“ State and Religion in Modern China: Religious Policy and Scholarly Paradigms ”

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Paper for the Panel "State and Society,"
"Rethinking Modern Chinese History: An International Conference to Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Institute of Modern History,"
Academia Sinica, Taipei, Republic of China, June 29-July 1, 2005.

Modern China, from the last decades of the Qing empire through the Republican and the Communist periods, has experienced dramatic and uninterrupted changes in the relationships between state[2] and religion, as political leaders devised and implemented radically innovative ways of dealing with religion through legislation and administrative practice, and as religious specialists and institutions reacted to such changes by resisting, adapting, or inventing new ways to place themselves on the public scene. Such relationships, as of 2005, are still contested and changing, and taken together in their various aspects, they constitute a "hot" topic for discussion in both scholarly and non-scholarly circles.

Accordingly, the scholarship relevant to the various aspects of state/religion relationships in modern China has been strongly growing in quantity and quality since the 1990s. The present article critically addresses this scholarship. As I define here religion in the largest sense as including institutionalized religions (Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, redemptive societies), communal religious organizations and rituals (local cults, pilgrimages), and self-perfection traditions (meditation, body techniques, spirit-writing -- all of them considered as techniques that are used by different kinds of social organizations), the relevant literature is extremely large. My focus will be on the state management of Chinese religion and religious adaptation to such management, including religious conflict and change. Inasmuch as the relevant literature is extremely large, I do not aim at analyzing

[1] This article evolved from a presentation at the panel "State and Society," of the "Rethinking Modern Chinese History: An International Conference to Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Institute of Modern History," Academia Sinica, Taipei, Republic of China, June 29-July 1, 2005. I am very grateful to the conference organizers, the panel chair and discussant Paul Katz, and co-panelists Chang Lung-chih, Chen Shih-jung and Lai Hui-min for their input. Earlier drafts have also hugely benefited from the critical comments on previous drafts by Paul Katz, Rebecca Nedostup, David Palmer, Mayfair Yang, and Adam Chau; I am very grateful to them. All remaining errors, omissions, and unintended misrepresentations are mine only.

[2] While I use the term state for the sake of convenience throughout this article, I am aware that a rigid dichotomy between state and society does not account properly for the history of religious policies in modern China (nor for any other history), and that what I mean by state actually refers to a motley assortment of actors taking part in state-building, including local elites, reformers, and local state agents, who all have specific views on religion.

the whole range of scholarly research on the history of religion in modern China, and some aspects, notably Islam and Christianity as well as religious traditions of non-Han ethnic groups, could not be included in my discussion, which does obviously not mean that they are not important. Another major bias of my discussion is that Western publications rather than Chinese ones seem to be over-represented.

I will begin by summarizing what I view as the major features of the history of state-religion interactions during the modern period as I understand them, so as to provide a background against which to analyze past and current scholarship. In particular, I will argue that, under the influence of Western secular models of a nation-state's religious policies (separating state from church and negotiating with a limited number of recognized churches), the modern Chinese state attempted to reconfigure the religious field, thereby creating new dividing lines between politically acceptable and unacceptable forms of religion. This reconfiguration narrowed the scope of politically acceptable religion, and what was excluded was targeted by violent, destructive action. Rather than anti-religious, these policies should be understood as the implementation of new political ideals of religion that favored certain institutions, practices, and ideas different from those favored by the Chinese state up to 1900. The newly adopted notions of "religion" (*zongjiao* 宗教) and "superstition" (*mixin* 迷信) during the first years of the twentieth century were instrumental in this process.

The second part of the paper will address the intimate connections between the historiography of modern Chinese religions and state religious policies that were formulated during this period. Chinese scholars in particular have had to work with the categories imposed by political authorities on the religious field. The bifurcation (imposed from the top down) of the Chinese religious tradition between acceptable "religions" and condemned "superstitions" had a profound impact on subsequent research.

Against this background of changing state policies to reinvent religion and scholarly involvement in such projects, I analyze, in the third part of the paper, past and current scholarship on state-religion interactions according to several major paradigms. I have identified five such paradigms that, while unable to fully account for the wide variety and complexity of the scholarship under discussion, will capture, I hope, some of the most important notions and debates in the field. As my purpose is to outline major paradigms common through the writings of different scholars, I discuss a wide range of writings pertaining to different time periods and religious traditions and practices.

The fourth and final part of the paper will consider new perspectives that question and attempt to improve upon the above paradigms. Particularly promising directions for future research are the history of religious policies at the local level, as well as the ways in which local religious groups and leaders have adapted to state-imposed paradigms (both in practice and in discourse) in order to survive or thrive.

1. State and religion in modern China

The religious policies of succeeding dynasties up to the end of the Qing (1644-1911) were based on the absolute religious authority of the emperor, who, theoretically at least, relied solely on his judgment to determine which religious practices and organizations to protect and which ones to ban. Yet, although different emperors had different personal religious convictions, which they gave expression to through the private realm of the court, the late imperial state was continuously committed to protecting the three religions, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism—albeit not on a par, as Confucianism was the state religion and the other two, although recognized as orthodox systems of thought, were, as social institutions, subjected to a strict (but often unimplemented) system of control. Within this system, a large array of local cults to ancestors, saints, and gods was recognized as orthodox (*zheng* 正)[3] and thereby allowed, while an even larger array of religious practices and groups were banned as heterodox (*xie* 邪) and/or immoral (*yin* 淫, see Jiang Zhushan 1995 and Kojima Tsuyoshi 1991).

Generally speaking, whereas cults and groups closely adhering to the patriarchal order of society (territorial communities, lineages, guilds) were on the orthodox side, congregational groups, based on voluntary participation (such as "sectarian" devotional groups or congregations featuring women in active roles) were not. The statutes of the dynasty as well as the huge bureaucratic literature produced by local officials document late Qing religious policies trying to impose the standards of orthodoxy on all forms of religious and cultural life. However, due to a lack of means of enforcement, as well as frequent neglect by officials absorbed by more pressing tasks, these policies were rarely strictly applied and official repression provided for by normative texts actually took, more often than not, the form of negotiation.

Such a political approach to religion underwent radical changes, first, tentatively, with the 1898 Wuxu 戊戌 reforms and more durably with the New Policies after 1901. In this context, religious reforms were adopted as part of a larger set of reforms aiming at modernizing China's bureaucracy, society, economy, and military. State rituals were gradually abandoned and the protection formerly extended to local orthodox cults was withdrawn; notably, temples (of both formerly orthodox and heterodox types) were targeted for destruction and re-use as schools or other state outfits (Goossaert, forthcoming). Many elements of religious reform first mooted during the last decade of imperial rule came under full fruition under the Republic. Notably, the early Republican leaders attempted to adopt religious policies congruent with the various Western models of a nation-state, either directly or mediated by the Japanese experience. In spite of their variety, these models had in common the separation of state from religion, defined as something independent from politics, and the recognition by the state of a legal status and some privileges to one or several churches organized with their own clergy, laity, places for

[3] There is a long-standing debate in the field on the relative role of orthodoxy and orthopraxy in the notion of *zheng*; it can be fairly assumed that both are present, sometimes in tension, while one or the other is emphasized according to circumstance or persuasion. For the sake of clarity, I maintain throughout this article "orthodoxy" as an encompassing notion subsuming all kinds of orthodoxy/orthopraxy complexes as opposed to heterodoxy/heteropraxy.

worship, educational institutions, etc. These models thus equated religion with church, as they were based on a modern Christian conception of religion.

