

CENTER on RELIGION and CHINESE SOCIETY  
中國宗教與社會研究中心

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## WHEN RELIGION GOES PUBLIC IN CHINA

Up to now, empirical research on religion in China has mostly focused on describing the status of various religions, religious rituals, and religious communities. The 2008 Beijing Summit on Chinese Spirituality and Society, which we organized with grant support from the John Templeton Foundation, gathered a group of Chinese and Western scholars who were working on cutting-edge projects or were in the forefront of theoretical development in the social scientific study of religion. We asked the Western scholars to think about the China case in their own theorizing and offer suggestions of research questions on religion and spirituality in China. We asked the Chinese scholars to envision or conceptualize research projects that pose relevant questions for the development of current theories. One of the tangible fruits of the Beijing Summit is the *Social Scientific Studies of Religion in China: Methodology, Theories, and Findings*, published by Brill Academic Publishers in April 2011 (see page 6 below for more information; a second volume of the Beijing Summit, *Confucianism and Spiritual Traditions in Modern China and Beyond*, is forthcoming from Brill as well). Along the line of theoretical development, my monograph, *Religion in China: Survival and Revival under Communist Rule* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming), will offer a political economic explanation for the status of religion in Chinese society and beyond.

However, what is also interesting and probably more important to study is: What are the impacts of religion on the social life of believers and the larger society? This topic has been much debated in China since the 1980s, as scholars and officials have studied and accommodated the revivals of religion, but worried about the consequences. Unfortunately, the debates so far have been dominated by ideology instead of based on systematic studies with scientific methods. To encourage and support social scientific studies of religion in China, we have developed the Chinese Spirituality and Society Program (CSSP), which includes various training components, as reported in this newsletter.

Of course, this is not an exclusively Chinese problem. In the so-called “secular age,” religious faith is often treated as a private matter that ought not to play a public role. In the last two decades, however, many social scientific studies have clearly documented the persistence of religion and its public role in many parts of the modern world.

In China, after surviving its eradication in 1966-1979, religion has been reviving and thriving. Various religions have become increasingly visible. Moreover, many religions have actively gone public: Religious believers have made their previously secret faith known to others; religious groups have engaged in civic participation in local community affairs; religious organizations have provided charity and social services in the larger society; and some pioneer religious congregations, such as the Protestant, Beijing Shouwang Church, have openly expressed civic disobedience and challenged the government’s current religious policy (see “The Chinese House Church Goes Public,” *Sightings*, May 12, 2011). When religion goes public in China, what will happen to Chinese society? We will watch closely.

Fenggang Yang, Ph.D.

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THE CHINESE  
SPIRITUALITY AND SOCIETY  
PROGRAM

## CSSP Research Training Workshop 2011

The second Research Training Workshop of the Chinese Spirituality and Society Program will be held from July 17 to August 17, 2011 at Purdue University. Seventeen Principal Investigators of the funded projects will participate in the workshop. Seven renowned scholars in the social scientific study of religion have been invited to give lectures and discuss CSSP projects. They are Christopher Bader, Thomas Banchoff, José Casanova, Roger Finke, Paul Lichterman, Corwin Smidt, and Carsten Vala.



Thomas Banchoff is Director of the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, and Associate Professor in the Government Department and the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. His research focuses on religious and ethical issues in world politics. He recently published *Embryo Politics: Ethics and Policy in Atlantic Democracies* (Cornell University Press, 2011). He is also the editor of *Democracy and the New Religious Pluralism* (Oxford University Press, 2007), *Religious Pluralism, Globalization, and World Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2008), and *Religion and the Global Politics of Human Rights*, co-edited with Robert Wuthnow (Oxford University Press, 2011).



Christopher Bader is Professor of Sociology at Chapman University and specializes in the sociology of religion and deviant behavior. He has published over 30 articles in journals in the fields of sociology, deviance, criminology, the sociology of religion and education. He was principal investigator of the first two waves of the Baylor Religion Survey and currently serves as Associate Director at the Association of Religion Data Archives ([www.theArda.com](http://www.theArda.com)). His first two books, *America's Four Gods* (Oxford University Press) and *Paranormal America* (NYU Press), appeared in October, 2010.



José Casanova is one of the world's top scholars in the sociology of religion. He is a professor in the Department of Sociology at Georgetown University, and heads the Berkley Center's Program on Globalization, Religion and the Secular. He has published works in a broad range of subjects, including religion and globalization, migration and religious pluralism, transnational religions, and sociological theory. His best-known work, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (1994), has become a modern classic in the field and been translated into five languages, including Arabic and Indonesian. Other publications include "Rethinking Secularization: A Global Comparative Perspective," *The Hedgehog Review* (2006) and "The Long Journey of Turkey into Europe and the Dilemmas of European Civilization," *Constellations* (2006).



