

intersection of faith and politics. It provides a rich examination of the complexity of this intersection that is often lost in the more quantitative studies with which we are familiar.

***The Violence of Liberation: Gender and the Tibetan Buddhist Revival in Post-Mao China.* By Charlene E. Makley. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007. xvii + 374 pp. \$60.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper**

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Alison Denton Jones  
*Harvard University*

Charlene Makley's book works in two modes: first as history and second as an argument about the subtle and fundamental roles of gender in the negotiation of political authority and identity in the relationships between the local (Tibetan) and translocal (Chinese state). These two modes are interwoven in a complex set of arguments about the incorporation of the Labrang region, the site of a major Tibetan Buddhist monastery, into the People's Republic of China.

The history is mainly presented in the first three chapters, each of which deals with a different era in the trajectory of incorporation. Chapter 1 focuses on the pre-Maoist era, looking at the relationship between Labrang's Tibetan Buddhist authorities and various Chinese authorities from late Imperial times until the beginning of the People's Republic of China (PRC). This is an extremely nuanced treatment of the efforts by the Tibetan authorities to "pacify" the region and bring it under their control through religio-political structures of authority, while local Tibetan Buddhist authorities conducted ongoing negotiations with Chinese rulers. Chapter 2 covers the Maoist period, when Tibetans lost virtually all agency under the PRC's campaigns to "domesticate" the region and its people into productive minority citizens, and religion in all guises was banned. Chapter 3 examines the last three decades of the Reform period. Here the Chinese state has relaxed some of its interventions and is now concerned with pushing consumption and mobility to fuel the market economy. The monastery is allowed to reopen, primarily with the hopes of stimulating the economy through tourism. At the same

time, local Tibetans are engaged in efforts both to revitalize the Buddhist-based authority of the monastic and lay authorities, and to re-insulate their households from the reach of the state. Ironically, while the efforts by the Chinese state and local Tibetans in the Reform Period sometimes play at cross-purposes with regards to local autonomy, they often intersect to construct a gendered hierarchy for Tibetans that result in different consequences of the reforms for men and women.

As she traces out this history, Makley focuses on the role of gender in the contestation over authority in each era, pointing out the way that the PRC has made use of “the feminine hinge” in both the Maoist and Reform eras as part of its project of incorporation. The subsequent two chapters delve into these gender dynamics in the Reform era in greater detail. Chapter 4 highlights how Tibetan women’s sexuality has been a site of contention between Buddhist (local) and non-Buddhist (Chinese) regimes of value during the expansion of the market economy in Labrang. Chapter 5 focuses on another gendered site of contention between the Chinese state and Tibetan Buddhist authorities — the status and control of monks’ masculinities.

Although certainly sympathetic to the sufferings of Tibetans (especially women) through this process, a great strength of this book is its refusal to primordialize or uncritically valorize Tibetan Buddhism and its masculine authorities. Both the careful historical perspective on the (ongoing) construction of Buddhist monastic authority, and the attention to the unequal gender dynamics throughout each historical period, allow Makley to offer a nuanced picture of the different segments of this Tibetan Buddhism community through its incorporation into the PRC. Another strength is Makley’s insistence on considering men and women in the gendered lens.

In presenting a critical and detailed picture of the process of incorporating Labrang into the Chinese state, Makley has made a valuable contribution to our understanding of Tibetan and Chinese history and modernity. The book should also prove instructive for considering other sites of contestation over political authority and state building. Makley’s focus on gender, especially in the current Reform period, adds to the growing literature on gender’s relevance to globalization and economic change (particularly to recent works on the Reform period in China) by highlighting the dimension of ethnicity in addition to those of gender and class.

The book mainly engages with Asian Studies, history, anthropology, sociology, and especially, gender studies. Unlike many of the books

reviewed in this journal, it does not treat religion as an independent variable that has various effects on aspects of politics as dependent variable. In fact, it does not treat religion (or politics) as delineated social spheres — it would be hard for readers to recognize “religion” as a player in this book, if you mean religion in the taken-for-granted Western sense. Makley’s recognition and depiction of the multifarious and overlapping registers of religion and politics (and gender) in her focus on struggles over authority and identity should be applauded — it is both accurate to the context and forces us to see the connections between these various sources of authority.

In my eyes, the book has two primary drawbacks. First, the interwoven arguments are complex and thus hard to draw out easily. Second, the language and extensive use of linguistic anthropology make the text even denser. This is not a book suitable for undergraduates, or even beginning graduate students, except perhaps in the area of gender studies. Many others will find the tone and complex language frustrating and grating.

***The Political Origins of Religious Liberty.* By Anthony Gill. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008. xi + 263 pp. \$75.00 cloth, \$23.99 paper**

***Liberty of Conscience: In Defense of America’s Tradition of Religious Equality.* By Martha C. Nussbaum. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2008. 406 pp. \$28.95 cloth**

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Ann Davies  
*Beloit College*

In *The Political Origins of Religious Liberty*, Anthony Gill employs a rational choice framework to explain government decisions to regulate or deregulate religion in the American colonies, Latin America, and the former Soviet Union, while arguing that previous accounts have focused too heavily on philosophical ideas at the expense of providing a convincing account of the actual causes underlying the emergence (or denial) of religious freedom. In *Liberty of Conscience*, Martha Nussbaum joins the ranks of those who focus on the philosophical and legal traditions associated with freedom of conscience as she seeks to