of Marxism and dialectical materialism
(Luo 1991: 7–8). This is explained in a 1950 *People's Daily* editorial.

So long as a part of mankind is technologically backward and hence continues to
be dependent on natural forces and so long as part of mankind has been unable
to win its release from capitalist and feudal slavery, it will be impossible to bring
about the universal elimination of religious phenomenon from human society.
Therefore with regard to the problem of religious belief as such, any idea about
taking coercive action is useless and positively harmful. This is the reason why
we advocate protecting freedom of religious belief, just as we advocate protecting
freedom to reject religious belief. (*People's Daily* 1950, cited in Welch 1972: 4)

Subsequently, religion came to be severely questioned from the late
1950s. This questioning began during the Anti-Rightist Campaign (1957),
which targeted ideological nonconformists, and the Great Leap Forward
(1958–60), which mobilized the population for a rapid transition to com-
munism. Radical Party leaders loudly proclaimed that religion had "lost
its basis for existence in the socialist society" and that it was necessary to
"abolish the system of feudal exploitation in the form of religion" (Luo
1991: 144). Popular movements arose to "wipe out religion by encouraging
the seizure of church or temple properties by the government during the
'Great Leap Forward' and people's commune movements, suspending re-
ligious activities: and, in a few places, 'advising' believers to back out from
religion" (Luo 1991: 144). Attacks on religion escalated. In 1965 Party
leaders declared, "the task of the Communists is to exterminate religions"
(Luo 1991: 145). During the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) religion was
considered one of the "four olds" (*sijiu*) (old beliefs, customs, traditions,
and thought) that needed to be eliminated to make way for communism.
Destruction and confiscation of religious sites was widespread, visible re-
ligious activity ceased, clergy were forced to laicize, and the Bureau of
Religious Affairs and religious associations were shut down.

After the Cultural Revolution ended in 1976, the Party began em-
phasizing a market economy and once again acknowledged religion.
Gradually institutions of religion were revived and reorganized and new
ones were created in the central state. The constitutions of 1975 and 1982

reaffirmed freedom of belief and placed a new stress on nonbelief. The 1975 constitution stipulates, "Citizens enjoy freedom to believe in religion and freedom not to believe in religion and to propagate atheism" (Leung 1995). This showed that the state was very modern because it protected the right of belief of both religious followers and atheists. In the 1982 constitution the space of religion was further elaborated to position it with state security concerns.

—Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief. No organs of state, public organizations or individuals shall compel citizens to believe in religion or disbelieve in religion, nor shall they discriminate against citizens who believe or do not believe in religion.

—The state protects legitimate religious activities. No one may use religion to carry out counter-revolutionary activities or activities that disrupt public order, harm the health of citizens or obstruct the educational systems of the state. No religious affairs may be dominated by any foreign country. (Leung 1995)

New policies and regulations defining religion and its place in society have been promulgated since the early 1980s. The Party's theory and approach toward religion was set out in a 1982 document, *On the Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question during Our Country's Socialist Period (Document 19)*. The Party's reason for reviving religion is to unite people for the task of economic modernization so as "to construct a modern, powerful, socialist state" (Chinese Communist Party Central Committee 1987 [1982]: 435). "Normal" religious activities are permitted as long as they are confined to registered "religious activity sites" (*zongjiao huodong changsuo*). The document also defines the key regulatory actors—the Bureau of Religious Affairs, renamed the State Administration for Religious Affairs in 1998, and religious associations—and their duties. Since the issuance of *Document 19* further rules for religion have being promulgated regarding the registration of religious sites, contacts with foreign religious groups, and so on, and an effort has been made to standardize local state regulations and laws (Chan and Carlson 2005: 1–24).

However, the institutionalization in locales has not proceeded uniformly, as they differ greatly in regard to their conditions, such as history, contours of religion, economic circumstances, and ethnic and political issues. Another reason that institutionalization has not been uniform is that each religion has different issues. The situation of Islam cannot be discussed without the issues of borders and ethnicity in the peripheries, where many of the Muslims live, as well as the presence of major mosques in big cities. Of course, for Catholicism the foreign authority of the Vatican is a major issue. Catholicism, along with Protestantism, faces issues of Sinicization, Chineseness, and indigenization, and the creation

of new Christian groups and teachings. Daoism is very embedded in local communities and is between the definition of "local culture" and religion. The situation of Buddhism is connected with its positioning as a part of Han Chinese civilization and a majority Han Chinese religion, and the state's concern with relations with other predominantly Buddhist countries.