Consequently, and in imitation of the Japanese and Western constitutions, the various Chinese constitutions (promulgated from the advent of the Republic in 1912 up to today) have recognized religious freedom (*xinjiao ziyou* 信教自由). But this religious freedom is hedged about with limiting conditions, in particular a restriction to "religions" deemed authentic, which are separated from the "superstition" that the Republic of China, especially with the Guomindang regime from 1927, and the People's Republic of China committed themselves to eradicate.

The religious policies of the modern Chinese state, rather than anti-religious, have amounted to a radical reinvention of the religious field, redrawing boundaries between acceptable, legitimate religion and otherwise unacceptable superstition, and to attempt to refashion religion in a way compatible with the modernist Nationalist project. The theoretical basis for this reinvention was the adoption, from 1901 onwards, of the Western Christian-based concept of religion and the complementary concept of superstition. The idea of a national religion (*guojiao* 國教), based on Confucianism, was discussed at length during the early years of the Republic (Chen Hsi-yuan 1999, 2002, 2005) but, unlike the contemporary decision made in Japan to enshrine (and invent) Shintô 神道 as the state cult (Hardacre 1989), it was not adopted. The early Republican legislators were keen on preserving the traditional Chinese religious pluralism, understood as different from tolerance. In contrast to many other nations using part of their religious heritage in manufacturing their own brand of nationalism, Chinese nationalism was built largely without, and even partly against, religion, and indeed, the whole of traditional culture (Cohen 2005). As Dunch 2001 has shown in the case of Protestantism, there existed several brands of Chinese nationalism at the beginning of the Republic, some of which were religiously informed, but an intolerant version eventually prevailed. It is only now that we begin to witness a grassroots nationalist reappropriation of local cults.

Since 1912, Chinese states have been avowedly secular, but that did not prevent them from making use of utopian ideas and vocabulary (a radical change towards a perfect society, creating a new man, etc.). The Maoist regime provided the most explicit and forceful expression of such utopianism recycling the vocabulary and symbolical resources of various religious traditions. Many ideas and practices have been crossing the border between "secular" and "religious" during the past century.

Moreover, the Nationalist rejection was not against religion in general; before the advent of communism, only a minority of political leaders rejected religion in the abstract, and the situation in contemporary People's Republic is rather similar. The notion of religion was and is often understood as meaning an entity with a potentially positive role to play in helping to cement the spiritual unity and moral values of the people. Religion was then generally thought of as acceptable among Republican leaders, whereas superstition was to be condemned. This dichotomy is very different from the imperial one that opposed orthodoxy to heterodoxy: imperial-times orthodoxy had to fit with imperially-sponsored cosmology, morality and the classics, whereas modern "religion" had to have its own

doctrinal texts, preferably foreign or with international diffusion. One of the tasks of the Republican and Communist regimes, when defining their religious policies, was then to decide was to consider "religion," and therefore to protect, and what to classify as "superstition" (Nedostup 2001).

A list of five religions (all of them "world religions"), that were recognized and so covered by religious freedom, was fairly rapidly defined under the Republic and remains the same today: Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Buddhism, and Taoism. Several sectarian groups were recognized between 1912 and 1949 (such as the Daoyuan 道院 and the Zailijiao 在理教), and again in Taiwan since 1986 (for the instance the Yiguandao 一貫道), but they are all still banned in the People's Republic. Even though, throughout the twentieth century, the five great religions had to suffer violent attacks, constraints, and destruction, they were also able to defend themselves publicly, organize into hierarchical national associations to negotiate with the authorities, and after the end of the Cultural Revolution retrieve their main educational centers. On the other hand, no state-approved organization was allowed to come into being to defend the hundreds of thousands of local temples and cult associations, even though some manage to obtain some official status under non-religious guises. The most significant consequence of this process of purification that aimed to separate the five approved religions from "superstitions" was that the great majority of communities worshipping local saints in village or neighborhood temples were deprived of all legal protection, and their temples were confiscated and converted into schools, police stations, garrisons, etc. That was logical, since local cults were the sites where the traditional and quite autonomous structures of local society were rooted which the modern state wished to destroy in order to take over their material and symbolic resources (Goossaert 2003a).

Obviously, the religious policies of the Chinese state since the early twentieth century have gone through many changes, with periods of heightened repression and control (the 1928-1931 anti-superstition campaigns, the Cultural Revolution) and periods of more open approaches (in the Mainland since 1978 and most remarkably in Taiwan since the 1980s). However, in the long term, three major kinds of state action toward religion can be defined: First, as we have just seen, attempts to impose a clear-cut distinction between those "religions" that are recognized and accommodated within the state project for social modernization and repression of "superstition" and all forms of religious practices not confined to these "religions" (including death rituals and healing practices); Second, attempts to reform and reinvent those recognized religions—including endeavors to control them through politicized national associations and new economic foundations, to redefine doctrines and practices, fostering reformism (and quite often fundamentalism) in tune with state ideology (be it scientism, nationalism, socialism, democracy, etc.)—; And third, cutting from their original religious framework, nationalizing, and recycling some parts of the religious heritage such as martial arts, self-healing and self-strengthening techniques (such as *qigong* 氣功) for the state's own secular purposes.

These threefold policies have had a deeply felt impact in the religious field, but their effects vary widely and are not easy to assess. The five recognized religions have mostly

played the game according to state-imposed rules, but this has often implied using state rhetoric towards objectives quite different from those of the state, ranging from preserving the tradition to reforming along idiosyncratic lines. Other traditions tried to reinvent themselves as "religions" to obtain state recognition, transforming themselves or creating altogether new religious groups in the process (some reformist Buddhist movements, or the "Confucian religious association," Kongjiaohui 孔教會) or, on the contrary, in order to avoid these categorizations, have defined themselves as science, medicine, philanthropy, or sports (as have, for example, the *qigong* and some sectarian groups).

While the state has failed to sort "religion" from "superstition," it has managed to a certain extent to impose new categories in which to think and negotiate the public practice of religion in modern China. All actors, from political leaders to clerics, peasants, and scholars have grown used to manipulating the official ideology and categories of religious policies.

2. Religious policies and the science of religion

Before examining how scholarship has dealt with this history of state-religion relationships, it is useful to note that the two—state policies and scholarship—are not independent at all. The fact that scholarly research is conditioned by the political context and current ideological paradigms is well-known worldwide, and in this regard, China is no exception. Many contemporary Chinese, Japanese, and Western scholars who have studied Chinese religions were themselves actors in the political and intellectual debates that helped shape the state's religious policies; one well-known example is the Folklore studies movement around highly influential scholars such as Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (1893-1980) who were quite close to the KMT and influenced its views on religion (Nedostup 2001:171-74). Chinese scholars in particular were often expected to support state authority, meaning that it proved difficult for their scholarship to be independent of contemporary political concerns.

Basically, the state has been defining the political categories to analyze religion (religion, superstition, sects, cults, popular religion, etc.), and the scholars have been asked to define and refine such categories. Thus, the invention of Chinese "religions" during the first years of the twentieth century and the subsequent bifurcation (imposed from the top down) of the Chinese religious tradition between acceptable "religions" and condemned "superstitions" had a profound impact on subsequent research in terms of focusing academic research on Chinese religion to the supposedly independent entities of "Buddhism" and "Taoism." In China, academic institutions in religious studies are usually divided between institutes devoted to the five recognized religions, which helps explain why so little research has been conducted on religious practices not subsumed under these five religions, for instance the religious aspects of Confucianism (rituals, self-cultivation etc.), even though this is changing since the late 1990s.