Roger Finke is Professor of Sociology and Religious Studies at Pennsylvania State University. He is noteworthy not only for playing a major role in recent transformations of both theory and research methods in his field, but also for leading a large number of other scholars to create the Association of Religion Data Archives. Professor Finke co-authored two extremely influential books with senior sociologist of religion, Rodney Stark. *The Churching of America 1776-1990* received the 1993 Distinguished Book Award from the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, and *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* received the 2001 Book Award from the American Sociological Association's Sociology of Religion section.

# CENTER ON RELIGION AND CHINESE SOCIETY



Paul Lichterman is Professor of Sociology and Religion at the University of Southern California. His research areas include culture, religion, civic organizations and social movements, politics, qualitative methodology, and theory. His recent book, *Elusive Togetherness: Church Groups Trying to Bridge America's Divisions* (Princeton University Press, 2005), compares nine religiously based community service groups responding to welfare reform. Paul has won Best Article awards twice from the ASA's Section on Sociology of Culture for work in the *American Journal of Sociology* and *Theory and Society*. His book *Elusive Togetherness* won the Distinguished Book Award from the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, the Distinguished Scholarship Award of the Pacific Sociological Association, and Honorable Mention from ASA's Section on Sociology of Culture. His work is translated into French, Dutch, and Italian.



Corwin Smidt is Professor of Political Sciences at Calvin College. Professor Smidt is the author of 13 books, 59 book chapters, 33 scholarly essays, and 27 other publications. Professor Smidt co-authored the book *Pews, Prayers, and Participation: Religion and Civic Responsibility* (2008; with James Penning, Stephen Monsma, Douglas Koopman, and Kevin Den Dulk). He also recently co-published the book *Church, State and Public Justice: Five Views* (InterVarsity Press, 2007) in which he speaks on the mission of the church and the purpose of the government in solving social injustices from a Reformed theology perspective. In 2008, Professor Smidt received a \$96,800 grant from the Bradley Foundation for the research project, "Religion, Civic Responsibility, and Renewing the American Experiment: Stage Two." He continues to serve, as he has since 1997, as the director of the Paul B. Henry Institute for the Study of Christianity and Politics.



Carsten T. Vala received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of California, Berkeley. Currently he is an assistant professor at Loyola University in Maryland. His research focus is Christianity in China. He is the author of "Pathways to the Pulpit: Leadership Training in 'Patriotic' and Unregistered Chinese Protestant Churches," a chapter in Yoshiko Ashiwa and David Wank, eds., *Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China* (Stanford University Press, 2009). Currently he is completing a book manuscript called, *God above Party: The Politics of Protestants and Party-state in Contemporary China*, based on more than 15 months of grassroots fieldwork and dozens of interviews with leaders in the Protestant associations, official churches, and unregistered churches.

## International Symposium of the Survey Research on Religion and Society

The "International Symposium of the Survey Research on Religion and Society" will be held at Purdue University on August 11-13, 2011 in conjunction with the Research Training Workshop. The keynote speaker will be Professor Roger Finke of Pennsylvania State University, a renowned scholar in the social scientific study of religion and the founding director of the Association of Religion Data Archives. The participants in the Workshop and four professors from Taiwan, Yen-zen Tsai, Cheng-tian Kuo, Ping-Yin Kuan, and Hsing-kuang Chao, will give presentations on their project findings.

## The 8th Summer Institute for the Scientific Study of Religion

The 8th Summer Institute for the Scientific Study of Religion will be held July 4-15, 2011 at Renmin University of China, Beijing. The Summer Institute is part of the Chinese Spirituality and Society Program, and the objective is to train faculty members at Chinese universities that have been offering or plan to offer sociology of religion courses on both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The keynote lecturers of this year include Jay Demerath, Roberto Cipriani, and Giuseppe Giordan.



Jay Demerath III is the Emile Durkheim Distinguished Professor & Emeritus Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Professor Demerath is one of the leading sociologists of religion and culture in the world. He is the author of 12 books and more than 60 articles in the most prestigious journals in the field. His book, *Crossing the Gods: World Religions and Worldly Politics*, received the 2002 Distinguished Book Award from the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion. He has served as Executive Officer of the American Sociological Association (1970-1972), Vice-President of the Eastern Sociological Society (1975-1976), and President of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (1998-1999). He has been Book Review Editor of the *American Sociological Review* (1965-1968) and was the founding editor of *ASA Footnotes* (1970-1972).



