

Religious Revival in Ethnic Areas of China

25 - 26 AUGUST 2011



Religious Revival in Ethnic Areas of China (25-26 Aug 2011)

*organised by Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore
at the ARI Seminar Room, Tower Block, Level 10, Bukit Timah Road*

25 AUGUST 2011 (THURSDAY)	
	REGISTRATION
09:00 – 09:15	OPENING REMARKS
	MICHAEL FEENER Cluster Leader, Religion and Globalisation in Asian Contexts Asia Research Institute and Department of History, NUS
09:15 – 10:30	KEYNOTE ADDRESS 1
<i>Chairperson</i>	TAN SOR HOON , Asia Research Institute and Dept of Philosophy, NUS
<i>09:15</i>	Another “Dual Structure” in Contemporary Chinese Society MA RONG , Peking University, China
<i>10:00</i>	Questions & Answers
10:30 – 11:00	MORNING TEA BREAK
11:00 – 12:30	PANEL 1 – (RE-)LOCALISATION AND DE-ETHNICISATION
<i>Chairperson</i>	MICHAEL FEENER , Asia Research Institute and Dept of History, NUS
<i>11:00</i>	“Islamic Revival” in South Fujian: Through Lens of “Relocalization” FAN KE , Nanjing University, China
<i>11:30</i>	Religious Revival and De-Ethnicisation in the Ethnic Minority Regions of China FRANCIS LIM , Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
<i>12:00</i>	Questions & Answers
12:30 – 13:30	LUNCH
13:30 – 15:00	PANEL 2 – GREAT AND LITTLE TRADITIONS
<i>Chairperson</i>	SHAN WEI , East Asia Institute, NUS
<i>13:30</i>	Religious Revival in Tibet, China since the early 1980s CHEN BO , Sichuan University, China
<i>14:00</i>	Married Lamas, Vanished Emperors, and Deserted Temples: Rebuilding the Puning Temple in Cheng De, North China ZHANG YAHUI , Minzu University of China
<i>14:30</i>	Questions & Answers
15:00 – 15:30	AFTERNOON TEA BREAK
15:30 – 17:30	PANEL 3 – THE GLOBAL AND THE MODERN
<i>Chairperson</i>	JULIUS BAUTISTA , Asia Research Institute and South East Asian Studies Programme, NUS
<i>15:30</i>	Transnational Sacralizations: When Daoist Monks meet Global Spiritual Tourists DAVID PALMER , The University of Hong Kong
<i>16:00</i>	Multiple Modernity, Social Risk, and the Predicament of Folk Religion: Case Studies from the Dailue Ethnic Society in Southwest China SHEN HAIMEI , Yunnan University, China
<i>16:30</i>	Mapping Li(a)ngshan – The Changing Implications of Yi (Nuosu) Bimo Culture OLIVIA KRAEF , Free University of Berlin, Germany
<i>17:00</i>	Questions & Answers
17:30	BUS TRANSFER TO DINNER VENUE
18:00 – 19:30	WORKSHOP DINNER
19:30	END OF DAY 1

Religious Revival in Ethnic Areas of China (25-26 Aug 2011)

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25 AUGUST 2011 (FRIDAY)	
09:00 – 09:15	REGISTRATION
09:15 – 10:00	KEYNOTE ADDRESS 2
<i>Chairperson</i>	XIANG BIAO , Asia Research Institute, NUS and University of Oxford, UK
<i>09:00</i>	Organizing For Allah, Benefitting Muslim Women: Religion, Gender and Innovation in Central China's Hui Muslim Contexts MARIA JASCHOK , University of Oxford, UK
<i>10:00</i>	Questions & Answers
10:30 – 11:00	TEA BREAK
11:00 – 13:00	PANEL 4 – STATE AND THE POLITICS OF DIGNITY
<i>Chairperson</i>	ZHAO LITAO , East Asia Institute, NUS
<i>11:00</i>	The State's Presence in the Religious Revival in the Liangshan Yi Ethnic Area PAN JIAO , Minzu University of China
<i>11:30</i>	Urbanisation of the Material and the War of Gods ZHU XIAOYANG , Peking University, China
<i>12:00</i>	Quit Drinking and Start Singing: Being Christian among the Lisu of Southwest China WU KEPING , The Chinese University of Hong Kong
<i>12:30</i>	Questions & Answers
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH
14:00 – 15:30	PANEL 5 – INVENTION OF TRADITION: CULTURAL HERITAGE
<i>Chairperson</i>	JEREMY KINGSLEY , Asia Research Institute, NUS
<i>14:00</i>	Superscription without Encompassment: Turning Gwer Sa La Festival into Intangible Cultural Heritage LIANG YONGJIA , National University of Singapore
<i>14:30</i>	Tibetan Buddhist Heritage: Experiments in Re-Fusing Ethnicity and Religion MARTIN SAXER , National University of Singapore
<i>15:00</i>	Questions & Answers
15:30 – 16:00	TEA BREAK
16:00 – 17:15	PANEL 6 – INVENTION OF TRADITION: ETHNIC RELIGIONS
<i>Chairperson</i>	CHENG YINGHONG , Asia Research Institute, NUS
<i>16:00</i>	The Worshipping of Chinggis Khan: Ethnicity, Nation-State, and Situational Relativity NARAN BILIK , Fudan University, China
<i>16:30</i>	Practicing and Marginalizing <i>Mixin</i> (Superstition): Religious Revival among the Zhuang People in China KAO YA-NING , National Chengchi University, Taiwan
<i>17:00</i>	Questions & Answers
17:30 – 18:00	CLOSING REMARKS
<i>17:30</i>	PRASENJIT DUARA Director, Asia Research Institute and the Office of Deputy President (Research and Technology), NUS
18:00	BUS TRANSFER BACK TO HOTEL
18:00	END OF DAY 2

