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Coalition and Hegemony: Religion's Role in the Progress of Modernization in Reformed China

*Zeng Chuanhui**

I. INTRODUCTION

In the past thirty-two years, mainland China has risen from one of the poorest countries to the second largest economic power in the world.¹ The sweeping but stable progress of modernization in China may be listed among the most important events in human history.² What are the proper cultural factors contributing to this marvel? What is the role of religion in this progress?

According to Max Weber, the Protestant ethic was coincident with the rise of capitalism in Europe.³ Protestantism is obviously irrelevant to the situation in China because Protestants are still a very small minority to this day,⁴ and Calvinistic ethic has little influence there.

During the 1970s and 80s when “the four little dragons in East Asia”—Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Korea—took the lead in modernization in Asia, many Neo-Confucian scholars ascribed the great success to Confucian morality, which still somewhat influences the cultural mores of these countries. China was the cradle of Confucianism and, of course, has been traditionally regarded as the major enclave of Confucian culture. Nevertheless, Confucianism has been criticized and rejected by mainstream intellectuals as an opponent to modernity since

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1. James Altucher, *There's No Stopping China*, NEW YORK POST, Aug. 1, 2010, http://www.nypost.com/p/news/business/there_no_stopping_china_0H8GJaMgzHCYenL038Yh2N.

2. SUISHENG ZHAO, CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY: PRAGMATISM AND STRATEGIC BEHAVIOR 248 (2004).

3. See generally MAX WEBER, THE PROTESTANT ETHIC AND THE SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM (Talcott Parsons trans., Dover Publ'ns 2003) (1958).

4. According to the census data conducted by our institute, in 2009 about 1.8% of the population in mainland China declared themselves as Protestants. See also Anthony Lam, *A Review of the Development of Christianity in China from the Latest Edition of Blue Book of Religions* (2010), 159 TRIPOD 54 (2010) (“In China, Protestants make up about 1.8 percent of the total population.” (citing THE CHINESE ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, BLUE BOOK OF RELIGIONS 191 (2010))).

the May Fourth Movement in 1919.⁵ After the Chinese Communist Party (“CCP”) came into power in 1949, and especially during the Cultural Revolution, Confucianism was treated as one of the “putrescent” cultures that should be thrown away “into the trash pile of history.”⁶ In the past several years, conditions have changed only slightly, but the government and some intellectuals are trying to make use of Confucian morality to help rebuild social order. The voices of neo-Confucianism are just beginning to echo from the studies of scholars.

Are the above observations sufficient for us to conclude that religion has been basically absent from the modernization of reformed China? How can we properly evaluate the role of religion in that country? This Article briefly examines these questions. Part II discusses China’s system of elite governance and how it has become more open to religion. Part III examines religion’s influence on China’s developing culture. Finally, Part IV discusses sources of domestic and foreign resistance to China’s changing hegemony.

II. RELIGION PLAYS A PART IN THE ELITE COALITION

A. *The Elitist Governance*

The Chinese government claims that China is a socialist country, but its version of socialism is fundamentally different from the traditional sense in that (1) it totally embraces the market economy, which was purported to be one of the lethal factors of capitalism; (2) most of the state-owned enterprises have been privatized; and (3) the disparity in the distribution of wealth in China today is among the greatest in the world.⁷