Roberto Cipriani is full Professor of Sociology and Chairman of the Department of Sciences of Education at the University of Rome 3. He has been a visiting professor at the University of São Paulo, Buenos Aires, and at Laval University and has conducted research in Greece and Mexico. He was editor of *International Sociology*. He was president of the ISA Research Committee for the Sociology of Religion and member of the Executive Committee of the International Association of French Speaking Sociologists and of the International Institute of Sociology. He was president of the Italian Sociological Association. His publications include: *Sociology of Religion: An Historical Introduction* (Aldine-de Gruyter, New York, 2000), translated into French, Portuguese, Spanish, Chinese (Renmin University Press); more than 750 articles, and 53 books in Italian, English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, and Russian. He is President of the Council of ESA National Associations.



Giuseppe Giordan earned his Ph.D. in Sociology at the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas in Rome. He is currently Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Padua, General Secretary of the International Society for the Sociology of Religion (ISSR/SISR), and Member of the International Committee of the Association for the Sociology of Religion (ASR). He edited *Vocation and Social Context* (Brill 2007), *Conversion in the Age of Pluralism* (Brill 2009), *Youth and Religion* (Annual Review of the Sociology of Religion, 1/2010), and with William H. Swatos Jr., *Religion, Spirituality and Everyday Practice* (Springer 2011). He is Co-Editor of the *Annual Review of the Sociology of Religion* (with Enzo Pace and Luigi Berzano). His current sociological research focuses on the interaction between religion and spirituality, youth and religion, and the relationship between sociology and theology.

## The 8th Symposium of the Social Scientific Study of Religion in China

The 8th Symposium of the Social Scientific Study of Religion in China will be held July 1-2, 2011 at Fuzhou University in China. It is co-sponsored by our Center and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Fuzhou University and the Institute for the Study of Buddhism and Religious Theories at the Renmin University of China. The theme of the conference is "Spiritual Capital and Public Goods."

## Global China Forum

### **The Religious Policy in China: An Analysis of the Implementation Process**

QIAN Zaijian, *Nanjing Normal University*

On February 23, Professor QIAN Zaijian, a visiting scholar in our Center, gave a presentation. In his presentation, Professor Qian examined the religious policy and its implementation process in contemporary Mainland China. Professor Qian pointed out four reasons he considered the implementation process of religious policy in China to be both a policymaking dilemma and an implementation complex.

### **Confucianism, Christianity and Religious Freedom: A Historical Lesson**

LIU Yi, *Shanghai University*

On March 3, Professor LIU Yi, a Post-doctoral Fellow in the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs at Georgetown University, gave a lecture discussing the historical debate at the beginning of the 20th century between Christians and Confucians regarding religious freedom and state religion. The highlight was the debate in 1912-1917 around the first constitution of the Republic of China. Should Confucianism be made the state religion, or should religious freedom be a guarantee for Christians and others? One hundred years later, what should we learn from this historical lesson?

### **The Influence of Religion on Family in China's Northern Dynasties (Bei Chao)**

SHAO Zhengkun, *Jilin University*

On March 9, Professor SHAO Zhengkun, a visiting scholar in our Center, gave a lecture about the influence of religion on family life in China's Northern Dynasties. Beginning in the Northern Dynasties (Bei Chao BC.386~581), both Buddhism and Daoism were practiced by common people as their spiritual sustenance rather than as obscure theological and philosophical discussion among merely a few. The religious revival emerging within families, as shown by much historical evidence, had in turn made a profound impact on the family structure in China of the Northern Dynasties. With that in mind, Professor Shao discussed how these changes occurred, and what impact they had on families in the Northern Dynasties.

### **The Chinese View of America**

SHEN Min, *Horizon Research Consultancy Group*

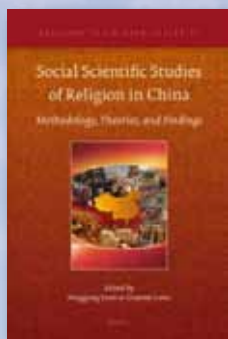
On April 6, Ms. SHEN Min, the Director of International Business Development of the Horizon Research Group gave a presentation on surveys conducted by the Horizon Research Group over more than ten years. The presentation included findings about Chinese perception and understanding of the United States of America, Russia, the EU, Japan, and many other countries, and people's views on the critical issues which have had a great impact on bilateral relations. She focused particularly on Chinese views of the United States and China's current status and national image as perceived by the Chinese public.

