

migrant construction work becomes untenable. Even the local labour brokers abandon the villagers, as they seek new sources of labour in other villages that still have land.

Chuang develops a highly convincing thesis about the centrality of land to the household economies in both villages. While some of her analysis is particular to the construction sector, much of what she describes is common to the lives of many of China's 260 million rural households, most of which depend on both migrant labour and farming. She writes well, and the moving stories she tells about individuals draw in the reader like a good novel.

Chuang's book is a major contribution to the literature on migrant labour and agrarian change in China. It should be read widely by people in the fields of contemporary China and East Asia studies, development studies, labour studies, and agrarian studies. It is accessible to undergraduates and could be used in a variety of graduate and undergraduate courses in these fields. It will also appeal to a wider audience because it is well written, deals with a critically important topic, develops an intelligent analytical narrative, and tells compelling personal stories.

JOEL ANDREAS

*Johns Hopkins University*

***Buddhism after Mao: Negotiations, Continuities, and Reinventions.*** Edited by Ji Zhe, Gareth Fischer, and André Laliberté. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019. Pp. vii + 355. \$72.00.

There has been a rapid and extensive revival of all forms of religion in China in the decades after the Cultural Revolution. Challenging standard social scientific theories about the inevitability of secularization and raising many important policy questions, this development deserves much more academic attention. So far, in the West, there has been some good research on Chinese Christianity, but not much on Buddhism, which has more adherents than Christianity and overall more influence on Chinese society than Christianity. This book, a collection of essays by some of the best social scientists in the world (but none from Mainland China) working on Chinese Buddhism, is an important first step in addressing the gap.

The book is almost exclusively concerned with Han Chinese, Mahayana Buddhism. There is nothing on Tibetan Buddhism or the Theravada Buddhism of some ethnic minorities in southwestern China. The chapters are based on a combination of documentary analysis and on-the-ground fieldwork, mostly among institutional leaders rather than ordinary laity. The book points toward important agendas for further research.

As the subtitle indicates, the eleven chapters are grouped in three sections: Negotiating Legitimacy, Revival and Continuity, and Reinventing the Dharma. The four essays in the first section on negotiating legitimacy focus on the relationship between the Chinese state and re-emerging Buddhist institutions. It is a complicated “politics of incorporation,” as André Laliberté puts it in his essay. Each side is trying to gain legitimacy while protecting itself from threats to that legitimacy. The Communist state is committed to an atheist ideology but also eager, somewhat contradictorily, to present itself as the heir of China’s great cultural traditions, of which Chinese Buddhism is an important part. Buddhist leaders, for their part, want to make the accommodations necessary to revive their institutions but must be wary of having their religious integrity compromised.

The government wants to use Buddhism as an “intangible cultural heritage” that will draw tourism to famous sites like Putuoshan 普陀山 or stimulate philanthropy that could alleviate some social problems or perhaps facilitate international cultural exchanges useful for government propaganda. Buddhists, on the other hand, want to carry out genuine pilgrimages to sacred sites like Putuoshan, to exercise meritorious compassion in charitable activities, and to participate as active subjects in a global sangha. Meanwhile, as Claire Vidal shows for the Guanyin-devoted island of Putuoshan, local governments and local Buddhist leaders pursue agendas that are not completely congruent with those of the central government and the central Buddhist Association of China. Through a case study of a well-known Buddhist charity foundation in Beijing affiliated with the energetic, charismatic monk, Xuecheng 學誠 (since removed from his post because of a sexual harassment allegation), she shows how Xuecheng has pursued a “complex mix of strategic and spiritual purposes” (p. 78) evoking the “Lei Feng 雷鋒 spirit” as well as the bodhisattva spirit. To round out the first section of this book, Brian Nichols provides a useful typology of temples across a spectrum from “tourist temples” to “places of practice.” The former do not have monks or prayer and are money-making attractions for tourist curiosity. The latter have monks and prayer but not tourists. The most interesting are hybrid sites in the middle, which welcome tourists and the income that comes with them but manage to use their resources to carry out genuine monastic practice.