The Politics of Religion in Modern China: Contributions of This Volume

The chapters in this volume highlight several different political processes of institutionalizing rules and definitions of "religion" in China. They reflect the varied situations of diverse locales and of each religion. They identify the multiple actors and interactions that are institutionalizing modern religion.

POLITICS WITHIN THE STATE

One process is politics within the state. This occurs in debates and competition among politicians and bureaucrats over the interpretation of the institutions of "religion" and their application to actual activities and entities. The competition reflects the interests and agendas of specific agencies and levels of the state. Timothy Brook's historical perspective on Buddhism and Daoism notes the problems that confronted local state officials in applying the centrally defined conceptual categories of the imperial state. According to the state's Confucian ideology, the "teachings of the two masters"—Buddhism and Daoism—were unorthodox, thereby precluding a category in the gazetteers to record their temples. Brook examines the attitudes and tactics of local officials in the Qing dynasty toward Buddhism and Daoism as they coped with this classification problem. The coming of the modern concept of religion (*zongjiao*) shattered their classifying tactics. After the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911, Confucianism was no longer the state ideology, while Buddhism and Daoism achieved greater legitimacy through their redefinition by political, intellectual, and religious elites as "religion."

In Chapter 2 Yoshiko Ashiwa examines the institutionalization of "modern" religion through central-local politics in two periods in the twentieth century. In the 1920s and 1930s institutionalization proceeded through a state campaign to eliminate superstition and appropriate temple assets that was embedded in intrastate politics. Radical members of local Nationalist party branches sought to undermine the local gentry who supported the conservative bureaucrats in the central state by attacking as "superstition" the deities and shrines that the gentry managed as a symbol

of their status and power. Ashiwa then describes how Buddhists raised legal challenges to the appropriation of temple land and buildings during the campaign, resulting in legal decisions on temple property. This institutionalized "religion" in laws and the strong norm that religions should serve a public purpose. Since the 1980s "religion" is once again being institutionalized in Buddhism and the state through local political processes that invoke central authority to resolve disputes, as seen in conflicts regarding temple property and leadership. In her conclusion, Ashiwa points to aspects of Buddhism in people's daily lives that are framed by the state institution of "culture" as "local tradition," "history," and so on, and considers their relation to religion.

Utiraruto Otehode's chapter examines the shifting definitions of *qigong* and their links to different interests in the state's modern medical, science, and sports sectors. In the 1950s a health official in the northern city of Tangshan obtained state recognition of certain body cultivation techniques that he termed *qigong*. He made qigong palatable to the state by expunging Daoist and other "religious" elements to represent it as a physical therapy practice of health maintenance rooted in the history of the Chinese working people. Suppressed during the Cultural Revolution, qigong was vigorously promoted in the 1980s by nationalistic members of China's military, scientific, and medical establishments. This led to a contentious debate about whether or not qigong is a "science." Utiraruto describes how this debate has proceeded through attempts to frame qigong by such modern principles as "science," "superstition," "nation," and "medicine" and how this politics both reflects and creates interests in different sectors of the state.

STATE IMPOSITION OF "RELIGION" ON RELIGIONS

Several chapters highlight the process of imposing the state's discursive category of modern religion on practices and beliefs. They illustrate how unpredictable institutionalization can be: it can generate perceptions and politics that depart from the state's goal of control and regularity. Carsten Vala examines "patriotic education" in state-recognized Protestant seminaries. Concerns of patriotism in regard to Protestantism first arose in the 1930s as Chinese Protestants replaced Western missionaries as heads of the church and questioned their foreign origins. Since 1949 the state has been concerned about foreign control of Protestantism and has sought to instill loyalty to the Party in pastors through "patriotic education" in state-approved seminaries. However, the institutionalization of "patriotic education" ends up undermining state control. First, the political screening that it entails weeds out candidates most committed to the rigors of ministry, causing a severe shortage of pastors. This shortage, in turn, devolves

administrative responsibility in state-recognized churches to deacons and elders who are not educated in state seminaries. They are less equipped to combat heresies and prevent congregation members from defecting to unregistered churches. Second, the heavy-handedness of patriotic education stimulates new links between the state-recognized and unregistered churches. Seminarians come to see the unregistered churches as offering a more authentic belief. As pastors, they also minister to congregations in unregistered churches, in some cases even resigning their positions in state-approved churches.