More intellectual freedom to explore the situation of the religious field was available in the fields of history, anthropology, folklore, and performing arts studies, but even in these

disciplines, the current political and ideological climates has often dictated the topics and orientations of scholarly research. Not only did scholars reflect on the current political and religious situation in their study of ancient religious history (McRae 2001), but also recent excellent studies of Chinese modern anthropology have evidenced the close connection between their paradigms and current political issues (Nadeau & Chang 2003, Wang Jianmin 1997, 1998). Similarly, Daniel Overmyer (2001) has shown how the nascent study of local religious traditions on the Mainland has had to deal with the political categories used by the state to label such traditions (see also Yang Fenggang 2004). A kind of rehabilitation of local cults is taking place under the new label of *minjian xinyang* 民間信仰 (literally "popular beliefs"), which means "popular religion," "folk religion" but which is different from the politically established term of *minjian zongjiao* 民間宗教 (literally "popular religions"), which actually means "sectarian" groups.

Another reason why religious policies and scholarly research on religion are intimately linked is that the only way through which a religious tradition can legitimately exist in the current situation on the Mainland is through the appearance of scholarship on such a tradition; for instance, geomancy (Bruun 2003), *qigong* (Palmer 2005a: 78-80, 115-184, Palmer forthcoming), or various local cults have been allowed to thrive inasmuch as they were legitimized by relevant scholarship (*xuewen* 學問), publications by state-sponsored publishers, and the organization of (preferably international) scholarly conferences (Dean 1998, 261-63). Yet, as the same time as sympathetic scholars work towards a political rehabilitation of certain religious traditions, they also often tend to argue in favor of religious change, promoting in their scholarly writings these traditions' rationalization and secularization, that is, projects quite similar to those of the state (one good example among so many: He Jingsong 1998).

A third and equally important reason is that the post-1912 Chinese state, inasmuch as it has not claimed any spiritual, theological, or otherwise transcendental authority for itself (in contrast to the imperial regime), has constantly resorted to scholarly support for justifying its religious policies. Thus from 1912, and still today, legislators and administrators faced with the complex task of separating out religion from superstition have called in academic experts to assist in this work, and still today that is part of the functions of religious studies scholars in the People's Republic—this is not unique to China, as my French colleagues working on "cults" (fr. *sectes*) know full well. A high point in the takeover of scholarly discourse by state religious policies was reached in November 1928 with the "Rules to decide whether temples are preserved or destroyed" (*Shenci cunfei biaozhun* 神祠存廢標準). This lengthy text, which purports to be a scientific study of the forms of religious life, provides criteria and a list of examples for both categories, "to be preserved" and "to be destroyed" (Nedostup 2001:196-211). This distinction turned out to be impossible to apply on the ground, especially in the case of Taoism, which is indissolubly associated with local cults. But since then public discourse and publications from both academics and Taoists, even the most scholarly among them, have been concerned with this burning issue: drawing a dividing line, which is constantly shifting in accordance with political contexts, between a "genuine Taoism" and "superstitions." (Schipper 2002). Similarly, in its recent

attack on "cults," *xiejiao* 邪教, the Communist government has been relying heavily on Western social sciences for justification (Palmer 2005b).

3. The paradigms

State attempts to reinvent religion, attempts in which the scholarly community has been involved, willingly or not, have led to the formation of a number of paradigms used to conceptualize modern Chinese religious history and state-religion relationships in particular. I have identified five paradigms that I will try to explore here, while keeping in mind that they are only heuristic devices, not recognized scholarly objects. I use paradigm here in a very loose sense, not referring to established schools of thought or comprehensive interpretations of Chinese society, but rather to orientations and emphases in the selection and analysis of evidence. The interpretations I subsume under these five paradigms definitely cannot cover the whole range of existing scholarship, but I hope they can capture some of the most important notions and debates in the field. These various paradigms are furthermore not exclusive of each other, and can indeed be combined in various ways.

For each of these paradigms, I will first offer an outline of its content, as I understand it, provide examples in the works of leading scholars, suggest the ways in which the paradigm has furthered our understanding of the issue, and finally mention recent criticisms, nuances, or improvements.

A. The secularization paradigm. This first paradigm is the most universal of the five, as it is indeed the most influential model that has dictated research on state-religion relationships in the modern world. Secularization (*shisuhua* 世俗化) theories are numerous and quite different from each other, and all of them have come under heavy criticism since the late twentieth century (for an overview see Beckford 2003). The basic paradigm of secularization still holds wide if not universal currency, however, and its key tenets can be summarized as follows: modernity brings the diminution of the social significance of religion; all forms of religion, and/or in particular mainstream institutional religion loses influence and religion becomes mostly a matter of individual, private belief and practice, and ceases to be a key basis for social organization. This secularization as social process is intertwined with but distinct from secularization as a political ideology. In the second sense, the term describe how modern states become "secular," that is, they stop basing their legitimacy and practical action on religious narratives, theories, and rituals. Such states attempt to keep their distance from religious institutions, reducing their intervention in the religious sphere to a minimum and attempting to foster pluralism and tolerance.

Whereas the universality and irreversibility of secularization processes is a scholarly notion that has justly fallen into disrepute, it remains a fact that such processes have occurred, and still do, and that the ideology of secularization, that is, secularism, has been and still is a strong force in politics, in China as elsewhere. Moreover, the temporality of the two aspects of secularization are different: there is good theoretical ground for

describing parts of the late imperial change in the Chinese religious field as "secularization," whereas secularism is indissolubly linked to the notion of religion and to the modern nation-state (Van der Veer 2001), that is, for China, an early twentieth-century breakthrough. It should be emphasized that the Chinese scholarly use of the word *shisuhua*, the standard translation of "secularization," actually often tend to refer to a third aspect, that is, "disenchantment," collapse of idealism and adhesion to cosmological worldviews.

A major advantage of the secularization paradigm lays precisely in its universal dimension. Because twentieth-century Chinese state attempts to reinvent religious policies were explicitly inspired by other examples of modern secular nation-states such as Soviet Russia, Mexico, Turkey, and European countries, the secularization paradigm should allow us to probe the parallels between the Chinese and other experiences, and also to question the nature of China's uniqueness—even though not much comparison along this line has been done to date.

The secularization paradigm seems to be universally espoused by political historians of modern China, who rarely deem religious issues as relevant to their larger historical narratives. Only recently have studies done justice to the centrality of religion and secularism in the Nationalist and Communist projects. Among the scholars who have developed analyses of the modern Chinese states' attitude towards religion, the most influential is certainly Prasenjit Duara. In a string of publications (1988, 1991, 1995), Prof. Duara has explored the Nationalist state's vision of modernity as exclusive of any religious justification or vision, even though Nationalist leaders were influenced by religious projects (Protestant Christianity, in particular). To be sure, the Nationalist approach was one of aggressive secularism, as anti-superstition legislation and campaigns tried to eliminate religion from the social sphere by any means. Such an approach is not unique, as other countries, not all of them run by a totalitarian regime, have also experienced a tension between militant radical secularism and a laisser-faire approach (for the French case, see Baubérot 2004). But more importantly, Duara has argued that secularism was not an inevitable process but a top-down engineered project that failed: "the realm of popular religion turns out … to be a reef upon which the enlightenment project in China repeatedly crashes." (Duara 1995:86).