### **How to Find Truth of Chinese Society Through In-Depth Investigation**

SHEN Ying, *Southern Weekly*

The in-depth investigation of a journalist on a piece of news and the fieldwork conducted by a sociologist are different tunes rendered with equal skills. Both of them have special challenges. With ten years of experience as an investigative reporter for *Southern Weekly* and using personal cases, Ms. SHEN Ying, a visiting scholar in our Center, shared her experiences in how to find truth through unconventional and detailed investigation techniques under China's current social environment.

## Books by the Center Director and Affiliated Fellows



### **Social Scientific Studies of Religion in China**

#### **Methodology, Theories, and Findings**

*Edited by Grame Lang & Fenggang Yang*

Brill Academic Publishers, April 2011

This volume presents a selection of articles by sociologists, anthropologists, and historians of religion on these themes. The chapters include rich field studies of particular religions and religious activities, along with theoretical and historical reflections by scholars inside and outside China on problems and opportunities in the revival of the social scientific study of religion in Chinese societies.



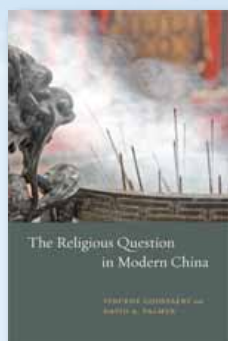
### **Constructing China's Jerusalem**

#### **Christians, Power, and Place in Contemporary Wenzhou**

*Nanlai Cao*

Stanford University Press, 2010

Drawing on extensive ethnographic fieldwork and in-depth life history interviews, this illuminating book provides an intimate portrait of contemporary Chinese Christianity in the context of a modern, commercialized economy. In vivid detail, anthropologist Nanlai Cao explores the massive resurgence of Protestant Christianity in the southeastern coastal city of Wenzhou—popularly referred to by its residents as “China’s Jerusalem”—a nationwide model for economic development and the largest urban Christian center in China.



### **The Religious Question in Modern China**

*Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer*

The University of Chicago Press, 2011

Recent events—from strife in Tibet and the rapid growth of Christianity in China to the spectacular expansion of Chinese Buddhist organizations around the globe—vividly demonstrate that one cannot understand the modern Chinese world without attending closely to the question of religion. *The Religious Question in Modern China* highlights parallels and contrasts among historical events, political regimes, and cultural movements to explore how religion has challenged and responded to secular Chinese modernity, from 1898 to the present.



### **Chinese Religious Life**

*Edited by David A. Palmer, Glenn Shive, and Philip L. Wickeri*

Oxford University Press, 2011

This book offers an introduction to religion in contemporary China. Instead of adopting the traditional focus on pre-modern religious history and doctrinal traditions, *Chinese Religious Life* is based on the social dimensions of religious life, with essays devoted to religion in urban, rural, and ethnic minority settings; to the religious dimensions of body, gender, environment, and civil society; and to the historical, sociological, economic, and political aspects of religion in contemporary Chinese society. This volume of essays, written by a team of internationally renowned scholars, is based on both field research and historical and textual studies.

## Thoughts of Visiting at Purdue



**L**IU Yang is former Deputy Chief Editor, South Wind Window Magazine. He is a visiting scholar in our Center.

In October 2010, I came to the Center on Religion and Chinese Society at Purdue University. It's been a long time since I graduated from college. After I waved goodbye to my professors, I swore I would never step into any Chinese university, or read any books I was forced to read for exams. Never did I expect I would come to a university in the United States. I've missed the climate of Northern China with the distinct seasons since I left Shenyang, my hometown, more than ten years ago and moved to Guangzhou in Southern China. The latitude of Purdue is close to that of Northeast China. In this past year, I saw the snow cover the earth like a carpet, the branches and boughs weighed low by the profuse blossoms. I heard the murmuring sounds of bugs and insects in the summer and enjoyed the splendid foliage in the fall. Such opportunities of making up for the lost memories of childhood and youth are rare and precious. The abundance of this year has far exceeded my expectations.

Of course, the main course here consists of the pleasure of knowledge and the contact and understanding of American society. The weekly discussion and lectures at CRCS are an important window of Purdue University for introducing and understanding issues related to China. The content covers sociology as well as other fields such as history, political science, culture, and mass media. CRCS often invites scholars from other universities and offers opportunities to visit nearby universities to participate in scholarly activities. Inter-disciplinary exchanges are especially inspiring. In the form of lectures, I have shared my experience and observation in the field of religious reportage on the basis of my work in Chinese public media. I hope my sharing has benefited the audience.