KEYNOTE ADDRESS 1

Another “Dual Structure” in Contemporary Chinese Society

Ma Rong

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People and scholars have paid a lot of attention to analyze the “rural-urban dual structure” in contemporary Chinese society. But another “dual structure” in Chinese society is usually neglected. That is the “Han vs. ethnic minority dual structure” in aspects of regional administration, discipline designing in universities and academic society, a parallel school system for Han and ethnic minorities separately in minority regions, and even in entertainment (novels and movies) and advertisement in mass communication.

This paper examines the “dual structure” in several important fields and aspects in Chinese society. Based on Lenin and Stalin’s theory of “nation/nationality” and the practices in the formal Soviet Union, the government of People’s Republic of China organized a campaign of “nationality recognition” in the 1950s, recognized 56 “nationalities among Chinese citizens. Each of the Chinese citizens received a “nationality status” as the base for all policy practice. The status of “minority nationality” may receive various special favored treatments, including exception of the family planning program, preferential university enrollment, fixed positions in administrations in autonomous areas. These system and policy designing and practice clarified the boundary between the Han and minorities and raised ethnic tension, especially after the market mechanism replaced the planning economy.

The paper also reviews the dynamic process of “ethnology” (nationality studies) in China. The adjustment in discipline adjustment and reform resulted in the separation between (minority) “nationality studies” and all other disciplines. The school separation of “ordinary” (Han) schools and “nationality schools” from primary school to university splits the knowledge and education system of Han majority and ethnic minorities.

In comparison with the Black-White relationship in the United States, this “dual structure” in China might lead to cultural conflicts and identity problems in the process of nation-building of China.

Ma Rong (Ph.D., sociology, Brown University) has taught in Institute of Sociology and Anthropology, and the Department of Sociology at Peking University, China since 1987. He visited Harvard University (1990-1991) and taught courses at UCLA (2000) and Duke University (2006). His research interest includes ethnicity and nationalism, population studies and local governance in China, especially in its ethnic areas. His publications include *China's Rural Entrepreneurs* (edited with J. Wong and M. Yang, Times Academic P., 1995), *Local Governance and Grassroots Democracy in India and China: Right to participate* (edited with M. Mohanty, et al., Sage, 2007), *Ethnic Relations in China* (China Tebetology P., 2008), and *Population and Society in Contemporary Tibet* (Hong Kong Uni. P., 2011), and a number of English and Chinese articles in journals such as *The China Quarterly*, *Development and Society*, *Policy and Society*, *Asian Ethnicity*, *Journal of International Association of Tibetan Studies*, *Global Asia*, and *Chinese Sociology and Anthropology*.

“Islamic Revival” in South Fujian: Through Lens of “Relocalization”

Fan Ke

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Since the early 1980s, the Hui in Quanzhou, a coastal city of southeast China have carried out projects of Islamic revival, which is largely intensified in the construction of Muslim identity. This study examines the process of this movement in terms of its formation and consequences. The argument addresses on three points as follows: First, the movement would not come about without the impacts of globalization; second, the movement has been featured in spectacle of spatial, historical, and cultural representation of Islam rather than in terms of revitalization of religious practice; and third, this movement is a showcase of how globalization has reflexively stimulated productions of cultural or ethnic diversities at the local level and how the government and the locals have done in order to make the place recognizable to the outside world.