Dru Gladney highlights unintended consequences of Islam's positioning by the state in multiple modern institutions. Historically, Chinese states have feared rebellions among Muslims in the borderlands of central Asia, while for Muslims accommodation to dominant Han Chinese culture is a long-standing source of tension. In the twentieth century, these situations have been complicated by the imposition of the modern categories of "religion" and "ethnicity." The state classifies Muslims as an "ethnic minority" that is defined by belief in the "religion" of Islam. This generates further tensions because it lumps together many peoples with little or no historical interaction and linguistic affinity, and with widely differing accommodations to Han culture. Also, labeling these "ethnic" groups as Islamic stimulates their transnational links in the global Islamic ecumene of groups dedicated to cultural nationalism and independent statehood. Such nationalist movements and the state monitoring of them have intensified with China's policies to develop its western regions, China's rising role in central Asia, and the global war on terrorism. These chapters underscore the unpredictability of institutionalization, because the process itself produces effects.

ACCOMMODATION OF STATE INSTITUTIONS BY RELIGIONS

Actors within religions also work to position themselves within the state's discursive institution of "religion." This gives the religions the legitimacy of state recognition, letting them openly conduct activities, and reinforces their claims for resources. David Wank examines the institutional consequences of this positioning in the Buddhist community of Xiamen city, Fujian province. He describes the politics of organizational actors to control temple property and wealth. Their actions reflect competing and contradictory principles in the state discourse of "religion" in *Document 19* and other institutions, such as "self-management," "patriotism," "religious freedom," and "administrative guidance." By framing their multiple claims for control in terms of these discrete principles, the Xiamen Religious Affairs Bureau,[4] Xiamen Buddhist Association, and

temples shape their organizational attributes and interests. Their escalating conflict drew in the central state authority, which reoriented relations among the local actors and created new links to the central state. Paradoxically, efforts by Xiamen's major temple, Nanputuo, to invoke the central state in order to enhance its autonomy from local politics brought the temple more firmly under central state control and conformity to "religion" and other state discursive institutions.

Adam Chau describes the Black Dragon King Temple, a well-known divination shrine in Shaanxi province that did not fit the state definition of a "religion." Community activists promoted the shrine by suppressing blatantly "superstitious" activities that would attract state scrutiny and positioning its activities within state institutions of "market," "education," and "environmentalism." The crowds of worshippers who flocked to the temple generated a large income that was used in ways to create significant support for the temple. Some income was used to pay off officials in a variety of local state agencies to tolerate the temple. Other income was invested in a school for children of the villages whose members served on the temple committee, thereby ensuring community support. Finally, funds were invested in a reforestation project around the temple, gaining it national recognition and even international environmental acclaim. Eventually the Shaanxi Province Daoist Association recognized the Black Dragon King Temple as a Daoist temple, securely positioning it within the state category of "religion." These two chapters illustrate how actors seek legitimacy by positioning themselves within discursive institutions of modern religion, and by doing so also define their attributes and interests.

POPULAR INSTITUTIONS AND THE POLITICS OF "RELIGION"

The politics of the religious revivals is also shaped by popular institutions in society. Several chapters illuminate relations between these popular institutions and the state's formal institutions of modern religion. Richard Madsen and Lizhu Fan examine the different representations of Sheshan, a Catholic shrine in Shanghai dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Since the mid-nineteenth century, different state regimes have represented Sheshan in distinct ways to support their authority. The French developed Sheshan's imagery in the nineteenth century as a "civilizing project" to support their colonial authority. In the twentieth century, the Nationalist Party and the Chinese Communist Party remade Sheshan's imagery to represent the nation. Among believers, Sheshan has long had an image of a benevolent protectress. Since 1949 it has also signified to some Catholics opposition to the state-approved Catholic Church. These multiple meanings that

have adhered to the shrine prevent it from being dominated by any single one. It is visited by Catholics from both the state-registered and unregistered churches, and can help diffuse tensions between Catholics inside and outside the People's Republic of China. Sheshan is considered a "tame" shrine because it poses no problems for the state in contrast to the "unruly" Dong Lü shrine in a nearby rural area, which is dominated by the underground church and is a site of resistance to the state.

Utiraruto Otehode's portrays distinct intrastate elite and intrasocietal processes in the institutionalization of qigong. The intrastate process is traceable to attempts by intellectuals and officials to position traditional body cultivation techniques within the modern institutions of medicine, science, and nation, as described above. The intrasocietal process, visible since the 1980s, is the revival of qigong in practitioner groups. Many groups are headed by self-styled qigong masters because the earlier generation that had received state-approved training was subsequently persecuted in the Cultural Revolution and did not play a leading role after 1980. Instead, a popular revival has been led by younger self-styled qigong masters who mix Buddhist and folk religious imagery. These inter- and intrastate processes overlap. Actors in the state research institutes have invited self-styled qigong masters to participate in scientific experiments, thereby giving the qigong masters access to the state's organizational and legitimacy resources. This has enabled some masters to vastly expand their audiences in mass gatherings and to create national networks, such as Falungong.

