

Religion and Law in China. By Zhao Jianmin. Alphen aan den Rijn: Kluwer Law International, 2014. Pp. 174. \$92.00 (paper). ISBN: 978-9041154330.

In *Religion and Law in China*, Zhao Jianmin comprehensively lists current legislation and regulation concerning religion in China. This collection of primary texts not only can provide a reader with a general understanding of the legal framework for the administration of religious activities in China but may also be of particular value to foreign readers interested in the topic but who may otherwise have difficulty locating Chinese laws, for it provides much basic material conveniently in a single volume. Moreover, if read with an informed eye by someone generally familiar with the various issues, tensions, and sensitivities that surround the matter of regulation of religious thought and practice in China, the various codified rules can be seen to reflect the official Chinese attitudes toward religious freedom in China. However, Zhao does not provide an explanation or discussion of this important contextual issue: it is a compendium of laws and regulations, not a discursive examination of the topic.

Zhao opens the book with a general introduction of background information on religion in China before providing detail to outline the specific legal framework and the effect that the framework has on the religious communities and individuals. While Zhao helpfully provides a listing of the relevant rules in relation to religion in China, for reasons that are not explained by either the author or publisher, the specific content of some chapters is omitted, with only the chapter titles appearing. This of course raises far more questions than it answers. The book would be far more interesting and valuable if Zhao could engage in further critical analysis of the laws that are here listed and extracted but not otherwise explained or subject to discussion. Drawing upon the basic framework introduced in the book, this review seeks to discuss some trends of administration of religion and religion-related activities in China, specifically party leadership in Chinese religion law, use of law to strengthen regulation of religion, and continuous fear of foreign domination and localization of religion.

The first point to understand about religion and law in China is that the Communist Party of China (CPC) currently plays a dominant role in formulating laws touching upon any aspect of religious practice, and it will continue to do so in the future. The People's Republic of China did not have actual laws concerning religion until the 1980s, and, strictly speaking, there is still no national legislation concerning religion promulgated by the Peoples' Congress. Before the adoption of the Open and Reform policy in 1978, the only basis for dealing with religions in China was not law, but rather the CPC's religious policies. When laws were eventually enacted, they were also shaped by the religious policies of the CPC. Therefore, as Zhao points out, in order to understand the religion laws and the basic structure of China, it is very important to understand the CPC and its religious policies (13, 16). The guiding ideology of the CPC in this matter has been Marxism–Leninism–Maoism, and China maintains the “Leninist–Stalinist–Maoist tradition of totalitarian control” in relation to religion. Such control can only be eased by a small degree under the “united front” policy of the CPC in order to maintain the overriding policy of the stability and unity of China.¹

1 Tony Lambert, “The Present Religious Policy of the Chinese Communist Party,” *Religion, State and Society* 29, no. 2 (2001): 127.

Marxism and Maoism have notoriously referred to religion as “the *opium* of the people,”² but the CPC adopted freedom of religion as a pragmatic policy even before the establishment of the People’s Republic of China. During the Soviet Republic of China³ and the time of the revolutionary-based border governments,⁴ freedom of religion was adopted in the regions by numerous rules issued by those governments.⁵ Because the principles of Marxist atheistic materialism underpin the CPC’s basic worldview, the adoption of freedom of religion was a practical response to the fragmentation of China as well as a means of seeking to unite as many people as possible to support the CPC and the fight against the Japanese invasion or the ascendancy of the National Party. After the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, freedom of religion was incorporated into the Common Program⁶ and the first constitution.⁷ However, these constitutional rights could not be legally enforced and were more like mere political statements⁸ and all regulation and control of religion and religious activity relied for any authority or validity upon policy positions of the CPC.