Fan Ke did his Ph.D. in Anthropology at the University of Washington, USA. He is currently teaching anthropology at Nanjing University. He is also a faculty member of the Johns Hopkins-Nanjing Universities Center. His research interests cover ethnicity and nationalism, citizenship and the anthropology of the state, and south China Muslim community and transnational Chinese migration.

Religious Revival and De-Ethnicisation in the Ethnic Minority Regions of China

Francis Lim

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As the Chinese state adopts greater toleration for religion and religious practices over the last two decades, religion has experienced a general revival throughout the country. This has also attracted increasing official and scholarly attention on the effects of religious revival on the ethnic minority regions. One important reason is the perceived close link between religious identity and ethnic identity among the minority minzu, such that an intensification of religiosity among these communities would have profound implications for the ways they relate to one another and with the state institutions, touching on issues such as social cohesion, competition for scarce resources, economic development, and political stability. In terms of the intensity of scholarly attention and official scrutiny, two religions in particular stand out: Islam and Tibetan Buddhism. This is because these religions have been often been linked with the ethno-nationalism and separatist movements spurred on by certain sections of the Uighur and Tibetan populations. In this paper I discuss the possibility of a de-ethnicization process resulting from religious revival, a phenomenon that tends to be ignored by analysts studying religion and ethnicity in the minority regions of China. By using the concept of "legibility" proposed by James Scott, I first discuss how the Communist state attempted to make legible the diverse groups of people in the country through the minzu shibie project. Following from this, I utilize case studies of Tibetan Buddhism, Islam and Christianity from published sources and my fieldwork data to suggest that religious revival could also result in a de-ethnicization process that can impact on minzu in two main ways: first, exerting centrifugal pressures on sub-minzu groups, and second, allowing the minority groups to transcend minzu boundaries and facilitating their integration into de-ethnicized, translocal and cosmopolitan communities.

Francis Lim teaches in the Division of Sociology at Nanyang Technological University. His research interests revolve around religion and tourism in various Asian cultures and societies. In the last few years he has been conducting fieldwork among the Tibetan Catholic communities in Yunnan and Tibet, as well as doing research on the growth of the Yiguan Dao sectarian religion from bases in Taiwan and Singapore. He is the author of *Imagining the Good Life: Negotiating Culture and Development in Nepal Himalaya* (Brill 2008), co-editor (with Julius Bautista) of *Christianity and the State in Asia: Complicity and Conflict* (Routledge 2009), and editor of *Mediating Piety: Technology and Religion in Contemporary Asia* (Brill 2009). He is currently editing a collection of essays on Christianity in contemporary China from the socio-cultural perspectives.

Religious Revival in Tibet, China since the early 1980s

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Melvyn Goldstein, in one of his articles, described the revival of Tibetan Religion in early 1980s in Tibet. His cases came from those revived big monasteries such as Drepung, west Lhasa. It is supposed that during the revolutionary decades monastic institutions suffered a great loss and the revival should come first and mostly in institutions. His statement is correct, but with its limitation.

It is no wonder that monastic operations were recovered; religious curriculum was restored, the freedom to train disciples and to continue the traditional learning procedure were re-guaranteed, and monastic economic independence to feed itself was reinforced. Since 1960s, those monasteries were largely reformed according to new social norms. A special structure called the Democratic Management Committee, consisted of members from all strata of monks/nuns, was set up in almost every monastery, if it was allowed to operate any more.

However, his analysis totally neglected the folk social field, where most of the religious resumption took place, with some even earlier than the institutional revival resumed, and where the revival strength lasted and prospered with few obstacles till today. It is important to take characters of folk social field into account, which are unique to the institutional structures, and to consider between both the interconnectedness that contributes to the resurgence.

Folk social field includes villages, nomad communities, and religious places that are largely non-government-direct-control units. Such religious units are out of the government direct control because they are too small and unworthy of controlling. The folk social field has some autonomous power in the trend of revitalization, and it has little political inclination. Instead, it focused almost on belief. In the institutional structures, however, politics were embedded in its revitalization and emerged to be prominent now and then to impact the whole society and the international politics. That's the reason why they were affected seriously in a reversal way by themselves and in some sense suffered from decline.

We need to adopt the multi-layer notion of the religion, to include the primordial worship, Bon-po practice, and Buddhist customs in Tibet, and to expand our interpretation into a historical aspect, especially to compare the revival in the 11th century.

In this article, I will give a description of the religious revival in Tibet, China since the early 1980s with both public documented materials and field observations from my experience in Lhasa in the last decade.

