



“Religion in China Today: Resurgence and Challenge”

November 3, 2014 | Village West 15th Floor, Room A, UC San Diego

Over the past three decades, there has been a remarkable resurgence of religious belief and practice in China. This has taken many forms, from the revival and transformation of folk religion, the reinvigoration of Christianity, Buddhism and Islam, and even the creation of new religious movements. These developments present new challenges to the Chinese state and have led to global controversies over the government’s handling of these challenges. This conference will bring together distinguished Chinese and American scholars for a dialogue about the causes and political consequences of these developments.

This will be a full-day workshop comprised of three panels and one roundtable discussion. Each speaker will prepare 15-20 minute remarks on their chosen topic, will join the discussion after all the panelists finish presentations, and will field questions from the audience. Workshop audience include faculty, students and community members.

Agenda

Monday, November 3, 2014 | Village West 15th Floor, Room A, UC San Diego

- 8:00 - 8:15 am** Light Breakfast
- 8:15 - 8:20 am** Welcome Remarks by Richard Madsen, Director of Fudan-UC Center on Contemporary China
- 8:20 - 9:50 am** **I. Christianity in China: Developments and Tensions**
- Moderator: **Richard Madsen**, UC San Diego
- “The Catholic Church in Contemporary Shanghai”
Paul Mariani, Santa Clara University
- “Party-State - Protestant Church Relations in Contemporary China: A Public Transcript Perspective”
Carsten Vala, Loyola University of Maryland
- “Understanding Christianity in Contemporary China”
Edward Xu, Fudan University
- 9:50 - 10:05 am** Coffee Break
- 10:05 - 11:25 am** **II. Islam in Chinese Society**
- Moderator: **Hason Khali**, UC San Diego
- “Integrating Islam? Hui versus Uyghur in China’s Xinjiang Problem”
Dru Gladney, Pomona College
- “Individual Agency through Imagining Transnational Community: Converting to Islam in Modern China”
Alex Stewart, UC San Diego
- 11:25 - 12:45 pm** **III. New Development of Confucianism**
- Moderator: **Richard Madsen**, UC San Diego
- “The Confucian Moral Language in Contemporary Chinese Religious Life”
Anna Sun, Kenyon College
- “Confucianism and the Reconstruction of Chinese Identity”
Chen Na, IR/PS, UC San Diego and Fudan University



12:45 - 1:45 pm	Lunch
1:45 - 4:00 pm	IV. Multiple Topics on Religion in China Today Moderator: Edward Xu , Fudan University “Doctrinal Evolution and Organizational Control of the Falun Gong” James Tong , UCLA “Of Mothers and Goddesses: Religiosity and Women’s Agency in Wenzhou” Mayfair Yang , UC Santa Barbara “Religion and Rural-Urban Immigration - An Approach to the Study of Social Integration in China” Lizhu Fan , Fudan University “The Strategic Thinking on the Involvement of Religions in the Comprehensive Social Construction” Liu Jinguang , China State Administration for Religious Affairs
4:00 - 4:30 pm	Coffee Break
4:30 - 6:00 pm	Public Lecture: “Religion in Contemporary China: Challenge and Hope” Moderator: Richard Madsen , UC San Diego Speaker: Xinping Zhou , Director, Institute of World Religions, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
6:00 - 6:30 pm	Reception
7:00 pm	Dinner

Abstracts

I. Christianity in China: Developments and Tensions

“The Catholic Church in Contemporary Shanghai”
Paul Mariani, Santa Clara University

By the beginning of the reform-era in China the world was surprised to learn that the Catholic Church had not been wiped out during the Cultural Revolution. However, with increasing—albeit limited—religious freedom, what emerged were an “underground” church faithful to the Vatican and a “patriotic” church that had submitted to the state. As a case study, this article will focus on the four—sometimes competing—bishops of Shanghai: Joseph Fan Zhongliang, Aloysius Jin Luxian, Joseph Xing Wenxhi, and Thaddeus Ma Daqin. By doing so, it will illuminate the historically freighted, yet ever-evolving dynamics between the Chinese state and the Catholic Church in China.