Yuan-lin Tsai, a scholar of religion at National Chengchi University in Taiwan, divides the religious polices implemented in China into three periods. The first period, from 1949 to 1966, which featured a transition from the new democracies to socialism to fight against feudalism and imperialism. The second period, from 1966 to 1982, was the period of the Great Cultural Revolution, which was characterized by the oppression and devastation of religions and religious activity. In the third period, from 1982 to the present day, the official perspective has been to move away from the negative attitudes towards religion expressed during the Great Cultural Revolution and

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- 2 Karl Marx, “Toward the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right,” in *Marx and Engels: Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, ed. Lewis S. Feuer (New York: Anchor Books, 1989), 263; also see Eric Kolodner, “Religious Rights in China: A Comparison of International Human Rights Law and Chinese Domestic Legislation,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (1994): 466–67; cf. John Raines, *Marx on Religion* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011).
 - 3 It existed from 1931 to 1935 in Ruijin, Jiangxi Province; and from 1935 to 1937 in Yan’an, Shaanxi Province. The Soviet Republic of China was established in November 1931 by the Chinese Communist Party in several provinces, although most of China was still controlled by the National Party.
 - 4 There were several revolution-based border governments established by the Chinese Communist Party during the period of civil war, and they served as the revolution bases of the Chinese Communist Party before the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. These include the Shanganning Border Government (1937–1950), Suwan Border government (1945–1949), and Jinchaji Border Government (1941–1948).
 - 5 See Feng Jinyuan and Min Xianliang 冯今源、敏贤良, 中国共产党宗教政策的历史发展 [The historical development of the Chinese Communist Party’s religious policies], accessed July 27, 2016, <http://www.mzb.com.cn/html/report/150936282-1.htm> (in Chinese) and <http://www.pacilution.com/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=4609> (in Chinese).
 - 6 The Common Program of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference was adopted by the first plenary session of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference on September 29, 1949. As there was no constitution immediately after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, it served as the temporary constitution.
 - 7 COMMON PROGRAM OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE’S POLITICAL CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE art. 5 (Sept. 29, 1949); the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China, adopted in 1954, provides, “Citizens of the People’s Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief. No State organ, public organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion; nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in, or do not believe in, any religion. The State protects normal religious activities. No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the educational system of the State. Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination.” XIANFA [CONSTITUTION OF THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA] art. 36 (1954).
 - 8 Ping Xiong, “China’s Responses to Minority Religions,” in *State Responses to Minority Religions*, ed. David M. Kirkham (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 213–14.

recognize that because religions and religious practice will persist among the Chinese population, a limited space for religion should be recognized and controlled.⁹

The Great Cultural Revolution turned China into a lawless state,¹⁰ during which time, among many other abuses, there was much persecution of religion and religious practice. It was not until 1982 that the CPC Central Committee issued the very important Document No. 19, which granted some limited autonomy to religious believers.¹¹ This document reiterated the policy of freedom of religion and the purpose of uniting religious believers. It also required the “reasonable arrangement” of religious sites, called for cultivation of patriotic clergy, and demanded that religious associations be free from any foreign infiltration.¹² This document, however, still proclaimed the Marxist atheistic worldview as the view of the CPC towards religion, and vested the CPC with the right of ultimate control over religion.¹³ This document can be seen as laying down a foundation for China’s religious policies, and various laws and rules that were issued in the years that followed were based upon this foundation as a just reflection of the various CPC’s policies.

Accordingly, the enforcement of the relevant laws and rules by government is in fact the implementation of the religious policies of the CPC. The role of CPC and the government, as pointed out by Tsai, is that “the United Front Work Department of CPC Central Committee (UFW) is more like a guiding and planning unit but the State Administration for Religious Affairs ... and its branches are more like research institutions and the organs to enforce the policies laid out by the UFW, and the CPC can implement its religious policies through the organizations such as the People’s Congresses at various levels, the China People’s Political Consultative Conference ... and the five religious associations.”¹⁴

This trend has not changed in modern China. At the most recent National Conference on Religion, on April 23, 2016, President Xi Jinping addressed the conference to call for adherence to socialist core values and the strengthening of supervision of religion.¹⁵ According to Xi, “We should guide and educate the religious circle and their followers with the socialist core values,

9 See Yuan-lin Tsai, 中共宗教政策的制度面分析 / “An Investigation on the Institutional Aspect of the Chinese Communist Party’s Policy toward Religion,” *Journal of the Taiwan Indigenous Studies Association* 3, no. 2 (2013): 143–48 (in Chinese), <http://www.cis.ndhu.edu.tw/files/11-1016-9554.php>; also available at <http://nccur.lib.nccu.edu.tw/bitstream/140.119/71132/1/143-160.pdf>.