Chen Bo teaches at the College of History and Culture, Sichuan University, China. With an education background in anthropology, he focuses mainly on Tibet studies. Recently he expands his field to the Himalayas and areas surrounding the Tibet-Qinghai Plateau. His interest is mainly in kinship, religious anthropology, historical anthropology, and anthropology of civilization. He conducted fieldwork among Tibetan Catholics in Tibet Autonomous Region, Tibetan villagers and Tibetan Muslims in central Tibet, nomades and villagers in Kham and Amdo, Yu-mis in Nepalese Himalayas, and Caucasians in USA. In these fields he published three monographs (with one co-authored) and a number of articles in both Chinese and English.

Married Lamas, Vanished Emperors, and Deserted Temples: Rebuilding the Puning Temple in Cheng De, North China

Zhang Yahui

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Puning Temple in Cheng De, a lama temple built in 1757, experienced a decline since 1949. Most lamas of the temple were forced to marry because of the government's order. They also had to work in the Lama Artel. Only the old lamas could escape the destiny. In 1980s, the central government began to release its control on the minorities' religious task. As a result, Puning temple set up a new lamas' organization. In 1985, the government invited Hamur lama to come here from Chifeng.

In this paper, I describe the rebuilding progress of the temple. I found that the monks and the villagers revealed some dilemmas of the revival of religion in Chinese frontiers. First, the Tibetan temples of Chengde were organized by the Qing emperors while the most important temples—Putala and Tashilunpo—had become two tourist attractions, and the earliest temple Puren had been deserted completely. Second, there was a symbol system of politics- religion in the landscape of Chengde which was a historical burden too heavy to carry on for the temple when there was no emperor inside the mountain villa. Third, the Puning Temple belongs to the Chuangjia lama whose reincarnation system was forbidden in the mainland of China since 1949. The Chengde government grasped the management power when Hamur lama tries to emphasize the historical relationship between the temple and Panchen Lama. Puning was turned into a local temple from a royal one. Last, the new lama organization never effort to be trusted by the villagers living around, and never to participate the rituals, education and medical treatment of them as the lamas do before 1949. There was no new lama from the Dashidawa to study in the temple in the past 26 years. The villagers also look down upon the new lamas from outside. I suggest that the revival of Tibetan Buddhism in the frontier brought an isolated lama organization, which cannot express the feudal structure in the minzu area, the red cowl of the lamas and the sound of reading classics from the temple were only some sad symbol of the history.

Zhang Yahui (Ph.D., Peking University) is an Assistant Professor at the Minzu University of China. His research covers religions of the Manchu, Mongolians and Tibetans of the Qing Dynasty, the social history of Water in North China, and the ethnographic study of Shamanism. He has published *Shuide Peitian* (The Virtue of Water is Celestial: Society and Morality in an Irrigational System, Central Shanxi, Minzu Press, 2008) and *Lishi yu Shenshengxing* (History and the Sacred, World Book Press, 2010). He also published papers in *Qingshi Yanjiu* (Qing History Studies), *Chinese Anthropological Review*, and *Sociological Studies*.

Transnational Sacralizations: When Daoist Monks meet Global Spiritual Tourists

David A. Palmer

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This article examines the production of sacrality in the context of globalization, through the case of encounters between international spiritual tourists and Chinese monks. The sacred mountain of Huashan has historically been localized in the context of Daoist cosmology, Chinese imperial civilizing, socialist nation-building and, now, global capitalism. While the monks experience Huashan as a gateway for embeddedness into Daoist lineage, ritual and cosmology, the spiritual tourists approach it as a fountain of raw, consumable energy on a path of disembedding and individuation. But encounters between the two groups lead to the mutual interference and interpenetration of both trajectories. Undermining dichotomist concepts of the sacred which define it as either essentially Other or as socially constructed and contested, the sacrality of Huashan serves as both an anchor for multiple centralizing projects and forces, and as a catalyst and node for the formation of interconnecting and expanding horizontal networks.

David A. Palmer is Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology and fellow of the Centre for Anthropological Research at Hong Kong University. Trained in anthropology, psychology, and religious studies, he received his Ph.D. from the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (Sorbonne, Paris) in 2002. He has been Eileen Barker Fellow in Religion and Contemporary Society at the London School of Economics and Political Science and a research fellow at the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient (French School of Asian Studies), where he was director of its Hong Kong centre from 2004 to 2008. He is the author of *Qigong Fever: Body, Science and Utopia in China* (Columbia University Press, 2007), which was awarded the Francis Hsu Prize for the best book in the Anthropology of East Asia in 2007, and co-author of *The Religious Question in Modern China* (University of Chicago Press, 2011). He is also co-editor of three books and journal issues to be released in 2011: *Chinese Religious Life* (Oxford University Press); *Daoism in the 20th Century: between Eternity and Modernity* (University of California Press); and *Redemptive Societies and New Religious Movements in Modern China* (special double issue of *Minsu Quyi – Journal of Chinese Ritual, Music and Folklore*).