Indeed, the state's heavy hand has been so much in evidence in secularization processes that little research has been conducted on the grassroots social processes (such as the Republican period temples that spontaneously transformed into schools, or guilds into chambers of commerce). Moreover, recent studies have mostly focused on the actual growth, in both quantitative terms and in variety, of religion in Chinese society since the 1970s, so secularization has not been much used as a concept in studies on the contemporary situation; a remarkable exception, though, is Fan Lizhu's sociological analysis of religion in Shenzhen (Fan 2005). In other words, in a context where the secularization discourse and practices are dominated by top-down authoritarian policies, with explicit reference to foreign ideologies, it is not surprising that the words "secular," "secularism," or "secularization" do not enjoy a good reputation and are not much used, either by scholars or social actors, to describe grassroots social processes (this is not all that different

from the situation in postcolonial Arab nation-states where secularism is also considered as a colonial Christian project).

Yet, a basic opposition between a secular state and a non-secular society would not do. Recent research has shown that however much the central state is still insisting on a successful implementation of its secularist project, the reality on the field is quite different. The five institutionalized religions have conformed to the expectations of the secularization project, organizing themselves as institutions separate from social life (the so-called institutional differentiation), rather like Christian churches in western secularized societies, and treated on a par with each other—this is a process that social theorists have described as confessionalization, a concept that seems fit to describe modern institutional Chinese Taoism and Buddhism. However, local cults have continued to be, or have once again become the focus of communal life: politicians campaign through temple organizations (Katz 2003) and religious groups are even entrusted by local officials with public projects (Tsai 2002). More fundamentally, local political leadership and charisma is still played out simultaneously in religious and "secular" terms (Feuchtwang and Wang 2001, Chau 2005a). This had led both anthropologists and historians to suggest that local religion might have played since late imperial times the role of the much debated and elusive civil society (this is almost a scholarly field in itself; see notably Davis 2001:200-225, Katz 2003:398, Weller 1999, 2004, Schipper 1997, Chau 2005a; Dean 1997 and 2001 argues otherwise, proposing the notion of "second government"). This resurgence of local ascriptive communities questions the relevance to the Chinese case of the notion, popular in social sciences, of the privatization of religion as a consequence of secularization; if new movements (sectarian groups, lay Buddhism, *qigong*, Chinese evangelical Christianity and quasi-Christian sects…) seem to fit well with the privatization model, village religion certainly does not. In other words, secularism as an ideology fights on, but Chinese society is far from secularized. Neither, indeed, is the Chinese state.

Another direction of research that has led to questioning the secularization paradigm is the extent to which modern Chinese states have really lived up to their own secularist project. First, some scholars have focused on the religious nature of the modern state's utopia, and in particular the explicit use of demoniac, exorcistic, and millenarian themes in the Communist political discourse (Feuchtwang 2000:163-66, 2001 chap. 8, ter Haar 1996), not to mention the Mao cult (Barmé 1996).

Second, other scholars have evidenced that both the Nationalist and the Communist state have continued to be actually deeply involved in defining orthodoxy from heterodoxy, that is, intervening directly in the religious realm. The Republican state wanted to distance itself from the imperial state by abandoning the latter's ambition to be a religious authority, but its attempts to separate religion from superstition, even though on the basis of a scientist utopia, actually amounted to continue being a religious authority defining truth and error on a theological level (Nedostup 2001). All states who have to give some sort of legal status to "religions" but not "cults" eventually face a similar conundrum, but few have assumed the posture of theological authority so clearly as the Chinese Nationalist and Communist states. Similarly, even though it eventually chose not to make it a national

religion (Chen Hsi-yuan 1999, 2005), the Nationalist state has strived well into the 1980s to maintain state control over the interpretation of Confucianism (Jochim 2003).

The recent return to an explicit discourse of orthodoxy and heterodoxy by the People's Republic state, in the wake of the Falungong crackdown, as well as its involvement in the politics of Tibeto-Mongol reincarnations are yet other proofs of this characteristic of all modern Chinese states that find it impossible to declare themselves not competent in any field, even that of gods and rituals. Of course, even deeply secular states cannot refrain from actually judging religious groups on a religious level, even when apparently they base themselves on civil law, but the Chinese state has gone further than many in that direction. Even the vastly more tolerant Taiwanese state since the 1980s has continued pursuing a policy of openly if gently encouraging certain forms of religious practice and discouraging others, seen as wasteful (Katz 2003), and this does not square well with a secularist model.

A third direction of research into the secularization paradigm is a nuanced appraisal of the attitude of elite politicians towards religion. Many, probably most local elites throughout the modern period have maintained religious practices and beliefs, and, in modern like in late imperial times, they played a crucial role in mediating between state policies and local religious traditions (see Chen Shih-jong's paper in this panel). Terms such as "anti-religious" or "anti-Buddhist" which have long been used rather uncritically to describe the elites' aggressively secular projects are now coming under scrutiny, as more intellectual options are being defined and investigated. Anti-religion, the first occurrences of which date from the 1920s, and which is often conflated with atheism (Bastid 2002, Yip Ka-che 1972, 1980), is clearly a Marxist influence. It has been obviously a major force in the intellectual world of the political elite since then, but it has not informed all religious policies by far. Other intellectual positions observed among these elite include fundamentalism—that is, the rejection of all ideas and practices absent from the canonical scriptures and of historical developments and localization of religion; fundamentalism is notably prevalent among Confucians (Chow Kai-wing 1994 defines it as "purism")—, anticlericalism—that is, the rejection of the institutionalization of religion, and notably of professional clerics, but not necessarily of religious beliefs themselves (Goossaert ed., 2002)—and anti-superstition, that rejects any religious practice that is not individual and text-based. Thus, Chinese modern elites have found many different ways of being religiously modern, and these ways have all found some expression in state policies.

Fundamentalist, anticlerical, and anti-superstition leaders have different visions of state-religion relationships but, broadly speaking, they all typically (in China as elsewhere) favor modernist secularist reforms while still envisioning a place for religion in society. The modern Chinese leaders who embarked on secularist projects were often themselves believers and practitioners of certain religions, or at least influenced by utopian, millenarist trends of thought—the many Christian KMT leaders readily come to mind, but also lay Buddhists such as Dai Jitao 戴季陶 (1891-1949) or more recently Chen Lü'an 陳履安. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that during the modern period, the Chinese state consistently felt more comfortable with, and favored fundamentalist movements (e.g. Taixu 太虛 (1890-1947) among the Buddhists, the Ikhwan among Muslims, Quanzhen leaders

among the Taoists…) over traditionalist ones. These fundamentalist movements share with the state, and with many scholars, a denunciation of "superstition," even though the definition of what this means differ in each case, and all of them engage in a project to change ordinary Chinese people's religiosity.

B. The continuity paradigm. By contrast to the secularization paradigm, which tends to inscribe the modern Chinese experience within universal trends, the continuity paradigm tends to emphasize the uniqueness of Chinese state-religion relationships. The scholars using this paradigm see a fundamental continuity in state-religion relationships through the late imperial, Republican, and Communist periods, in contrast to those who tend to neatly distinguish these three regimes in terms of religious policies. Upholders of the continuity paradigm consider that, in spite of changes in official state ideologies, local officials, who were the real actors carrying out state religious policies, have remained committed to a similar set of values through the late imperial period and the twentieth century. Such values included a sense of self-superiority of officials/cadres over the "ignorant masses," a commitment to enlighten these masses, an aversion to popular culture in general and festivals, performing arts, and public displays of faith in particular, as well as grand ambitions to instruct the people in more sober and rational attitudes towards the hardships of life.