10 For example, see Jerome Cohen, “Reforming China’s Civil Procedure: Judging the Courts,” *American Journal of Comparative Law* 45, no. 4 (1997): 793.

11 关于我国社会主义时期宗教问题的基本观点和基本政策 [The basic viewpoints and basic policies on religious issues during socialism period of our country], Document No. 19 of the Central Committee of the CPC, March 31, 1982, available at <http://www.mzb.com.cn/html/folder/290171.htm> (in Chinese).

12 The government does not directly select or appoint clergy, but supervises it by requiring the recording of the clergy. Article 2 of the Method for Recording Religious Teaching Professionals defines the religious teaching professional as the person who is appointed by his or her own religious organization in accordance with the appointment method of his or her own religious organization to conduct religious activities. 宗教教职人员备案办法 [Method for recording religious teaching professionals] (promulgated by the State Administration for Religious Affairs, December 29, 2006, effective March 1, 2007) No. 3 Decree of the State Administration for Religious Affairs (China), available at <http://sara.gov.cn/xxgk/zcfg/xzfgjbmz/2196.htm> (in Chinese).

13 See Lambert, “Present Religious Policy,” 123n2.

14 Tsai, “Investigation on the Institutional Aspect,” 150n10.

15 Xi said, “We should guide and educate the religious circle and their followers with the socialist core values, and guide the religious people with ideas of unity, progress, peace and tolerance.” In particular, CPC members must act as “unyielding Marxist atheists, consolidate their faith, and bear in mind the Party’s tenets.” “China Focus: Xi Calls for Improved Religious Work,” *Xinhua*, April 23, 2016, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-04/23/c_135306131.htm (in English), and http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-04/23/c_1118716540.htm (in Chinese).

and guide the religious people with ideas of unity, progress, peace and tolerance.” He continued: “In particular, CPC members must act as ‘unyielding Marxist atheists, consolidate their faith, and bear in mind the Party’s tenets.’”¹⁶ It seems that the dominance of Party leadership on religion will only be strengthened, and the limited autonomy allowed to religion and religious practice by existing policies is considered to be adequate to serve the CPC’s purpose to maintain the unity and stability of the CPC’s regime.

The second point to understand about religion and law in China has to do with the use of law as a tool to strengthen the regulation of religion and religious activities. The use of law to regulate religious activities is the result of the development of the rule-of-law rhetoric accompanied with the rapid development and further liberalization of the Chinese economy in the past almost 40 years.¹⁷ After the Great Cultural Revolution, the CPC recognized the devastating effects of its religious policies unleashed during the Revolution and made a conscious decision to adopt a more liberal policy towards religion. As discussed above, Document No. 19, issued by the CPC in 1982, opened a new page for the regulation of religion, and from then into the early 1990s, a series of laws were promulgated. The early rules are to be found mainly in various circulars or opinions issued by different ministries and the Supreme People’s Courts, which are at the lower level of regulation in China.¹⁸ It was not until 1994 that the State Council promulgated the Regulations on the Administration of Sites for Religious Activities, which was later repealed by the Regulation on Religious Affairs promulgated in 2004 by the State Council.¹⁹

The 2004 Regulation issued by the State Council is by far the most authoritative rule in relation to regulation of religion and covers such issues as administering religious bodies, religious personnel and the religious sites. Through the promulgation of this regulation, the Chinese government in fact strengthened its control over religion.²⁰ Following the promulgation of the 2004 Regulation, the

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Katrin Blasek, *Rule of Law in China: A Comparative Approach* (Berlin: Springer, 2015), 16. This is also the policy, Central Committee Decision concerning Several Major Issues in Comprehensively Advancing Governance According to Law, made by the CPC during the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Party Congress, October 23, 2014, which explicitly pointed out the importance of the role of law as an instrument of state governance. Available at <http://chinalawtranslate.com/fourth-plenum-decision/?lang=en> (last visited November 23, 2016).