Needless to say, there is much pleasure in reading and exchanging and in the expansion of thinking, which gives rise to the comprehension of new meaning of life. In retrospect, now I can perceive the naivety and errors in the media's knowledge of the issues related to the sociology of religion. On the other hand, I feel very sorry for the lone-rangers, the scholars. Their research is profound, but for various reasons, they can't break into the public media, thus, they fail to disseminate basic knowledge or correct basic misunderstandings. The public cannot be inspired. The scholars cannot help but look down on to the public as they become increasingly lonely and detached from the reality of society. This development would affect the decision making on public issues. Ultimately, it would also affect the academic vitality of the scholars. Though some scholarly fields are massive and hard to crack into, this shouldn't be the case for sociology. In my expectation as a layman, the field of sociology should be lively.

After reading *Acts of Faith* by Stark and Finke and *Chinese Christians in America: Conversion, Assimilation, and Adhesive Identities* by Fenggang Yang, I walked into local American churches (both Protestant and Catholic) and Chinese churches to observe on-the-spot. In my mind, I compare what I see with the results of the scholar's research. This is a very interesting and productive process which allows me to see the richness of reality and the vitality of theory.

During my leisure time, I went to Chicago and Los Angeles to visit the mainstream US media and publishers such as the *Chicago Tribune* and *Christianity Today*, and observed the activities of some public service organizations. All these experiences helped me gain a deeper understanding of the United States, China, and myself, and helped me see more clearly what I can do for China.

People are nurtured and shaped by their native land. "Although Zhou is an ancient state, its mandate is new."  
("King Wen", *Book of Songs*)

For Chinese and Americans alike, their behavior and thinking are closely related to their respective land and culture as their survival depends on these elements. Although the civilization and the national character of the Chinese people can be traced back to ancient times in history, their potential for opening up a new realm might have been oppressed all along. However, this process of renewal will be completed eventually.

(Translated by Alice Wang)

Website:

<http://www.purdue.edu/CRCS>

This website has been developed into a center of information and resources on Chinese religion, spirituality, and society. It includes an archive of government documents, scholarly articles, and short essays on Chinese spirituality, religion, and society.

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## New Project: Spatial Network of Religious Studies in China

The Center on Religion and Chinese Society at Purdue University and the China Data Center at the University of Michigan are pleased to announce the project, “Establishing a Spatial Information Network for the Study of Christianity in China,” supported by the Henry Luce Foundation. The project aims at promoting research, teaching, learning, and training on the study of Chinese Christianity. The project will develop a spatial information platform with spatial intelligence technology, which will enable a variety of data derived from different sources and formats to be incorporated into a single system to create dynamic maps and enable powerful geo-spatial analysis to yield new insights into Christianity and society in China by integrating social, economic, demographic, religious, and geographical information. It is expected that the project will enhance the scholarship on the subject and provide effective assistance in support of scholars’ research through 1) developing their research interactions and collaboration; 2) expanding their research projects with the information and tech support in view of their limited access and tech support from local institutions; 3) promoting interdisciplinary studies with the added value from the integration of those data from different sources and fields; and 4) providing a variety of teaching and training tools for their courses on the study of Chinese religion.

## CRCS Visiting Scholars



QIAN Zaijian is a Professor in the School of Public Administration at Nanjing Normal University in China. He has published more than 40 academic articles and authored two books, co-authored four books, edited one book, and written eight book chapters. He has completed more than 10 research projects which received honors and awards from the government and the university. His books include: *Modern Public Policy* (Nanjing Normal University Press, 2007), *A Study*

*On Vulnerable Groups in Unemployment and the Social Support to Them* (Nanjing Normal University Press, 2006) and *New Public Policy* (Chief Editor)(Shanghai: East China Normal University Press, 2006).

SHAO Zhengkun is Associate Professor at Jilin University in China. She received her Ph.D. in the Ancient History of China from Jilin University in 2006. She has published *Family in Northern Dynasties* and more than 10 journal articles, including “On Women’s Positions in Their Families in Northern Dynasties,” “Buddhism Among People Who Had Fictive Kins in Northern Dynasties: A Study Centered on the Inscriptions,” and “Discussion on the Household Economy of Common People in Northern Dynasties.” Her research interests include Buddhism and Taoism in the family of ancient China and social assistance based on Buddhism and Taoism.