The second section of the book is about revival and continuity of the monastic tradition. After a generation of disruption during the Maoist regime, how are monastic leaders to be chosen and how is a new generation of monks and nuns to be educated and ordained? Using a rich array of historical materials as well as contemporary information, the essay by Daniela Campo discusses the reconstruction of the Chan 禪 and Tiantai 天台 Dharma lineages. In the past, such lineages would have been

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<sup>1</sup> The Jenkhentsisum is an acronym formed from the titles of its three leaders: Gyalo Thondup, Tsipön Shakabpa, and Khenjung Lobsang Gyentsen, literally: *jen* (elder brother), *khen* (khenjung), *tsi* (tsipön) and *sum* (the number 3).

carried forward in an institutionalized process: monks would be trained in prominent Chan or Tiantai monasteries and future leaders would be chosen by the abbot as his Dharma heirs. Now Dharma transmission is private, an affiliation not with a particular monastery but with the legacy of prominent Chan or Tiantai masters from the Republican era, carried out through various ritual practices and creating networks of Dharma heirs who (sometimes fraudulently) take up prominent positions in Buddhist establishments, not only in Mainland China but in Hong Kong and the United States.

Besides reconstructing Dharma lineages, monastic communities have to ordain new monks and nuns. Ester Bianchi's essay discusses how ordination rituals are adapted and standardized in order to "transmit the precepts in accordance with the Dharma." This involves drawing on forms from the ancient Vinaya but unifying and standardizing them in accordance with modern international standards that, for example, call for the ordination of women. Besides representing an effort by the sangha to guarantee its orthodox purity and strength, the process also involves intervention by the state to control monastic communities by controlling the process of admission. But the process of defining ordination procedures is still a work in progress.

Buddhism renews itself not only by ordaining monks but by educating them along with lay practitioners. A modern institution developed by the reformist monk Taixu 太虛 in the early twentieth century is the Buddhist academy, which combines a systematic study of Buddhist philosophy with "secular" subjects like national history and literature. These academies are the predominant form of Buddhist education today although their nature and function has changed from the earlier models envisioned by reformers like Taixu. According to the chapter by Ji Zhe, a key tension is between "study and practice" (pp. 195–99). Traditionally, monks developed doctrinal knowledge and cultivated religious practice in an integrated manner through the personal guidance of monastic leaders. But now intellectual learning—in a bureaucratically structured educational institution certified by the state—is separated from religious practice, with resultant tensions.

In the case of the Buddhist academies, the tensions lead to unified and centralized control of their educational programmes by the national Buddhist Association of China. But as the chapter by Ashiwa Yoshiko and David Wank demonstrates, there are local cultural adaptations for the development of Buddhist religious practitioners. Their chapter concerns the "lay nuns" of Minnan 閩南—Fujian Province. These are celibate women who do not shave their heads or wear Buddhist robes but live in community and devote themselves to prayer and meditation while compassionately helping others in the spirit of Guanyin. These lay nuns are part of a long local tradition. Their historical origins "are fused into layers of the cultural foundation of the Minnan region" (p. 239). Although their position within Buddhism is ambiguous, they have, throughout the twentieth century, developed their own sites for religious

practice and methods of cultivation, and they have recently been given institutional recognition by the state as “religious professionals.” The authors argue that this represents the “Buddhization of local culture and the sinicization of Buddhism as Chinese culture” (p. 243).

The final section is on “Reinventing the Dharma”—adapting Buddhism to modern circumstances. Weishan Huang’s case study of the redevelopment of the ancient (founded in 247 C.E.) Jing’an Temple 靜安寺 in Shanghai shows how an enterprising abbot can frame the temple as a contribution to “culture” rather than religion and work with local officials and business leaders to make the temple a vital part of one of Shanghai’s most dynamic commercial districts. But the tensions between religion, culture, and commerce are never fully reconciled.