¹⁸ These include 国务院批转宗教事务局、国家基本建设委员会等单位关于落实宗教团体房产政策等问题的报告 [The report on the issues of real property of religious organizations], State Administration for Religious Affairs and the State Capital Construction Commission and ratified by State Council of PRC, July 16, 1980; 最高人民法院、国务院宗教事务局关于寺庙、道观房屋产权归属问题的复函 [Reply letter on the ownership of the real property rights of the Buddhist and Taoist temples], Supreme People’s Court and the State Administration for Religious Affairs, January 27, 1981; 中共中央办公厅、国务院办公厅转发中央办公厅调查组《关于落实党的宗教政策及有关问题的调查报告》的通知 [An investigation report on the implementation of CPC’s religious policies and other issues], recirculated by the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council, December 29, 1985; 国务院宗教事务局、民政部关于印发《宗教社会团体登记管理实施办法》的通知 [The implementation measures of registration and administration of religious associations], State Administration for Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Civil Affairs, May 6, 1991.

¹⁹ 宗教活动场所管理条例 [Regulations on the administration of sites for religious activities] (promulgated by the State Council, January 31, 1994, effective January 31, 1994) No. 145 Decree of the State Council, available at http://www.law-lib.com/law/law_view.asp?id=10179 (in Chinese); 宗教事务条例, The Regulation on Religious Affairs (promulgated by the State Council, July 7, 2004, effective March 1, 2005) No. 426 Decree of the State Council, November 30, 2004, available at <http://www.sara.gov.cn/cxgk/zcfg/szfgjbmngz/331824.htm> (in English) (last visited November 23, 2016). Article 48 of this document repealed the 1994 regulation.

²⁰ For more discussion of the controlling nature of the laws concerning religion in China, see Ping Xiong, “Freedom of Religion in China under the Current Legal Framework and Foreign Religious Bodies,” in “Religion, Democracy and Civil Society,” ed. Aaron Worthen, special issue, *Brigham Young University Law Review* 2013, no. 3 (2014): 610–16.

State Administration for Religious Affairs also issued a number of provisions regarding the regulation of religion and related activities, including the registration of religious sites, the recording of religious teaching staff, the administration of the establishment of religious seminaries, and the administration of the awarding of degrees by religious seminaries.²¹

However, there is still no legislation by the People's Congress on religion at the national level. Many religious groups realized that the various regulations issued by different Ministries and at different provincial levels have become a hindrance to the conduct of religious activities. These groups hope that national legislation could standardize the activities conducted by different government agencies, and accordingly there are calls for national legislation to regulate religion among academics and religious leaders.²² Preparing national legislation would in all probability require the formulation of clearly articulated policies, resolve inconsistencies, attempt to promote some efficiency, and involve exposure for public comment. Religious organizations and communities would have an opportunity to argue within that process of review and legislative development for a more transparent, consistent, and liberal framework of regulation.

There is no sign that government is responding to these calls by preparing a more liberal framework or perspective. Indeed, it would seem that a more restrictive application of the existing regulatory framework is in fact occurring. With the emergence of global terrorism and increasing attacks by separatists in the restive northwestern region of China, the issue of the balance between freedom of religion and the prevention of religious extremism has become an urgent issue in China, and a predictable response of government is to use the law to strengthen its control over religion. In 2014, the Supreme People's Court, together with the Supreme People's Procuratorate and the Ministry of Public Security, issued an opinion in order to apply criminal law to deter the offenders involved in violent terrorism and religious extremism.²³ China then promulgated its Counterterrorism Law of the People's Republic of China in 2015.²⁴ This law includes several accounts of religious

