

literature, it might better have appeared in the third section on creative productions and representations of feminisms to serve as a comparison with the other chapters there. I am similarly ambivalent about the placement of Ke Qianting's examination of Chinese adaptations of *The Vagina Monologues*. Alternatively, the first and the second parts might have been merged since all the chapters therein touch on the influence of transnational cultural flows, capitalist market expansion and patriarchal structure on Chinese feminist theorization and practices. Nonetheless, exactly because patriarchy, capitalism, socialism, power and gender politics are already so intricately intertwined and are addressed in every chapter in this volume, it is hardly possible to organize them into neat categories. Overall, *Feminisms with Chinese Characteristics* significantly enriches contemporary discourses on feminism and China by showing the importance of Chinese cultures, histories and traditions in the discussion of plural feminisms. The volume is, accordingly, well suited for graduate seminars as well as upper-level undergraduate courses in gender and feminist studies, China studies and Asian studies.

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The Space of Religion: Temple, State, and Buddhist Communities in Modern China

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The first three decades of the People's Republic brought tremendous loss to Buddhism in China, particularly the destruction of physical temples and the decimation of the sangha. The restoration of both has been a weighty challenge for post-Mao Buddhist development. Through this ethnography of the historically prominent Nanputuo Temple, Yoshiko Ashiwa and David Wank examine the dramatic revival of Chinese Buddhism after the Chinese Communist Party restored the policy of religious tolerance in 1982. The two authors adopt multiple methods, including interviewing, observation, survey and archival research. Their 26 months of fieldwork in Nanputuo Temple extended over three decades between 1989 and 2018 (although their account of the temple's restoration concludes in 2004), allowing them to record its recovery and reform over two terms of temple leadership. In addition to published state media coverage, gazetteers and commemorative volumes, their archival data includes unpublished materials such as diaries, letters of correspondence between state and temple officials, and temple epigraphs.

Ashiwa and Wank's major contribution lies in their elaboration of religion as an integrated space of three dimensions: physical, institutional and semiotic. Accordingly, the physical space contains religion's tangible existence, including buildings, landscapes and monuments; the institutional space comprises policies and regulations, mainly as devised by the Chinese state; the semiotic space centres on the symbols and actions that give meanings to those who share the same belief system. A temple is thus a nexus where the physical, institutional and semiotic spaces interact to reproduce the space of Buddhism. This analytical framework allows the authors to address such a complex and multifaceted phenomenon as the Buddhist revival in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution. They further introduce two concepts in their analysis of Nanputuo Temple's



transformation: the network concept captures trans-local and multi-level agency in the temple's development, while the episode concept organizes their account of the interactions between actors and networks.

The first part of the book maps out the three spaces of Nanputuo Temple. The authors provide a detailed description of the temple's layout, with a focus on its buildings and landscape, and their functions. For the temple's semiotic space, the authors document the couplets, murals and paintings (both in Chinese and English translation) and provide their interpretations of how members of the Buddhist community might imagine these representations. For the institutional space, the authors introduce the central and local state policy and the party-state's system of religious administration, which, together with Nanputuo Temple's historical capital, facilitate the temple's revival. It is worth noting that their depiction of the state system is no longer applicable after the 2018 incorporation of the State Administration for Religious Affairs into the Central United Work Front Department. The second part discusses how the clerical leadership rebuilds the temple institution, expanding the space of Buddhism. Yet, Nanputuo Temple's increasing spiritual and economic prominence also brings the temple into conflict with local state agents whose agendas are not always in line with those of the clergy, especially over the use of temple properties. Meanwhile, a new-generation abbot (born post-1949) oversees the temple's alignment with the standards of patriotic Buddhism formulated by the central state. The third part investigates local religious traditions and communities and their relations with Nanputuo Temple.

Ashiwa and Wank argue that local temples in Xiamen depend on their connections to Nanputuo Temple for recovery (p. 261), but not all the evidence they provide supports this collaborative view. Some temples appear to maintain uneasy and competitive, if not hostile, relationships with Nanputuo Temple on issues of political leanings, folk religious traditions and local embeddedness (pp. 199, 207, 246, 253). The authors' discussion of Nanputuo Temple's relationship with the local state is rich in detail, but their observations are not always persuasive. For example, the Xiamen Religious Affairs Bureau could, on one occasion, support a temple's expansion plan because the officials understand its importance (p. 180), whereas, on another occasion, they oppose it because they lack such understanding (p. 184). Without an institutional account of state–Buddhism and within-state contradictions in the space of religion, it is hard to make sense of the bureau's regular inconsistency, the divergence between various local state agents, and the discrepancy between the central and local states regarding religious administration. It is true that the state delimits the institutional space of religion. Still, in this space, various state agents and members of the Buddhist community operate on persistently incompatible institutional logics, such as religious commodification and the merit-based temple economy. Similarly, the central state deploys contradictory goals of regime legitimation, such as local state development and the clerical management of temple property, thus paving the way for conflicts and cooperation between the temple leadership and various local state agents.

These issues aside, with a sensible theoretical framework and rich ethnographic data, this book succeeds in dissecting the compound phenomena of Buddhist revival by navigating through the different spaces of religion in the last three decades of the 20th century. It will be essential reading for scholars of Buddhism in modern China and a valuable resource for China specialists and students interested in state–religion dynamics in the People's Republic.

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