Multiple Modernity, Social Risk, and the Predicament of Folk Religion: Case Studies from the Dailue Ethnic Society in Southwest China

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Global processes have become unique developments in China. Meanwhile, the encounter with modernity among ethnic minorities in China has many unique features. Rubber tree planting and the production of rubber have forged a link between tropical jungle villages like Mandi of Xishuangbanna, the booming car industry in China, and even in the wider world system of capitalism. Dailue ethnic minority in Mandi village of Xishuangbanna have experienced a social change from mechanical solidarity in rice agriculture to organic solidarity in market economic conditions. These changes have also brought Dailue society into a system involving increasing social risks in modernity. Social transformations influenced forms of religious practice since the traditional guardian spirit cults of *Dubulahen*, *Dubulaban* and *Dubulameng* are expected to conduct social risk management. Nevertheless, increasing social risks exist everywhere and inevitably in the modern context provoke people like the Dailue in Mandi to face up to the predicament of the invalidation of their folk religions.

Shen Haimei is Professor of Anthropology at Yunnan University's Anthropological Research Institute. She earned her PhD in Chinese ethno-history from the Department of History at Yunnan University. Her academic specialties include women/gender studies and ethnicity in southwest China. Professor Shen is affiliated with the Center for Drug & AIDS Prevention Research at Yunnan University, and has conducted a visiting research fellowship in the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore during October 2009 – January 2010. She is the CNAPS Visiting Fellow of Brookings Institution in 2011.

Mapping Li(a)ngshan – The Changing Implications of Yi (Nuosu) Bimo Culture

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The Yi (Nuosu) of the Liangshan Mountains in China's Sichuan Province believe in and continue to practice a combination of animism and ancestor worship. The Bimo, a type of religious practitioner and healer, symbolizes the center of this worldview, providing the rituals that bind and sustain Nuosu society and culture in Liangshan. While Bimo culture continues to be an active and vital component of Nuosu society at the local level today, it has been receiving increased official attention. Beginning with the reform and opening policies in the early 1980s China Bimo practice in Liangshan underwent large-scale, official recognition and revitalization. In 1996, the Bimo Culture Research Center was founded in Liangshan's Meigu County, institutionalizing local scholarship on Bimo practice, and facilitating scholars from outside of the area in their research on Nuosu religion. At the same time, the drive for tourist development in minority areas of China in general has also led to a commodification of the Bimo, his reputation, and his ability via staged Bimo shows and rituals for audiences from outside of the area.

This paper examines some of the issues arising from the discrepancy between, on one hand, the day-to-day practice of the Bimo and, on the other, the public attention it and he receives. Although Bimo rituals are a 'must' on the agenda of every Nuosu (Yi) individual and family in Liangshan, the terms resorted to when talking about these rituals never seem to move beyond the vocabularies of the state's biased cultural terminology of *mixin* (superstition) versus *kexue* (Chinese definition of what is scientifically acceptable). Intensified scholarly work on Bimo has both led to and supported the popularization of Bimo as a symbol and unifying concept for Nuosu (and Yi) society. Finally, staged Bimo rituals, although promoting Bimo culture for tourist and also cultural development, tend to work against the achievements at both the folk and scholarly levels, promoting hybrid and adapted versions of rituals, which tend to defy ritual logic and insult established Bimos. By presenting and discussing interviews with Bimos, Bimo experts and promoters as well as commercial and own video and audio materials, I wish to address what the Bimo could (continue to) mean for a society underlying rapidly changing social and cultural parameters, and for development in Liangshan in general.