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- 21 These provisions from the State Administration for Religious Affairs include the following: 宗教活动场所设立审批和登记办法 [The method for the establishment, approval and registration of religious sites], April 21, 2005 (which replaced the April 13, 1994, 宗教活动场所登记办法 [The method for the registration of religious sites]); 宗教教职人员备案办法 [The method for the recording of religious teaching staff], December 29, 2006; 宗教院校设立办法 [The method for the establishment of religious seminaries], August 1, 2007; 宗教院校学位授予办法 (试行) [The provisional method for the degree awarding by religious seminaries], November 5, 2012. All available at <http://www.sara.gov.cn/xxgk/zcfg/xzfgjbmzg/index.htm> (in Chinese, with some items in English).
- 22 See, for example, Xu Jiliang 徐季良, 呼唤宗教立法的缺失 [The lack of legislation of religion], March 2005, <http://www.pacilution.com/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=6716> and <http://www.fjdh.cn/wumin/2009/04/16135159371.html> (in Chinese); Liu Peng 刘澎, 关于宗教法人的专题研讨纪要 [Outline of a study on the special topic of religious legal personality], 宗教与法治「季刊」 [Religion and rule of law] no. 4 (2005), <http://www.pacilution.com/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=6568> (in Chinese); Master Daojian 道坚法师, 宗教立法已有基础 步子可以再大一点 [There are some bases for religion legislation, and a bigger step can be extended], December 15, 2012, <http://www.pacilution.com/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=6482> and http://fo.ifeng.com/a/20151215/41523749_0.shtml (in Chinese); Master Shenghui 圣辉法师, 佛教界合法权益并未完全在法律的保护下 [The legitimate interests of Buddhists are not under the protection of law completely], October 5, 2015, <http://www.pacilution.com/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=6296> and http://fo.ifeng.com/a/20150928/41483457_0.shtml (in Chinese). All sources last accessed on July 28, 2016.
- 23 "Opinions of the Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Procuratorate and the Ministry of Public Security on Several Issues Concerning the Application of Law in the Handling of Criminal Cases Involving Violent Terrorism and Religious Extremism," Supreme People's Court, Supreme People's Procuratorate, Ministry of Public Security, Document No. 34 [2014] of the Ministry of Public Security, September 9, 2014, available at http://www.spp.gov.cn/zdgg/201409/t20140922_80679.shtml (in Chinese) (last visited November 8, 2016).
- 24 The law was adopted at the 18th Session of the Standing Committee of the 12th National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China. Counterterrorism Law of the People's Republic of China (promulgated by the

extremism, although no definition of the concept is provided. The law is nonetheless considered to be a necessary tool in the effort to combat against terrorism.²⁵ The Chinese government sees the adoption of the Counterterrorism Law as a proper use of law making to pursue and maintain social order and national unity. Others, however, have expressed concern that this use of law erodes protection of human rights.²⁶ It is also reported that Xinjiang Autonomous Region, which is a Chinese Muslim congregated region, will start to draft its own regulation against religious extremism.²⁷

A third and final point about law and religion involves taking account of the continuous fear of foreign domination and localization of religion. The CPC requires that all Chinese religion and religious organizations to be independent of any foreign organizations; thus, concern about the localization of any foreign religions can be seen as a trend in China. The fear of foreign domination over religion is grounded in the history of China,²⁸ and the idea that religious bodies and affairs should be free from foreign domination has been incorporated into the Constitution of the People's Republic of China.²⁹ The ensuing regulations promulgated by the State Council³⁰ and Implementation Rules issued by the State Administration for Religious Affairs³¹ have detailed provisions to regulate the religious activities of foreigners and foreign religious bodies, which has strengthened this position of the Chinese government. The tension between the Chinese government and the Vatican, and the limited tolerance shown by the Chinese authorities towards Protestant "house churches" reflect this fear.³²

The recent address by President Xi at the National Religion Conference is further evidence of the authorities' suspicion and resistance to foreign influences in any aspect of religion in China. Xi called for a resolute guarding "against overseas infiltrations via religious means" and prevention

President of the People's Republic of China, December 27, 2015, effective January 1, 2016) No. 36 Decree of the President of the People's Republic of China, available at <http://law.npc.gov.cn/FLFG/flfgByID.action?flfgID=35320530&keyword=%E5%8F%8D%E6%81%90%E6%80%96%E4%B8%BB%E4%B9%89%E6%B3%95&zlsxid=01> (in Chinese) (last visited November 23, 2016).