Such was for instance the reasoning of a very distinguished historian of late imperial officialdom, William Rowe (2001:436) who discussed the continuity of Qing officials' campaigns against popular culture and cults with the twentieth-century anti-superstition movement. Another historian, Richard Smith (1998), has also drawn parallels between imperial, Republican, and Communist campaigns to civilize and instigate ritual propriety among the population, but observed that in spite of very important continuities, imperial state policies were fully supported by the imperial cosmology whereas the lack of such a cosmology made Republican and Communist efforts much weaker in both principle and effect. More generally, the continuity argument finds it hard to explain how a government can legitimately continue to manage the religious field when it stops basing itself on any religious ground. Moreover, recent research that, in contrast to a tradition of viewing the Confucian bureaucracy as secular, has insisted on the ritual life and religious worldview of late imperial officials (e.g. Sutton 2004), should draw our attention to the deep differences between their approach of religious issues and the contemporary cadres'.

Anthony Yu (2005) has recently argued for a long-term continuity in the religious nature of the Chinese state that drives it to control all forms of religious life, the miscomprehension of which has fraught Western understandings of modern state-religion relationships in China. Similarly, Daniel H. Bays' (2004) argument in favor of a basic continuity in state attitudes towards religion (both Christian and native) tends to essentialize the Chinese state; he sees the Republican period as an anomaly (because the regime was too weak to control effectively religious groups), and the Communist regime as a return, with merely more efficiency, to imperial attitudes of paranoia towards uncontrolled groups and attempts to control, regulate, and repress systematically. He even

draws a parallel between the Ministry of Rites and the contemporary Religious affairs Bureau, a parallel which is certainly intellectually stimulating but might need to be refined when we know more about what the Ministry of Rites really did. While state ambitions to control religious groups is certainly a long-term fixture, the continuity argument might be strengthened, or conversely weakened by more sustained long-term comparison of legislation pertaining to religion and notions of "control," since there now exist good studies on Nationalist (Nedostup 2001) and Communist period legislation (Potter 2003). In order to define long-term, quintessentially Chinese, and contextual inputs in forms of state control, it would also be enlightening to compare these with colonial management of Chinese Religion, such as Japanese colonial policies in Taiwan (Tsu 1998, Ts'ai Chin-t'ang 1994; for a discussion of how these policies must be seen as both colonial and shaped by Taiwanese elites, see Chang Lung-chih's paper in this panel) and British policies in Hong Kong, where they took steps toward controlling the temples inspired by the Nationalist moves (Lang and Ragvald 1993, 45-49), as well as the Singapore approach (Sinha 2005).

It should also be emphasized that, in some regards, regime changes did force dramatic changes in religious policies, such as the management of Christianity and Tibeto-Mongol Buddhism, which were under the Nationalist regime largely considered as questions of foreign or colonial policy, and were therefore subjected to distinct laws, and were brought into line with the management of other religions by the Communists (on the policies towards Tibeto-Mongol Buddhism, see Jagou 2004).

One aspect of official religious policies where continuity has been singled out is the repression of "heterodox"/"rebellious" groups. David Ownby's (2001) remarkable analysis points out that, in spite of sharp ideological differences, communist cadres prosecuting sectarian groups in the 1950s had similar ways of representing and (mis)understanding these groups as imperial officials had (notably, by focusing on the groups' supposed political project, and overlooking their actual focus on implementing mainstream morality). The contemporary fashion for late imperial styles of governance, not seen as "feudal" or "backward" anymore, certainly helps the development of the continuity paradigm as contemporary local officials are not afraid of comparing with their Qing predecessors. Yet, these continuities, even when evidenced with primary material, are not so easily explained: are they caused by larger continuities in the training and worldview of the state's administrative personnel? Or by even larger continuities in Chinese ideas of the state and the social order?

In any case, continuity arguments fruitfully draw attention to the shortcomings of using late imperial/Republican/Communist divides too narrowly. Research conducted on transitional periods that straddle the successive regimes show that changes in the relationships between state and religion can not be accounted for uniquely by political regimes and must be explained by deeper social changes. For instance, some of the themes and rhetoric of the anti-superstition campaign and "built schools with temple property," *miaochan xingxue* 廟產興學, that were to characterize the Republican period were actually articulated during the latest decade of the Empire (Goossaert forthcoming). Similarly, continuities between the Nationalist and Communist regimes in terms of religious policies,

and differences between long-term and short-term factors in state-religion relationships deserve to be emphasized (see e.g. Weller 2004 on a comparison of the corporatist approach of the Taiwanese and Chinese states, tightly controlling national institutions but letting some leeway for low-profile local activities).

C. The repression and resistance paradigm. This paradigm tends to analyze interactions between state and religion as moved by the sole agency of the state acting predatorily towards religious institutions for a host of reasons. The most important of these reasons, which are often combined, are anti-religious ideology, ambitions to seize the social, economic, and political resources possessed by religious institutions, and the destruction of all sources of local power and cultural/political autonomy in towns and in the countryside. The reaction of religious institutions is understood as resistance in the largest sense, which encompasses rhetorical subversion, apparent compliance hiding defiance, legal action, and even acts of armed resistance. In this perspective, the relationships between state and religion are analyzed as linking an active, modern nation-state with the traditional structures of society, or the national with the local.

A theoretical appraisal of the nature and extent of modern Chinese religious repression, when compared to other contexts (such as the USSR, Mexico, or Turkey), remains to be done. Yang (2004) has attempted to bring more theoretical sophistication to the study of contemporary fights between local communities and state outfits for the control of temples, but also graves, as concerned not only with material and symbolic resources, but more generally with space, arguing that the state tends to produce homogeneous, productive space (factories, museums…) whereas local communities turn them (when they can) into idiosyncratic, local productions (temples).

In any case, attention to the repression and resistance paradigm has produced many excellent researches that have the high merit of shedding light on the crude violence of many aspects of the state-religion relationships. Both rhetorical and physical violence were already important during the earliest stages of the process during the late Qing, when the destruction of temples was initiated, notably through the "Build schools with temple property," also called "Destroy temples to build schools," *huimiao banxue* 毀廟辦學 movement (Makita 1984), initiated by the 1898 reform and that began in earnest in 1901 only to grow continuously through the 1930s. The destruction of temples continue to influence the politics of religion to this day, with temple communities throughout China claiming the return of their buildings still used by schools and other state outfits. However, few studies so far have focused on the details and particulars of temple destruction and iconoclasm (see Nedostup 2001, focused on Jiangsu), and reliable quantified data are very scarce, which make it difficult to assess the geographical and time variations and scope of the destruction process.

Beside the violence of temple appropriation and/or destruction, research has been conducted on temple festivals and the ways the Republican state encroached on them. Yet, while one author, Flath (2004), focuses on the predatory attitude of the state endeavoring to appropriate the economic and political resources of temple festivals, the success of

which basically differed according to the effective might of the local state, another, Poon (2001, 2004) takes an approach more focused on symbolical issues and on resistance. While nobody doubts the violence of the Nationalist rhetoric and its application in some hotbeds of revolutionary activism such as Guangzhou, opinions on its actual effects in the countryside vary widely from irrelevance to widespread disruption. In my opinion, the situation on the field was so varied that Nationalist policies did manage to disrupt to a large extent traditional religion in some places while it made very little impact in others.