Finally, Kenneth Dean shows the limited effects of "religion" in the popular institutions of Daoism, which are deeply embedded in local communities. Since the late nineteenth century modern ideas of organizational rationality and scriptural authority have put pressure on Daoist traditions, even threatening to eliminate them at certain times. These tensions exist today in the problematic fit between the discursive clarity of the Party's modern definition of "religion" and Daoist rituals and modes of expression. The scriptural emphasis of the rationalized Daoist education in state-recognized Daoist seminaries strips away the ritual experience of Daoism that emphasizes local communities served by masters who transmit ritual methods to their initiated disciples and provides a framework for local rituals. Therefore, the state's modern institution of "religion," as well as "culture," only adheres to the surface of Daoism. This veneer of institutionalization is also strategically enacted by Daoists to satisfy state expectations while letting them conduct rituals as they see fit.

All of the chapters describe processes of institutionalizing the state's discursive institution of "religion." They show how institutionalization is

affected and shaped by the histories and forms of capital of specific religions, how this interaction shapes the characteristics of organizational actors and the relations of the field, and how institutionalization is also linked to the expansion of such other modern categories in the state as science, superstition, environment, medicine, education, nation, market, tourism, and law. Yet at the same time these chapters also acknowledge, explicitly (Ashiwa; Dean) or otherwise, the existence of numerous beliefs and rituals outside the modernist framing of "religion" that are enacted as part of the daily lives of people and rituals of communities. The issue of beliefs and their relation to "religion" lies outside this volume's scope, but it is, nevertheless, important to acknowledge in order to underscore that the chapters are concerned with those aspects of religion that are enacted within the state's modern institutions.

Conclusion

Modernity treats religion as a matter of individual belief in the context of secularism. At least within the modern social sciences, since Max Weber, individual belief and secularism have been key concepts of the study of religion in modernity. Social scientists have been challenging these concepts of individual belief and secularism through fieldwork in and monographs on non-Western societies. However, as Talal Asad points out, even social scientists such as Clifford Geertz, who are extremely sophisticated advocates of the interpretation of cultures to capture their complexity, are often ignorant of their own ambiguous use of the analytical as well as descriptive concepts of religion and belief when they analyze what they observe in religious practices in everyday life in non-Western societies. This is because the concepts of religion and belief are embedded in the modern way of thinking. Any understanding, therefore, that these concepts appear to impart is derived from their basis in the modern concept of religion. In this volume, although we acknowledge that the issue of individual belief is becoming crucial for the state and society in China, we have chosen not to discuss belief, but rather decided to delineate how the concept of modern religion has been, and is being, made within the process of state making in China. It is important to note that institutions both reflect ideas and are ideas in themselves. In this sense, the approach of this volume is to analyze the framework that reflects the beliefs of the people and individuals in China's modernity.

The categories behind the statistics on religion in China are part of the process of making religion and making the state that has been ongoing at all levels of the state and people's relationship through the continuous ef-

forts to institutionalize modernity. Every chapter in this volume argues that China is in the throes of this process.

Notes

1. We would like to thank Ken Dean and Carsten Vala for comments on drafts of this chapter.

2. These statistics first appeared in a white paper, "Freedom of Religious Belief," and have been cited in subsequent white papers: "Fifty Years of Progress in China's Human Rights" (2000) and "Progress in China's Human Rights Cause in 2003." However, based on a survey conducted between 2005 and 2007, university-based researchers maintain that there are 300 million religious believers above the age of sixteen. Buddhists, Daoists, Catholics, Muslims, and Protestants account for 67.4 percent of these believers. About 200 million are Buddhists, Daoists, or worshippers of the Dragon King, God of Fortune, and other figures, while about 40 million are Protestants (*Wenweipo* 2007; Wu 2007).

3. The state bureaucracy of religious management was called the Religious Affairs Office from 1951 to 1954 and the Bureau of Religious Affairs from 1954 until 1998. The current name—State Administration for Religious Affairs—was adopted in 1998. For ease of reference this volume uses the current name to refer to the post-1949 bureaucracy at the national level. Local level offices of religious administration from the provincial level on down often use the word "bureau," and therefore the term "Religious Affairs Bureau" will refer to the local levels, unless otherwise indicated.

4. The official name of the bureau is the Bureau of Ethnic and Religious Affairs of Xiamen (*Xiamen shi minzu yu zongjiao shiwu ju*). In this chapter it is shortened to Xiamen Religious Affairs Bureau. For the use of one bureau to manage both ethnic and religious affairs see Ashiwa and Wank (2006: 344n12).

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