5. See KAI-WING CHOW, *BEYOND THE MAY FOURTH PARADIGM: IN SEARCH OF CHINESE MODERNITY* 162 (2008).

6. See WILLIAM THEODORE DE BARY & WEI-MING TU, *CONFUCIANISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS* 253 (1998). There were many popular slogans during the Cultural Revolution, such as “Demolish the Four Olds,” which referred to the old thinking, old culture, old customs and old habits, and “Sweep all the putrescent feudalism, capitalist and revisionist contrabands into the trash pile of history with the iron besom of proletariat.” “The feudalism contrabands” refers particularly to the cultures from China itself before the ruling of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP); “the capitalist contrabands” refers to those from the western countries; and the “revisionist contrabands” refers to those from the Soviet Union. See also Editorial, *Sweep Up All Kinds of Ox Monsters and Snake Demons* (横扫一切牛鬼蛇神), *PEOPLE’S DAILY*, June 1, 1966 (later labeled as the “Declaration of the Cultural Revolution”); Red Guards from the Middle School Attached to Tsinghua University, *Long Live the Revolutionary Rebellious Spirit of the Proletariat* (无产阶级的革命造反精神万岁), 37 *PEKING REVIEW* 20, 20–21, Sept. 9, 1966, available at <http://www.marxists.org/subject/china/peking-review/1966/PR1966-37p.htm> (commended by Chairman Mao, published in Red Flag Journal, and labeled the “Declaration of Red Guards”).

7. BJÖRN GUSTAFSSON, SHI LI & TERRY SICULAR, *INEQUALITY AND PUBLIC POLICY IN*

According to traditional Marxism, public ownership and distribution of goods in proportion to work are two basic standards of socialism.⁸ In today's China, state ownership and collective ownership have been transformed in favor of joint-stock ownership.⁹ Social wealth has become more and more concentrated in the holdings of a small percentage of the population. In 2008, the Gini coefficient was around .469,¹⁰ approaching an alarming level.

Thus China no longer has a socialist system, at least in the traditional sense. Nor does it have a capitalist system. The major difference between the system of China and that of other Western capitalist countries is the system of governance. The Chinese people have not voted to select their president directly. This does not mean that there is no democracy at all, or that the Chinese government

lacks legitimacy. China's special way of governance and the government's high efficiency have supported its legitimacy.

Some scholars of politics named this system of governance "neo-

CHINA 118–144 (2008).

8. *See generally* ADRIAN CHAN, CHINESE MARXISM (2003).

9. The ownership reform of state corporations started in the mid-1990s. The state corporations have been reorganized as limited or joint-stock companies. The methods of reform are diverse and include combination, annexation, leasing, responsibility contract, alienation, bankruptcy, and, of course, joint-stock. The reform proposals are made or approved by the parent units who control the ownership. The goal of reform is to establish the modern company system, which allows the executive agency independence in day-to-day decision making involving production, hiring, and contracts with other businesses. In most cases, the management of the reformed companies evolved to become the major stockholders. By 2005, most state corporations were privatized. For example, in the three provinces in Northeast China (Manchuria) where state corporations used to flourish, 62.5% of large industrial corporations were reformed, and in Liaoning Province, state ownership fell below 50%. All province or county-controlled ownerships were transformed in Jilin Province, including the carving up of 90% of 3,000 midsized and small state corporations and 85% of the large corporations. As a result, a significant number of private companies are formerly state-owned. In a sample test conducted in 2002, 25.7% of private companies used to be state-owned or collectively owned all around China. In East China, this figure is even higher, up to 45.6%. *See Report by Gao Liang, Director of the Center for State-Owned Property Under the National Development and Reform Commission, SCIENCE NETWORK* (Nov. 20, 2007, 10:49 AM), <http://bbs.sciencenet.cn/home.php?mod=space&uid=2862&do=blog&id=11346>; *see also* George Tseo et al., *The Reform of Chinese State-Owned Enterprises Through Employee Ownership of Stock and Participation in Management* 1–2 (unpublished manuscript), *available at* <http://cog.kent.edu/lib/TseoPeng-zhuLihai.pdf>.