Whatever the extent of the 1927-1949 changes, it is widely recognized that the most violent episodes of religious repression in modern China took place during the Maoist period. Yet, the history of religious oppression and resistance during the Maoist period had just now begun to be explored in detail, the only classical reference being Welch (1972), which focused on institutional religion and, by necessity, was based on press reports. Recently, this history has been brought to new levels by the superb ethnography of Hebei village ritual life by Stephen Jones (1999, 2004). Contrary to the idea that the Maoist period was one of uninterrupted repression of all forms of popular culture and religious life, Jones outlines its complex history from a village perspective. The local politics of religion was first dominated by the anti-sectarian campaigns of the 1950-1953 period, now documented by excellent research, based on local archival material, against the Yiguandao (DuBois 2005) and other local sectarian groups which engaged in rebellion (Ownby 2001, Shao Yong 1997). Other religious traditions fared differently according to their distance from sectarian practices. On the other hand, peace and relative economic security during the early 1950s and again in 1961-1964 brought a real renewal in village religious and ritual life. The real repression on family and community religion applied during the Great Leap Forward and the early phase of the Cultural Revolution, a time span short enough, in some cases, not to have badly disrupted the transmission of ritual knowledge. Indeed, for those traditions that were not actively repressed during the 1961-1964 period, elderly masters had enough time to successfully train young disciples who were able to become active and train in turn disciples of their own after the late 1970s.

Faced with repression, religious specialists and communities have resorted to a large array of resistance techniques. The most violent kinds of resistance, such as armed rebellions, are usually analyzed as cases of desperate last-ditch defense of local traditions crushed by a mighty state (Mitani 1978). It is quite remarkable that very few kinds of articulate, political resistance based on religious ideas and organizations are documented through the modern period; Murray Rubinstein (2003) has noted that the only such case in post-war Taiwan was a Christian group, the Presbyterian Church. More generally, Robert Weller (2004) argues that neither traditional local cult networks, nor modern, national congregations can or want to provoke political change on their own (notably because of the conservative orientation of local lay leaders), but that both (and particularly the former) provide the kind of social space isolated from state control that facilitate political change.

However, among the theoreticians of violence and resistance, several anthropologists have drawn attention to the ways in which religious communities faced with oppression, rather than revolting or organizing a political opposition, resorted to less spectacular but

more efficient, passive resistance in maintaining narratives and discourses of local history and identity stubbornly different from those of the state (Feuchtwang 2000); this ties up with now well-established studies worldwide of peasant modes of resistance (the "weapons of the weak"). Many scholars agree that resistance to state religious policies overlap very much with the defense of local identities and memories threatened by homogenizing state projects (e.g. Jing Jun 1996). Some scholars have emphasized the success of such resistance by stressing that through manipulating the apparent and implied meanings of their religious practices, local communities were often able to resist state attempts at ideological control (Weller 1987, 1994; Poon 2004; Anagnost 1994). Adepts of the continuity paradigms should note that scholars of late imperial history (most recently Guo 2003) have conducted analyses of similar "disguises," "superscription," and other forms of accommodation whereby local celebrations continued basically unchanged under the name of officially sponsored orthodox ritual reform.

A related problem in studying resistance is just how "religious" was the widespread resistance towards state-building in modern China. This problem has been raised in contexts other than China, such as 1920s Mexico where revolutionary state-building met with peasant armed revolt (the Cristeros) understood by some as a Christian spiritual movement and by others as a peasant economic self-defense reaction that was merely organized, by lack of any other available cultural resource, within a religious infrastructure (in the Marxist sense) (Butler 2002). Very similar issues characterize scholarship on modern Chinese peasant revolts, beginning with the Boxers (Cohen 1997) and continuing with the small-scale but numerous revolts against Japanese occupation in Taiwan (Katz 2005) and the New Policies on the Mainland. The latter have been well described by Prazniak (1999, see also Wang Shuhuai 1977) who amply document the centrality of religion (temple seizures as the triggering event, and temple networks and leadership as the core of the revolt) in these events but refrains from using religion as a factor explaining the revolt itself. Later religiously-inspired revolts through the 1940s and 1950s (Ownby 2001 provides examples) are less documented but seem to have been more numerous than usually thought. A history of modern violent religious resistance to the state might help to better understand contemporary events such as the Falungong crackdown.

In brief, the repression and resistance paradigm is of obvious relevance and usefulness to the understanding of the violent relationships between state and religion. Yet, as it usually describes religious resistance as either passive or outright rebellious, it tends to treat traditional village religion as unchanging in the face of political modernization, and to underestimate the adaptation of religious traditions. Rather than, or beside resisting state-imposed change, a large part of the Chinese religious world has been reinventing itself, and some parts did well, or at any rate much better than others, through the twentieth-century repressions. Moreover, the situation in the 1990s and 2000s in Mainland China is more often one of toleration than outright repression, even though this may change at very short notice, but this toleration itself would need to be defined and analyzed: it is a conscious policy, or is it due to neglect, lack of interest, or fear of counter-effects, or inability to repress effectively (Bruun 1996, 61-65)? In some cases, it can be analyzed as a negotiation

(Feuchtwang 2000:173-74, Chau 2005a). This should invite us to focus not only at cases of outright confrontations but also to look closely at the many types of negotiations taking shape between state officials and religious leaders or groups. Conceivably, in the long run, negotiation between state and religious groups can be considered the norm, and repression/resistance, as the exception caused by instances of failure or impossibility of negotiation. This negotiation-repression approach is the paradigm that now influences most deeply my own on-going work.

D. The dichotomy paradigm. This paradigm analyses the state-religion relationships in terms of various dichotomies, most important of which are orthodox/heterodox, religion/superstition, elite/popular, institutional/diffused, and pure/syncretic. Although all of these pairs have their own history and semantic fields, they are related and quite often considered to be interchangeable. In all of them, the first term relates to what the state approves or at least tolerates, and the second to what it disapproves and seeks, more or less actively, to suppress. Upholders of this paradigm normally consider that such dichotomies are inherent to the Chinese religious scene, and that the state's endeavor is to basically enforce a preexisting distinction. Yet, the major problem with this paradigm is that it actually mixes or equate terms of purely scholarly invention (diffuse/institutional, elite/popular), terms that were imported but indigenized (*zongjiao*/*mixin*), and terms of traditional use (orthodox/heterodox), which all fluctuate between discursive and normative status. It is therefore not intellectually coherent, but is nonetheless of common use in scholarly writings.

The major advantage of this paradigm is that it has the potential to bring coherence to state religious policies as a whole even though they may be expressed differently when applied to various religions. In other words, it offers a unified theory of state religious policies. Indeed, the Chinese state, to the extent that diplomatic concerns do not interfere, does not have distinct Buddhist, Taoist, Muslim, and Christian policies but has a theoretical stand expressed through the above dichotomies that can apply to all of these particular religions.

Most importantly, Duara (1988, 1991, 1995) and Nedostup (2001) have shown that the major characteristic of the change in religious policies between the late imperial and Republican eras was a shift from an orthodox/heterodox paradigm to a religion/superstition paradigm. With a few marginal exceptions, Republican leaders were not anti-religious (as said above, many of them being Christians, along with lesser numbers of Buddhists and Muslims) but condoned religion while unleashing fierce anti-superstition campaigns. The brunt of these campaigns was on those traditions and practices that were previously considered orthodox but now found themselves on the wrong side of the new dichotomy. The return in the PRC of a discourse of heterodoxy, notably in the wake of the Falungong repression, may bring one to wonder whether official religious policies there are not tilting back to the old imperial paradigm.