“Party-State - Protestant Church Relations in Contemporary China: A Public Transcript Perspective”
Carsten Vala, Loyola University Maryland

Interactions between Protestant churches and the contemporary Chinese Communist Party-state reveal a range of relationships from official churches under Party-state and association oversight to unregistered house churches and, in a few major cities, a new phenomenon of large but unregistered “urban churches.” Despite operating apart from the authoritarian regime’s corporatist structures, few of these religious organizations with hundreds of participants have been suppressed. This raises questions about the Party-state mechanisms for managing state-society relations. Based on more than 15 months of fieldwork across China and interviews with leaders in official, unregistered, and urban churches, this paper argues that what has evolved is a public transcript of domination with considerable flexibility in implementation.



“Understanding Christianity in Contemporary China”

Edward Xu, Fudan University

For understanding Protestant Christianity in contemporary China, this presentation will talk about the following issues: Pre-1949 Social Status of Protestant Christianity in China; Marginalization of Protestant Christianity in today's China; New trends for the development of Protestant Christianity in China. In the coming years, the absolute number of Chinese Christians may continue to grow, but its ratio among the overall population is unlikely to increase substantially. Obviously, in a new historical context, the need for the Chinese Protestant Church to strengthen itself and improve the quality of its work in areas such as pastoral care, theological education, academic research, social service, the construction of civil society and foreign exchanges, etc., is needed now more than ever.

II. Islam in Chinese Society

“Integrating Islam? Hui versus Uyghur in China's Xinjiang Problem “

Dru C. Gladney, Pomona University

This talk examines China's important and changing relationship with its Muslim minorities, especially with regard to the recent tumultuous events in Xinjiang following a year of violence throughout China related to the Uyghur. How will these events affect China's policy toward ethnicity and nationality? How will China's own 21 million Muslims be affected by these changing policies? This talk also examines the role of global social media and Western scholarship in shaping and interpreting the “Uyghur problem” in China. Some have suggested that China has already experienced a “twitter revolution” in Xinjiang as early as 2009. The July 5, 2009 riots in Urumqi were attributed by the Chinese state to “outside forces,” yet very few of the issues raised by the protestors invoked demands extending beyond China's borders. While the state media attributed the Uyghur protests to radical Islam and separatism, none of the protestors called for jihad or an independent “Eastern Turkestan.” Are the on-going problems in Xinjiang an “Islam” problem or a “Uyghur” problem?

“Individual Agency through Imagining Transnational Community: Converting to Islam in Modern China”

Alex Stewart, UC San Diego

This study examines subjective, social, and transnational aspects of conversion to Islam in modern China by examining the “conversion careers” (Gooren 2007) described by several “new Muslims” who reside in and around Xining, Qinghai Province. Examining their experiences from pre-conversion context, to initial encounters with Islam, to study of the faith, to conversion, and expressions of their new Muslim identity reveals the complex interaction between sociocultural circumstances and individual agency. Rather than gradually succumbing to Islamic orthodoxy and local religious authorities, converts autonomously study Islamic texts, form a variety of interpretations, and express their newfound belief in a variety of ways that often conflict with social expectations, local Islamic norms, and moral authority of the Chinese state. Converts draw confidence to pursue these conversion careers through belief in the universality of their faith and through imagining themselves as part of a transnational community that shares their interpretations of Islam.

III. New Development of Confucianism

“The Confucian Moral Language in Contemporary Chinese Religious Life”

Anna Sun, Kenyon College

The revival of traditional moral discourse is one of the most salient features of the current revival of religious life in China. I suggest that the Confucian moral language, especially concerning values such as filial piety (xiao), trust (xin), loyalty (zhong), and benevolence (ren), have been diffused into the moral language of Buddhism and Daoism and popular religions in contemporary China. In the ecological system of Chinese religious life, moral discourses are shared resources, with Confucianism as one of the deepest reservoirs of moral and ethical teaching.

“Confucianism and the Reconstruction of Chinese Identity”

Chen Na, IR/PS, UC San Diego and Fudan University

This study explores the historical relationship between Confucianism and Chinese identity in the twentieth-century China;



in particular, this study examines how Confucianism has revived since the post-Mao reform and what role Confucianism has played in the reconstruction of Chinese identity. This presentation will address, first, with all the denunciation of Confucianism over the decades, the tradition has never really died. Although Confucianism suffered many times of death sentence from the political authorities and some intellectual elites, tradition (in its revised versions) remained alive in everyday life at the grassroots level. Second, the revival of Confucianism is by no means a simplistic restoration of tradition. And third, based on our analysis, we can predict a trajectory of further revival of traditional heritage in the sociocultural development of China. In the final analysis, even when China has materialized the dream of “Science and Democracy”, what makes the Chinese Chinese would remain China’s cultural heritage with Confucianism as a characteristically dominant element.