- 25 Ibid. Article 4 of the law deals with eliminating extremism such as that which rises from the distortion of religious doctrine in order to incite extreme actions, such as hatred, discrimination, or violence. Article 6 requires respect of human rights and religion when dealing with terrorism issues. Article 81 deals with minor offenses related to incitement to religious extremism.
- 26 Michael Clarke, "Widening the Net: China's Anti-Terror Laws and Human Rights in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region," *International Journal of Human Rights* 14, no. 4 (2010): 542–58.
- 27 See "Xinjiang Drafts 1st Statute against Religious Extremism," *China Daily*, January 14, 2016, http://www.china.org.cn/china/2016-01/14/content_37573586.htm. Also, on August 1, 2016, the Method for Implementing the Counterterrorism Law, issued by the People's Congress of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region, came into effect.
- 28 See the white paper issued by the State Council, 中国的宗教信仰自由状况 [Freedom of religious belief in China], October 16, 1997, available at <http://www.sara.gov.cn/zcfg/bps/2222.htm> (in Chinese) and <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/zjxy/t36492.htm> (in English) (last visited November 8, 2016).
- 29 XIANFAN [CONSTITUTION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA] art. 36 (2004).
- 30 Provisions on the Administration of Religious Activities of Aliens within the Territory of the People's Republic of China (promulgated by the State Council of the People's Republic of China, January 31, 1994) No. 144 Decree of the State Council of PRC, available at <http://www.sara.gov.cn/xxgk/zcfg/xzfgjbmzg/331823.htm> (last visited November 23, 2016).
- 31 Rules for the Implementation of the Provisions on the Administration of Religious Activities of Aliens within the Territory of the People's Republic of China (promulgated by the State Administration for Religious Affairs, September 26, 2000, effective September 26, 2000), available at <http://www.sara.gov.cn/xxgk/zcfg/333505.htm> (last visited November 23, 2016).
- 32 There are only five officially recognized religions in China: Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism, and they all belong to five associations recognized officially, which are independent of their foreign counterpart organizations. The "unregistered" or "underground" churches are not considered religions. See W. Cole Durham, Jr. and Brett G. Scharffs, *Law and Religion: National, International, and Comparative Perspectives* (Austin: Wolters Kluwer, 2010), 447.

from “ideological infringement by extremists.”³³ Xi also urged religious leaders to “dig deep into doctrines and canons that are in line with social harmony and progress, and favorable for the building of a healthy and civilized society, and interpret religious doctrines in a way that is conducive to modern China’s progress and in line with our excellent traditional culture.”³⁴ The address sent out a clear message that foreign infiltration should be avoided and localized religions that cater to the CPC’s policy should be the orthodoxy.

The regulation of religion in China, which had been based upon reliance on the CPC’s religious policies, is now becoming more and more formalized and institutionalized. During this process, the dominant role of the CPC will not bend. There remains an insistence by the government that, under this patchwork of laws and regulations founded upon the policies of and put into practice by the CPC, religion and religious practice in China should be permitted but controlled in the light of the fundamental goal of social unity and harmony. An important aspect of those policies is that religion in China should be independent of any foreign influence or foreign religious organization. The legal framework for the regulation of religion in China is administrative in nature and is intended to avoid the inevitable resistance and conflict that a banning of religion would undoubtedly engender by permitting religious practice and institutions to exist but only within a close framework of regulated controls. For the foreseeable future it is highly unlikely that this existing framework of controls will be replaced by national level legislation.

It would seem that Zhao intended *Religion and Law in China* to be an English-language source book for the various laws relating to the regulation and control of religion and religious practice in China. Such a book is certainly useful and particularly useful for foreigners who do not read Chinese or who are unfamiliar with the methods needed to find the texts of laws in China. It is likely to be useful for people from foreign religious organizations and foreign scholars who have interests in the legal framework used by Chinese authorities to regulate religion in China. If there are to be future editions of this work, it would be interesting for the sake of completeness to include the texts of those laws that are mentioned but not reproduced. Further, it would be interesting to go beyond the laws themselves to include contextual material that directly informs the laws, such as some selected documents setting out the policies of the CPC concerning religion. Such material certainly should include Document No. 19 and could even include contemporary speeches by leaders that point to the thinking of the leadership about this field such as the address by President Xi at the National Religion Conference in 2016. Eventually, perhaps, Zhao could use his considerable learning and expertise to write an analytic commentary that considers the development of the government’s thinking and practice in regulating religion in China and includes some case studies, which would help readers to envisage the actual implementation of the rules and the impact of these policy choices upon society.

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³³ “China Focus: Xi Calls for Improved Religious Work.”

³⁴ *Ibid.*