10. ROGER A. ARNOLD, *ECONOMICS* 578 (2005). The Gini coefficient is a measure of inequality of a distribution developed by the Italian statistician Corrado Gini in 1912. It is often used to measure income inequality. It is a number between zero and one, where zero corresponds to perfect equality (e.g. everyone has the same income) and one corresponds to perfect inequality (e.g. one person has all the income and everyone else has zero income).

authoritarianism,” which was quite popular in the 1980s through the early 1990s.¹¹ As to rampant corruption, some scholars called it crony capitalism, but I prefer to characterize it as elite governance. I do not adopt the term “elitism” because it has multivocal and derogatory meanings. The elite governance I refer to in this Article is the style of political practice in reformed China, which implies that the government rules with the cooperation of select groups whose members can claim great achievements, widespread social influence, or a high level of specialized training. The gist of elite governance in the Chinese context is often expressed as a popular slogan: “Experts manage state affairs” (*Zhuan jia zhi guo*).¹² Accordingly, most of the “third generation leading group”¹³ headed by Jiang Zemin and the “Hu-Wen leading group”¹⁴ had technocratic backgrounds. This occurred partly because technocrats are better at accumulating good performances and hence get promoted faster in an economy-centered era.¹⁵ It was also partly an intentional selection because Deng Xiaoping, the leader of the CCP, and his think tank adopted a strategy of technocracy.¹⁶ This strategy successfully avoided

11. In the early period of reform, Chinese people were concentrated on the disenchantment from the deified leadership of Chairman Mao, but soon after the nation became ideologically confused. The expansive power of local governments presented a significant challenge to the authority of the central government. In fact, some intellectuals and high officials were eager to introduce radical political reform, which resulted in more social turmoil. These intellectuals and officials included Fang Lizhi (方励之), former professor and president of the University of Science and Technology of China, Yan Jiaqi (严家其), former professor and director of the Institute of Politics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and Hu Yaobang, the former secretary-general of the CCP. In response, Mr. Deng Xiaoping repeatedly stressed authority. He drew a new road map: strong authority of the ruling party, where the CCP and leading groups would secure social order, make government efficient, and cushion market-oriented, economical reform. Some scholars, like Xiao Gongqin (萧功秦), professor at Shanghai Jiaotong University, Wu Jiayang (吴稼祥), then a staff member of the Central Committee’s Research Department and now a freelance writer, and Zhang Binjiu (张炳九), professor at Peking University, adapted the neo-authoritarian theory to this situation. See AN INTRODUCTION TO NEO-AUTHORITARIANISM, <http://baike.baidu.com/view/2290869.htm> (last visited Sept. 2, 2011); see also TAKASHI INOGUCHI & MATTHEW CARLSON, GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY IN ASIA 144 (2006).

12. ZHIDONG HAO, INTELLECTUALS AT A CROSSROADS 227 (2003).

13. This phrase refers to the generation of party leaders during current President Hu Jintao’s presidency.

14. See JOHN WONG & HONGYI LAI, CHINA INTO THE HU-WEN ERA: POLICY INITIATIVES AND CHALLENGES 7 (2006).

15. *Id.*

16. Kaiser Kuo, *Made in China: The Revenge of the Nerds*, TIME, June 27, 2001, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,165453,00.html>. This strategy of selecting leaders with science and technology backgrounds results in a different leadership dynamic than that of many Western countries such as the United States, where most political leaders have legal or social science backgrounds.

the waste caused by rifts between the leftist vis-à-vis rightist ideologies and cushioned the implementation of pragmatism. The technocracy, with the cooperation of elites from other circles, formed a distinctive elite governance.

Elite governance differs from neo-authoritarianism in that it accepts low political involvement from the grass roots but does not exclude them.¹⁷ It lurches, though cautiously, towards universal suffrage; it is not tantamount to cronyism in that it demonstrates strong will, tries to determine the best way to fight against corruption and disparity, and allows vertical social mobility.