Olivia Kraef is currently a PhD candidate with the Institute of Sinology at the Free University of Berlin. Olivia studied sinology, political science, North-American studies and Chinese-English translation in Berlin, Bonn, and Beijing, and has lived, studied and worked in China for 12 years. Since 2002, Olivia has been conducting extensive research on the Yi (Nuosu) of Liangshan, Sichuan Province, particularly in the context of gender, migration, cultural change, minority policy and music. Forthcoming publications focus on aspects and change of traditional and contemporary Yi music in China.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS 2

Organizing For Allah, Benefitting Muslim Women: Religion, Gender and Innovation in Central China's Hui Muslim Contexts

Maria Jaschok

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The religious revival discussed in this presentation relates predominantly to Hui Muslim communities in central China, or zhongyuan diqu (Hebei, Henan, Shandong, Shanxi), and to Islamic religious sites, qingzhen nüsi, importantly led by and involving women. Using Doreen Massey's concepts of 'multiple identities' of a given place which reflect a shifting and fluid 'power geometry' of differently situated populations, differently impacted by globalizing and parochial forces, the presentation foregrounds women's positionalities and gendered historical traditions to explore the local implications for Muslim women of religious revival. Religious beliefs are increasingly finding public expression, taking the form either of an exemplary religious life-style on the part of individual believers, especially leaders, or, until recently unthinkable, of religious women organizing varied educational, cultural and welfare initiatives.

The reopening of women's mosques – alongside other religious sites – during the years following the Cultural Revolution, brought new opportunities for religious leaders and ordinary Muslim women, culminating more recently in an unprecedented expansion of their cultural and economic spaces. Increasingly assertive, Muslim women utilize the richness of their own historical tradition and the Chinese State's rhetoric and policy of gender egalitarianism to bargain for equal female religious authority, social equality and political relevance of Islam to a modernizing society.

Maria Jaschok (Ph.D., SOAS, University of London) is director of the International Gender Studies Centre and Research Fellow at Lady Margaret Hall, University of Oxford. Her research interests are in religion, gender and agency; gendered constructions of memory; feminist ethnographic practice; marginality and identity; gendered spirituality. Her latest, co-authored book (with Shui Jingjun), entitled *Women, Religion and Space in China*, was published by Routledge, New York. (2011). It forms the sequel to the study of female-led Islamic traditions in China, published in 2000, and entitled *The History of Women's Mosques in Chinese Islam* (Curzon). She is a member of the Academic Advisory Committee of 'China in Comparative Perspective Network (CCPN)', LSE, London; a Senior Research Fellow at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Copenhagen; a member of the Editorial Board of *Berliner China-Hefte. Chinese History and Society*, Berlin, and she is a co-founder and administrator of the Women and Gender in Chinese Studies Network (WAGNet).

The State's Presence in the Religious Revival in the Liangshan Yi Ethnic Area

Pan Jiao

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The religious revival of the Yi ethnic minority is manifested not just in Yi folk practices, but also in the activities orchestrated by the Liangshan Yi autonomous prefectural government. The Bimoism was once taken to be the Yi's superstition or shamanism at best but now is being contended to be a religion and to be registered as one of the World Cultural heritage. The Bimoists once taken to be the backward elements impeding the socialist construction are now revered as guardians of the Yi culture, positive force for development and construction of a harmonious society, and are organized for the grand entry in the celebration of the Yi Torch Festival, which is organized by the government to reify the uniqueness of the Yi culture and attract tourists and investors across the world.

In light of the Yi case, the article argues that the religious revival of the Yi people has its secular aspect. It involves the dignification and reification of the Yi identity and the local government's strategy for economic development. The more noteworthy however is that the representation of the minority ethnicity and religion are more often than not justified by their real or putative contributions to GDP or, paradoxically, to calming down the tumultuous people with GDP.

Pan Jiao (Ph.D. Minzu University of China) is Professor and Director of the Institute of Anthropology at Minzu University of China. His visiting positions include visiting fellows at the University of Cambridge, the University of Washington, and Harvard University. His research focuses on nationalism, ethnicity and ethnic policy in China, as well as the history of Chinese anthropology and ethnology. His current project looks at the social, political and economic displacement of the ethnic, domestic migrants to the coastal areas of China. His recent publications include three edited volumes of the *Centennial Collection of Chinese Social and Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology* (Zhishi Chanquan Chubanshe, 2008).

Urbanisation of the Material and the War of Gods

Zhu Xiaoyang

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The paper examines the role spirituality and belief play in the struggle of the material space in the process of Chinese urbanization, especially the so-called “transforming the villages in city” (chengzhongcun gaizao). Based on a demolition campaign against the villagers in the east bank of the Dian Lake, Kunming, the paper will explore how “gods” are employed in the struggle between the demolished households and the demolishers. These gods include the traditional folk spirits (Village god of wealth, dragons in wells), the symbols of the modern technologies (bulldozers, for example), and the Explanation of Hexagrams (Sanyang Kaitai, for example.) These gods partake in the fight for spaces in the demolition campaigns, thus being renewed and strengthened by different players. I will provide a description of these wars of “gods”, and explore human spirituality and belief intermingled in the war against materials in a time of “materialization.”