IV. Multiple Topics on Religion in China Today

“Doctrinal Evolution and Organizational Control of the Falun Gong”

James Tong, UCLA

This article analyses the doctrinal development and organizational control of the Falungong, as it grew from a regional healing and body-training program into a global religious congregation in the past two decades despite ruthless suppression inside China. Along the way, it shifts its core mission from a qigong organization practicing breathing exercise to a religious community searching for moral cultivation and spiritual salvation. Li Hongzhi, its founder, anointed himself as the Reverend Master, canonized his writings as sacred scripture, conferred himself and his disciples a messianic mission to save the universe, and counting Sakamuni and Jesus Christ among his followers.

Schism has been prevented by a stringent set of doctrinal and organizational controls, and an autocratic management structure. No individual or institution shares Li Hongzhi’s authority. Its management bodies, top associates and local leaders remain anonymous. Only the official website (Minghui.org) is authorized to issue Li’s speeches and instructions, which are prohibited from being recorded and disseminated without permission. His associates and disciples are forbidden to explain or interpret his teachings. References to his works must be verbatim, and in quotation marks. Thus far, there has been no significant dissent in the history of the Falungong.

“Of Mothers and Goddesses: Religiosity and Women’s Agency in Wenzhou”

Mayfair Yang, UC Santa Barbara

In the post-Mao era, while Wenzhou has been thrust into rapid industrialization, urbanization, and globalization, at the same time, it has also revitalized its traditional culture and religious traditions. Despite the new conditions of Wenzhou women’s culture brought on by the Economic Reforms, such as birth control, nuclear families, improved women’s education, and women’s participation in managing family enterprises, there continues to be a conservative streak in Wenzhou gender culture. This paper will address the issue to how to understand Wenzhou women’s agency in the public spaces dominated by men. Saba Mahmood, writing about the women’s Islamic piety movement in contemporary Egypt, has criticized the narrow definition of women’s agency put forth by liberal Western feminism. She suggests that women’s agency cannot be understood or defined in terms of oppositionality, critical discourse, or rebellious acts, but must also take into account the modesty, self-effacement, and self-sacrificing ethos of pious women. This paper will examine the importance of religiosity on women’s agency in rural and small-town Wenzhou. Since Mahmood does not pay sufficient attention to the social effects of pious women’s agency, this paper will also address the social impact of women’s religious agency in bringing about subtle changes in Wenzhou society. We will focus on Wenzhou women’s relationship with two primary goddesses worshipped in the local area: Goddess Chen the Fourteenth 陳十四娘娘 and Bodhisattva Guan Yin 觀音菩薩, and their participation in popular religion and Buddhism.

“Religion and Rural-Urban Immigration - An Approach to Study Assimilation in China”

Lizhu Fan, Fudan University

China’s rural-urban immigration over the last thirty years has received much attention from the academia in recent years. Numerous empirical studies of new immigrants have dealt with the topic of assimilation or social inclusion in various aspects - economic, cultural, social and psychological. This research will focus on the issue of religion and spiritual life among the immigrants in China. We will first describe the widely spread religious phenomena among



rural-urban immigrants in various cities, and try to address the following issues: First, what make religious belief, practice, organizations and values meaningful to those people whose primary goals in the urban were material oriented? Second, within the same religious group, does religion play the role of assimilation or segmentation between the new immigrants and the urban citizens? Third, which religious beliefs and practices will be strengthened or weakened in the process of rural-urban migration - comparisons between the institutional religions (5 official recognized religions) and diffused religions (Chinese traditional beliefs, include ancestor worship, community rituals and temple festivals)? And finally, is there any chance for religious innovation among the rural-urban immigrants with new life experience?

“The Strategic Thinking on the Involvement of Religions in the Comprehensive Social Construction”

Liu Jinguang, Deputy Principal of the Politics and Law, China State Administration for Religious Affairs

18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposed the national development strategy: The full implementation of the economic construction, political construction, cultural construction, social construction and ecological construction as comprehensive construction. This article takes the perspective of cultural strategy to discuss the involvement of religions in the comprehensive construction: how religious cohesion of wisdom and cultural power to make contribution to China’s further development.

Conference Participants

(in alphabetical order)

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