After the Tiananmen Square Movement in 1989, the Chinese government launched a nationwide reindoctrination and rectification movement to reestablish its authority on the one hand, and insisted on the implementation of reform strategies on the other.¹⁸ The policies, most of which had been designed by the former leading group stagnated under the radical movement in 1989 but were realized under the powerful endorsement and resuscitation of the late paramount leader Deng Xiaoping's Southern Tour in the early spring of 1992.¹⁹ The governing Party has addressed the economic interests of the business elites by adopting a joint-stock system and has focused on shared ideology and decision making with the intellectual elites.²⁰ There is also more separation among the various functions of party, government, business, and education. Other improvements include a more independent judiciary system and a more professional civil service.²¹ It is true that the Party today still controls the appointment of top officials at every level, and top officials hold concurrent posts of both party and administration in many cases, but the Party and the government are far less involved in day-to-day management (except, of course, in sensitive political areas). Experiments with the election of village leaders by universal voting have been extended throughout the countryside.²² In some places, elections to

17. See generally INOBUCHI & CARLSON, *supra* note 11.

18. See generally YIJIANG DING, CHINESE DEMOCRACY AFTER TIANANMEN (2001).

19. JAMES A. R. MILES, THE LEGACY OF TIANANMEN: CHINA IN DISARRAY 88 (1997). Following the Tiananmen Square Movement, Deng Xiaoping toured several southern provinces to encourage continued economic reform but not political reform.

20. See generally JUAN ANTONIO FERNÁNDEZ & LEILA FERNÁNDEZ-STEMBRIDGE, CHINA'S STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISE REFORMS: AN INDUSTRIAL AND CEO APPROACH (2007).

21. See generally Chris X. Lin, *A Quiet Revolution: An Overview of China's Judicial Reform*, 4 ASIAN-PAC. L. & POL'Y J. 255 (2003).

22. Dingjian Cai, *The Development of Constitutionalism in the Transition of Chinese Society*, 19 COLUM. J. ASIAN L. 1, 18-19 (2005).

local legislatures have become more democratic, allowing independent candidates.²³ In 2002, the Party revised its charter in order to reflect the growth of a new bourgeoisie and allowed private entrepreneurs to join the Party. And the Party has recently encouraged greater public involvement in the drafting of some local legislation by holding open hearings.²⁴ It was reported that more than 5,000 experts from all walks of life participated in the drafting of The Eleventh Five-Year Plan, which was passed by the national congress in June 2006.²⁵

B. The Return and Development of the United Front Policy

In 1978, with the ascension of Deng Xiaoping to power and the introduction of a profound reform program, party leaders also reached a consensus that they must shift the role of the party from revolution to governing and bring back the United Front policy—the coalition strategy.²⁶ In October 1978, the Central Committee issued a document to “address two emergent questions on religious work,” which were (1) to “distinguish the two contradictions with different natures”²⁷ and “earnestly and roundly implement the constitution’s article dealing with the freedom of religious belief,” and (2) to return a few venues for open worship.²⁸ This document initiated a journey to bring religious organizations into the new coalition. In the next year, the Central Committee once again approved its United Front Work Department’s (UFD) request for abolishing the “hat of capitulationism”²⁹ put on the

23. *Id.*

24. See Richard J. Ferris Jr. & Hongjun Zhang, *The Challenges of Reforming an Environmental Legal Culture: Assessing the Status Quo and Looking at Post-WTO Admission Challenges for the People’s Republic of China*, 14 GEO. INT’L ENVTL. L. REV. 429, 445–46 (2002).

25. For reports on the independent legislature candidates, which captured much public attention, see *Shenzhen Futian District People’s Congress General Elections*, CHINA YOUTH (May 21, 2003, 2:25 AM), http://zqb.cyol.com/content/2003-05/21/content_666412.htm. Some earlier independent cases occurred even in the 1980s and 1990s, but few people paid attention to them. See *Shenzhen’s Wang Liang is Not the “First Independent Candidate,”* CLUB.KDNET.Net (May 26, 2003, 8:59 AM), <http://club.kdnet.net/dispbbs.asp?boardid=2&id=597224&page=1#597224>.

26. See George Finch, *Modern Chinese Constitutionalism: Reflections of Economic Change*, 15 WILLAMETTE J. INT’L L. & DISP. RESOL. 75, 92–93 (2007).