In spite of such changes in the prevalent dichotomy in use, though, most authors agree that the Chinese state's opposition against "popular culture" and "popular religion"

(whatever the definitions for these two terms are) and by contrast to favored elite/institutionalized/clerical/text-based/orthodox traditions, is a long-term fixture of official policies—here this paradigm overlaps with the continuity paradigm. Culture and religion are indissociable here. Indeed, just as the same imperial laws dealt with both cults and opera, modern cultural policy regarding performing arts is indissolubly linked to religion and religious policies, and includes repression as well as attempts to transform and adapt such arts to Nationalist or Communist ends through folklorization and/or professionalization (Holm 1991, 2003). Such attempts in turn raise the question of museification as one of the strategies used by the state to emasculate "popular culture" (Yang 2004, Goossaert 2003b) and recycle temples as well as religious art in modern society. Indeed, in China as in other places (such as Revolutionary France), the birth of the notion of heritage, of inventories of ancient (usually religious) art and of museums are intimately linked to active suppression of such art and religion as living phenomena. Some studies have been conducted on the notions and practice of heritage in twentieth-century China (Zhang 2003, Fresnais 2001), but much remains to be done on the history of destruction/collection of traditional cultural and religious artifacts (including the sale of parts of it to Western and Japanese collectors).

One reason for such a situation where most of the state's effort are directed at the "popular/diffused/syncretic" side of the dichotomy is, as one of the most influential writings in the field, CK Yang's 1961 classic, argues, is that very early on (by the Song, according to the most common opinion) the Chinese state has managed to control rather effectively the "institutional" religions (Buddhism, Taoism) but not so the rest which, for that reason, has been the most active and potentially reactive component of Chinese religion. Yet, such an analysis suffers from a major flaw. Local cults, considered to be part of "diffused religion," do not feature national hierarchical church-like institutions, but are nonetheless, as both historical and anthropological research now abundantly document, impressively well organized with congregations, corporate resources, internal elections for leadership positions, and regional networks of alliances and cooperation. The label "diffuse," just like the label "heterodox," applied to non-clerical religion is purely arbitrary, or politically motivated.

This is not to deny that the dichotomies exist. They do, as polemical and political categories: nobody knows what they mean exactly, so that they can be manipulated by all (Nedostup 2001). The dichotomy categories are used by social actors themselves, including but not limited to the state, to legitimate oneself and delegitimate other groups or persons. Categories such as "popular/diffused/syncretic religion" on the one hand and "elite/institutional/pure religion" on the other have proved very useful to legitimate state repression of many practices and groups; for instance Ownby 2003 draws attention to the labels both late imperial and modern Chinese states have managed to impose on religious groups.

One of the clearest examples of the rhetoric and malleable nature of the dichotomy categories is provided by the case of some "sectarian" groups, notably the redemptive societies (such as Tongshan she 同善社, Daoyuan, Yiguandao, or Zaili jiao) which

represent themselves fully as "religions" (with a national organization, doctrines, a canon, and a modernist discourse) and claim to be recognized as such (that is, passing over the threshold in the dichotomy), which they achieved in some cases under the Nationalist and, especially, the collaborationist regimes (Duara 2003, 111-122). In this case, as well as in many others, being on one side or the other of the dichotomy was a matter of negotiation, not something intrinsic to the tradition under consideration.

The dichotomy paradigm, then, is most useful when one ceases to consider the dichotomy categories as having any real basis outside of religious policies. The state (and the scholars) reinvent and attempt to remodel the religious field by describing it in terms that are merely heuristic but that often manage to pass as ontological categories.

E. The renewal paradigm. This paradigm posits, explicitly or implicitly, that by the late Qing period the major religious traditions were in a state of decay and thorough dilution in local forms of religious practice (the wrong side of the dichotomy paradigm), and that a process of renewal ushered in by state policies and local elite and activists allowed them to become fully autonomous, and ready for engagement with processes of institutionalization in ways compatible with the secularization paradigm discussed above. For many authors, such a process was their inevitable destiny. The state policies that ushered in such processes of renewal were both active—the promotion of progressive leaders—and passive—by creating the conditions (including repression) under which radical change (for the best) was possible (see also Ketelaar 1990, about the Japanese case, on how persecution might be used by the persecuted to reinvent itself). Although histories following this paradigm do not necessarily take a benign view of state action in the religious field, they at least point out that the religious policies conducted by the Chinese state through the twentieth century were not entirely destructive, but worked to the advantage of certain religious leaders, groups, and ideas that were more or less aligned with the progressive project of the state.

This paradigm has led to a number of histories of Taoism and Buddhism based on their institutionalization, notably the national associations that came from the 1910s onwards to dominate the organization of the five recognized religion; particular attention has been paid to the Buddhist associations and their political role (C. Jones 1999, Günzel 1998, Laliberté 2004; see also Chen Bing and Deng Zimei 2000, an excellent history of modern Buddhism, which focuses on institutional construction and intellectual renewal). Such political histories, as well as the biographies of institutional leaders, are of course necessary and welcome, yet they should not avoid questioning assumptions taken for granted by the renewal discourse held by institutional leaders. For instance, Buddhist and Taoist leaders often consider that before the twentieth century, their religion was very poorly organized and therefore weak: efforts at institutionalization and modernization are therefore described as revivals in the face of decline (Welch 1968, Qing Xitai ed. 1995, Li Yangzheng 2000). They emphasize rightly that the national associations were a radically new phenomenon, and a kind of organization rather difficult for clerics to grapple with—the difficulties are still apparent today. But we should question what kind of "weakness" and

"decline" were late imperial Buddhism and Taoism in, and if institutionalization was not destructive of certain practices and ideas in the same time as it was a political road to survival and adaptation.

Behind the fights for leadership that rhythm the history of the national religious associations, the nature and problems of the whole process of institutionalization is best understood when looked at a local level, with cases of clerics declining to join, of rival associations, of difficult negotiations between these associations and local authorities, and indeed of uncertainties about who is qualified to join or not (see the fascinating case of Canton Taoists in Lai Chi-tim 2002). In this regard, more comparative perspectives on the history and problems of the long-term institutionalization processes of the five recognized religions—heretofore usually each studied in isolation—would certainly be illuminating, as would a critical approach of the religious national associations' discourse.

Furthermore, the institutionalization process was not limited to questions of national leadership and political representation but, more importantly, implied a reinvention of liturgical and disciplinary norms, of training and initiation procedure, of recruitment and admission. Only through fieldwork can such effects of state-induced institutionalization be fully evaluated. One particularly crucial case is that of training and education. Yang Der-ruey (2003) shows, in the case of the Taoist seminary in Shanghai, that the state imposed the replacement of traditional master-disciple internships by classroom teaching, producing a radical alienation of young Taoists from their tradition and vocation. However, this alienation is mitigated by the commodification of the local religious economy, as the young priests are not entirely dependant of the association after graduation, have to make a living through liturgical services to devotees, and thereby regain a sense of their vocation. This path-breaking study offers a radical critique of the renewal-cum-institutionalization paradigm that pervades the official discourse of the Taoist association. Yet, the issue of the institutionalization of the careers of religious specialists is even more complex. Certain religious specialists such as spirit-mediums or diviners, who unlike the Buddhists and Taoists are not organized as clergies (that is, with national ordination and training institutions and unified textual traditions and rules) take by themselves the initiative to build modern educational institutions like those of the Buddhist and Taoist associations. For instance, Taiwanese spirit-mediums organized a national association with training and licensing programs in order to gain state and social recognition (Paper 1996, Tsai Yi-jia 2002).