Zhu Xiaoyang (Ph.D. Macquarie University) is Deputy Chair, Professor at the Institute of Sociology and Anthropology, the Department of Sociology, Peking University. Dr. Zhu has carried out ethnographic fieldwork in Xiaocun (Hongren), a village in Kunming, China and published two ethnographic books: *Zuiguo Yu Chengfa* (1931-97) , *Zuiguo Yu Chenfa* (Offences and Punishment): *A Story of Xiaocun* (1931-1997), *Tianjing: Tianjing Guji Chubanshe* (Tianjing Classic Press), 2003 ; (revised edition, by Beijing: Law Press, 2011); *A Story of Xiaocun: the Topography and Homeland* (2003-2009), *Beijing: Peking University Press, 2011*, *Hometown* (co-directed with Yu Jian) was filmed in Xiaocun.

**Quit Drinking and Start Singing:
Being Christian among the Lisu of Southwest China**

Wu Keping

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The Lisu throughout Southwest China and Southeast Asia are known for their high rate of conversion to Christianity. In Northwest Yunnan Province where my current research takes place, the Lisu first came into contact with Christianity in the early twentieth century through British and American missionaries. However, the large-scale conversion did not take place until the 1980s after the Religious Policy Reform and the Market Reform, not with the effort of Western Missionaries but the local Lisu Christian leaders. The Lisu church has become the new “public space” in which the Lisu celebrate their communal life and Lisu identity – since Christianity has become “the Lisu Religion.”

However, Christianity has also seemed to serve as a constraint for the Lisu who struggle to make a living. Following the early Missionaries' instructions, the Christians in this part of the world are strictly forbidden to drink or smoke. On the one hand, the poor Lisu who are not able to afford alcohol and tobacco can still enjoy a social space in which they are not excluded. On the other hand, those who do not drink cannot fare well in the market economy that the entire western China is being increasingly incorporated into. The major source of income for the locals – ethnic tourism – requires drinking, singing and dancing (sometimes intimately) with the tourists, which is strictly forbidden by the church. However, those Christians who become hired labor usually save more money and squander less in comparison to their non-Christian neighbors since they do not engage in substance indulgence if not abuse. This paper argues therefore that the Lisu church, even though it does not advocate a prosperity gospel, provides practical measures that allow the members to have a dignified life that is socially supportive, financially secure and not completely being objectified during ethnic tourism and market economy.

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Superscription without Encompassment: Turning Gwer Sa La Festival into Intangible Cultural Heritage

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The Gwer Sa La festival of the Bai in southwest China was recently announced as the national Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and nominated for the UNESCO world ICH candidacy, largely due to the local government's promotion of Gwer Sa La's religiosity by constructing and materialising a survival of primitive fertility cult, an ethnic carnival. However, the central concern of the participants is Gwer Sa La's encompassing power of prosperity, related to a series of encompassing powers vested in the patron god temples, looked after by congregations who renew the power of prosperity during the Gwer Sa La.

The paper argues that the state's effort to turn Gwer Sa La into ICH is "superscription without encompassment", that is, the effort is based on an imagined, primitive fertility cult, alluring sexual promiscuity, while the locally sanctioned practices are intended to renew prosperity in human and wealth through a series of encompassing powers.

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Tibetan Buddhist Heritage: Experiments in Re-Fusing Ethnicity and Religion

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The relation between ethnicity and religion has a troubled history in the PRC. Blending religious practice with ethnic culture is considered to carry the risk of breeding 'splittism' – especially in Tibet and Xinjiang. While in the post-Mao era the outright hostility against religion has given way to a religious revival, keeping religion and (nationality) politics separate has remained a major concern for the CCP. Religion is supposed to be a private matter that does not interfere with politics.

Against this background, a recent phenomenon in the TAR is all the more remarkable: the (re-)fusion of ethnicity and religion under the label of cultural heritage and its protection. My paper approaches this officially endorsed re-fusion ethnographically and examines its wider implications. I argue that endorsing religion as attribute of Tibetan heritage goes along with the definition of public spaces and events in which religious practice is legitimate and expected. Simultaneously, religious practices outside these dedicated spaces and events become even more problematic and everyday Buddhist practices, such as circumambulation, are consequently seen as (and performed as) political acts.