Huang emphasizes the agency of temple’s shrewd abbot, but in the next essay Gareth Fisher emphasizes the creativity of laypeople. His comparative analysis of three different temples shows a range of lay self-organized creativity within the relatively free space of temples. Many different religious agendas are being followed in many different modalities. “Much like the Beijing government’s designated zones of protest during the 2008 Olympics,” such temples “create room for religious diversity but also keep it contained” (p. 288).

A new form of space for religious experimentation is cyberspace, explored in the final essay by Stefania Travagnin. The Internet has enabled many new ways to conduct on-line rituals and to participate in common prayer and religious study. There are subtle debates within the Buddhist community about the authenticity of such online compared with traditional practices. But the religious creativity afforded by the Internet is, like all things in China, constrained by state surveillance and control.

The book has an excellent introduction, co-authored by the three editors. While providing a useful overview of the chapters and discussing extant theoretical frameworks for the study of Chinese religion, the introduction stresses the diversity of Buddhist adaptations to a changing social ecology.

The value of this vision of diversity of religious response to a diversity of social forces is less in the questions it resolves than in the new questions it opens.

One further line of research would simply be to update the book. Most of the essays are based on research done before 2015, when Xi Jinping launched his campaign to “sinicize” Chinese religions, an effort meant to subject religions to a tighter form of state control. As one Chinese scholar told me, in its current official usage, *Zhongguohua* 中國化 (sinicization) really means *tinghua* 聽話 (obedience). How is the new push toward control affecting some of the Buddhist institutional arrangements described in this book?

Another line of research would move beyond the formal Buddhist institutions studied here to changes in the religious consciousness of ordinary people. Gareth Fisher’s essay begins to do this but it whets the appetite for more. Some of the most

dynamic Buddhist movements in China are from laypeople seeking meaning and community often through readings and videos produced by international monks like the Australia-based Jingkong 淨空, over the disapproval of much of the Buddhist establishment. Then there are other movements of Buddhist piety mixed with parts of Daoist and folk traditions—such as Falungong 法輪功 and other “sectarian” groups. Such movements may be harbingers of subterranean changes in cultural consciousness whose development may proceed at a different pace from political and economic developments. Can we find methods to study these changes, which could be extremely consequential in the long run?

Finally, this all points to a need for more comparative research. How do the developments of Buddhism in Mainland China compare with those in other parts of the modern world, particularly Taiwan, where there has been a spectacular resurgence of “humanistic Buddhism” during Taiwan’s transition to democracy? One could also compare the development of Buddhism with that of other religions in China, including Daoism, Christianity, Islam, and, for that matter, Tibetan Buddhism. Such comparisons could better place Chinese Buddhism within other elements of China’s religious ecology and show how all are shaped by China’s particular political economy.

Such comparative research might eventually yield insights toward more general theories of religious development and decline within a “secular age.” For example, the tension between study and practice in Buddhist education discussed by Ji Zhe is a tension common to many forms of religious education in the modern world. One sees it in controversies within worldwide Christian communities about academic training in seminary education and Muslim communities in training within Islamic universities. Another example is the hoary distinction between church and sect, the church in Troeltsch’s classic formulation being an inclusive institution (often allied with the state) encompassing a wide variety of people with different levels of belief and moral commitment and the sect being an exclusive group (often in conflict with social and political establishments) chosen by people who all have the same belief. This distinction helps make sense of the diversity found within Buddhist temples as described by Gareth Fisher and the homogeneity found in some lay sectarian groups. And the relative balance between church and sect forms might help explain different patterns of development among Chinese Christians or Muslims.

What is needed besides particular case studies are holistic frameworks that can integrate many such studies and open the way for larger comparative research. But, first, we need the particular case studies that show religious forms in all their blooming buzzing confusion. This book gives us such studies and we can hope that more will be forthcoming.

RICHARD MADSEN  
*University of California, San Diego*