In brief, it is obvious that the institutionalization of the five recognized religions has been a major aspect of the state-religion relationships for a century, but its interpretations has often been partisan. Ideological interpretations of this paradigm accrue a positive value to these processes described as "renewal," which tend to make Buddhism and Taoism more like Western religions, a process also observed in other Asian countries and sometimes described as the "protestantisation" of Asian religions (Goldfuss 2001:10-22). These modernist, ethical, anti-ritualistic forms of reinvented religion are, according to the Weberian model (very influential among China specialists), the natural product of history.

It is in such a context that we should understand the size and eulogistic orientation of the scholarly literature devoted to the foremost Buddhist reformist leader Taixu (Pitman 2001).

However, more critical approaches perceive the negative side of such evolutions in terms of disappearing traditions and alienations among both clerics and laypersons. Indeed, an unfortunate consequence of research based on the renewal paradigm, taking at face value themes such as reformist Buddhist rejection of "funerary Buddhism," is that precisely these rituals rejected by reformists are not deemed (by some scholars) worthy of research any more. Yet, such topics as death rituals do repay research with rich insights in state-society and state-religion relationships, and indeed, an important element of the Nationalist and Communist policies was to reform marriages and funerals—a kind of state involvement in family life that was quite different from late imperial management of marriage and succession discussed in Lai Hui-min's paper in this panel. The history of these reforms that endeavored to dissociate life-cycle rituals from the recognized "religious" sphere also document state attempts at replacing religious specialists with cadres and inventing alternative secular rituals. The Nationalist funeral reforms are mentioned by several historians but have not yet been studied in detail; Chang Renchun (1997) provides fascinating first-hand material by documenting the ritual variety of high-profile funerals in Peking before 1949. For the communist period, Whyte (1988) documents the evolution of the funeral reform, notably the replacement of burial and family-centered mourning with cremation and work-unit-centered memorial meetings; as Chau (2005b) brilliantly argues, this amounted to the state's taking over the people's right to host their relatives and friends at life-cycle key rituals, and thereby their face and self-esteem along with their social prestige and sense of sovereignty. As Mayfair Yang (2004) noted, graves and temples are both, and in similar ways, at the center of tugs-of-war between the local state, local communities, and religious specialists.

Beside life-cycle rituals, body practices are another important part of Chinese religion that is left out of the moralistic, text-based, anti-ritualistic "renewal" vision. By leaving such practices outside of the field of "religion" altogether, scholars and social actors are in effect confirming state attempts to redefine and narrow the religious field to the five recognized religions and their doctrinal and devotional practices, and to incorporate other religious traditions into itself. Just as it has attempted to capture for itself life-cycle rituals by designing modern, civic marriages and death rituals, the state, far from letting individual spiritual techniques alone, has co-opted and nationalized them for a host of ideological projects, such as martial arts, which were at the same time stripped of their "religious" background and proclaimed "national arts," (*guoshu* 國術) or the so-called *qigong* techniques that were incorporated in a medical framework. It is only recently that scholars, notably David Palmer (2003a, 2003b, 2005a, forthcoming) and David Ownby (2003) have drawn attention to the ways in which the modern Chinese state has attempted to wrest technical knowledge and symbolical resources from independent spiritual masters.

4. Directions for future research

New perspectives that question or refine on the prevalent paradigms have recently begun to appear. Obviously, the most hotly debated topic is how modern and contemporary history might help understand and foresee current and future developments, for which there is both much hope and fear. To remain within historical concerns, though, I have identified at least three particularly promising directions for future research. The first such perspective is the local history of religious policies at village, city, or county level, and the way local religious groups and leaders have adapted to state-imposed paradigms (both in practice and in discourse) in order to survive or thrive. This perspective should explore how local representatives of the state mitigate between centrally defined religious policies and local realities, leading to the existence of not one but many actual religious policies conducted simultaneously in different places. Indeed, some of the most fascinating research (Ownby 2001, Nedostup 2001, Lai Chi-tim 2002, DuBois 2005) has been conducted not (or not only) on the basis of national laws and Peking- or Shanghai-based journals and political writings, but with local sources such as archives, private writings, records of local religious groups, and oral memory. This perspective, though, is really promising not at it might just add more evidence to existing paradigms, but as it can develop comparative research between different areas, both within China and with Chinese communities outside of the country. The present stark differences in religious policies between different provinces in the mainland should be better explained. Must also should be gained by looking at how Chinese religion adapted to purely colonial policies (in south-east Asia, notably) compared to the situation of internal colonialism, or self-colonialism (that is, the forceful adaptation of Western paradigms by Chinese political leaders) within the country.

A second perspective is provided by analyses of the impact of the state on local religious systems, focusing on the whole range of religious specialists, institutions, and practices in one given area, and the changes in their relative roles and official status during the modern era. This perspective takes full measure not only of the variation in local religious culture, but also in local state formations. Rather than being conceived as mere case studies of the global Chinese history of state-religion relationships, such local studies can demonstrate the extent of the repertoire available for managing state-religion relationships and the possibilities and constraints inherent to this repertoire.

Looking at how local state agents intervened in the cooperation, competitions, and conflicts on the religious scene opens up the fascinating realm of the unintended effects of state religious policies. One of these effects is the empowerment of certain specialists that either were less actively suppressed, or better resisted suppression (because they were less institutionalized and more difficult to target) than the official Buddhist and Taoist clergy and for this reason, tended to take over the socio-religious roles previously hold by the Buddhists and Taoists. Among the specialists who benefited feature diviners, spirit-mediums (Chau 2003), but also sectarian leaders (DuBois 2005), geomancers (Bruun 1996, 2003), or lay musicians (S. Jones 1999). In many cases these specialists fared better than clerics because they were natural local leaders who took over village cadre roles and could protect their tradition during the worst of the repression, and help it reconstitute during the

1980s. A related and vexed question is how the present religious scene and traditions can be considered as being in direct continuity with the premodern past (S. Jones 1999) or are largely (re)invented or "recycled" (Siu 1990a, b). In other words, we would like to know whether repressed traditions resisted in similar ways during the modern period as they had under the imperial regime, or if the global forces of capitalism are creating totally new conditions for the future of Chinese religion (Yang 2004, S. Jones 2004).

The last perspective I would like to mention is the effect of state policies on the material world of religion. This would include documenting much more systematically than heretofore the history of the destruction of the religious heritage (temples, texts, artifacts, images, ritual objects), and how such destruction, and subsequent construction of new material has affected ritual practice and representations. This would include looking at the economics of the production of religious material, and the role of discourses and practices of cultural heritage protection in both state policy at the national, regional, and local level, and in the economics of domestic and international tourism, as well as the production of representations of religious buildings and objects (books, magazines, documentaries, guidebooks, postcards) and their circulation, as a new type of iconography.

As the history of the direct, confrontational contacts between state and religion in modern China is beginning to be known with some clarity, the immense and barely charted realm of the unintended and indirect effects of their interaction opens before our eyes.

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