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The Worshipping of Chinggis Khan: Ethnicity, Nation-State, and Situational Relativity

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Belief system, especially Religion, is vital for a community; in the age of the nation-state, nationalism, according to authors such as Benedict Anderson (1991), has replaced religion in creating “imagined communities”. In this paper I join Uradyn E. Bulag (2010), Nasan Bayar (2007), and Almaz Khan (1995), and further explore the political meanings of ritualism, past and present, dedicated to Chinggis Khan. My argument is that ritualization of Chinggis Khan’s worship is indexical to the vicissitudes of nationality (minzu) relationship in China and beyond in the process of nation-building; it also helps unveil the discursive dilemma for which different linguistic ideologies (M. Silverstein 1979, B. Schieffelin et al. 1998) and their relevant practice are responsible.

The burial place of Chinggis Khan is difficult to locate though several claims have been made by explorers who offer quite different locations. It is so situational that different exploring projects from different countries with different backgrounds would come up with different possible locations. In the same vein, the interpretation of Chinggis Khan is also situational and is negotiated along the dimension of ethnicity and nation-state.

For Mongols Chinggis Khan is a symbol that synthesizes shamanism, Buddhism, ethnicity, ancestral connection, and dignity; for the state his image is symbolic capital that can be “invested” for various strategic purposes. There are thus two types of situational relativity, each serving a different purpose: one involves Mongolian ethnicity and the other concerns strategic interests of geopolitical powers such as the Soviet Russia, Japan and China.

Following a “nomadic” tradition the Mongols see the spirit of Chinggis Khan everywhere, in the heaven, in the mountains, and in the rivers. In contrast, the Chinese state of “walled culture” tends to calculate when and where to resurrect the image of Chinggis Khan or not.

After 1911 the fate of Inner Mongolians has been tied to that of the Chinese state, and the situational worshipping of Chinggis Khan by geopolitical powers has deeply influenced the outcome negotiated between Mongols and the Chinese state.

Inner Mongolians regard Chinggis Khan as a common tie that binds them together; his icon as well as the rituals held in his name is more pertinent to their culture and history. Since Chinggis Khan’s worship is open for various interpretations and is ready to absorb endogenous and exogenous elements such as shamanism and Buddhism, it is more sustainable in comparison with, say, Buddhism which is both unstable and limited in Communist China. There is a surge of rituals and activities held in memory of Chinggis Khan who provides spiritual support for Mongols who need to strengthen their identity in response to mainstream nationalism.

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Practicing and Marginalizing *Mixin* (Superstition): Religious Revival among the Zhuang People in China

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The official distinction of “superstition” and “civilization” has been made in China since Imperial times. This paper, which examines religious revival among the Zhuang people in the People’s Republic of China, and which focuses in particular upon the opposition of those religious activities associated with superstition and those considered to be civilized religious activities, provides insights into the multiple understandings of this official distinction. It thereby also contributes to the understanding of “religions in China” and “Chinese religion(s)”.

Two main dimensions of religious revival are explored. The first is a grassroots dimension: the religious revival led by the practice of so-called “superstitious” activities by local people. While shamanic practices are identified and criticized by the Chinese government as the epitome of superstitious activity, the practices are a significant framework for the social and religious life of the Zhuang people. I take a border town cult that commemorates the Zhuang hero Nong Zhigao as an example to illustrate this dimension. Despite over fifty years of government prohibition and discouragement of superstitious activities, local members of this cult continue to believe that the spirits of Nong Zhigao and his wife remain in a forest and a cavern, respectively, and are guardian spirits are still contacted through shamanic rituals.

The second dimension explored is a top-down dynamic and involves the discourse and practice of civilizing projects. Since the mid-1980s, officials and scholars in this Zhuang area have conducted a series of projects aimed at standardizing the Zhuang religion. They have collected religious texts written in Zhuang square script, have “discovered” the apical ancestor and ancestress, Baeuq Roxdoh and Mo Loekgyap, and have standardized a Zhuang religion named Mojiao 麽教, which has its canon and practitioners. The idea (or ideology) behind these projects is that Zhuang people have their own civilization, demonstrated in their written script, their own apical ancestors (comparable to the Yellow Emperor of the Han Chinese), and a more-or-less institutionalized religion.

While activities and policies to eliminate so-called “superstition” have been well documented both preceding and since 1949, grassroots responses have seldom been explored, and have even been purposefully ignored. The analysis of two cases of religious revival among the Zhuang presented in this paper enriches our comprehension of how activities at different levels are shaping Zhuang religion. As a study of religious revival among China’s most populous ethnic group, this investigation assists in the task of reversing a long-time academic ignorance of religions among ethnic groups within the study of Chinese religion(s). It also provides a basis for promoting comparative research and dialogue regarding the religious practices of the Zhuang and those of other ethnic groups in China.

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