27. This refers to the sometimes inconsistent characteristics of religion.

28. In October 1978, the Central Committee of the CCP forwarded a report from the Central United Front Work Department of the CCP. The name of the report was *Urgent Need to Address Two Current Religious Policy-Related Issues*. This file is one of the files possessed by the Central United Front Work Department of the CCP.

29. “Capitulationism,” from the word “capitulant,” refers to thoughts or behaviors that harm national or class interests and surrender to the enemy or another country. The “hat” here is actually the abbreviated name for a “clown’s long hat,” which was a tall conical paper hat filled with large

heads of the organs of the united front, ethnic and religious work during the Cultural Revolution throughout the country.³⁰ This actually was a formal top-down purge, which was part of the new coalition strategy. This purge cleared the way for religious participation in public life.

Nevertheless, the new coalition strategy encountered much resistance from the “leftists” in the early post-Maoist era, which required a more sophisticated ideological justification. In September 1979, Deng Xiaoping gave an order to legalize ethnic and religious policies.³¹ In the coming years, Hu Yaobang, the late general secretary of the CCP, presided personally over attempts to articulate a new set of policies acceptable to all the political viewpoints in that period. In March 1982, the Central Committee issued the well-known Document 19,³² which today is still the working guideline and theoretical foundation for the CCP in dealing with religious affairs.³³ It highlighted from a Marxist viewpoint that religion is a historical-social phenomenon, meaning that religion is not only a kind of ideology but also an important social force, and has a natural process of origination, development, and death.³⁴ It stressed the five characteristics of religion—longevity, popularity, ethnic diversity, international appeal, and complex nature—which were articulated in the 1950s by Li Weihang, a late director of central UFWD.³⁵ These five characteristics were later reduced to the three characteristics—longevity, popularity and complex nature—in 2002 by Ye Xiaowen, the present director of the State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA).³⁶ This theoretical formulation led to the conclusion that the freedom of religious practice should not be a policy

characters spouting insulting labels and put on the head of a “bad element” at a denunciation conference during the Cultural Revolution. In the Cultural Revolution, the Red Guards put the label of capitulationism (投降主义) on the United Front Work and stopped it.

30. In 1979, a report filed by the Central United Front Work Department of the Chinese Communist Party was approved. The name of the report was *A Request for Abolishing the Hat of Capitulationism of All United Front, Ethnic, and Religious Work Through the Country*.

31. DENG XIAOPING'S COMMENTS ON UNITED FRONT WORK 161 (1991).

32. In 1982, the Central Committee of CCP published Document Number 19. The name of the document was *The Basic Opinion and Policy of Religious Issues During the Period of Socialism in China*. An English translation can be found in DONALD E. MACINNIS, *RELIGION IN CHINA TODAY: POLICY AND PRACTICE* 8-26 (1989).

33. See Lawrence Cox, *Freedom of Religion in China: Religious, Economic and Social Disenfranchisement for China's Internal Migrant Workers*, 8 *ASIAN-PAC. L. & POL'Y J.* 370, 374 (2007).

34. *Id.*

35. HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH/ASIA, *CHINA: STATE CONTROL OF RELIGION* 117 (1997).

36. Ye Xiaowen, *Socialist Religions*, 5 QIU SHI (求是) (2003), available at <http://www.dingan.gov.cn/Article/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=954>.

of expedience but must be guided and supervised under laws and regulations.

When the third generation leading group came to power in 1992, some subtle changes had taken place in the religious situation in China: most religious properties that could be returned had been handed over to the respective religious organizations, the focus of religious affairs had switched to daily coordination and supervision, the religious “boom” enabled temples and churches to play a larger role in society, the former socialist countries had imploded, China had entered the WTO, and China was more deeply involved in globalization. All of these developments ushered in a whole new range of challenges.³⁷ In November 1993, President Jiang Zemin’s address at the National United Front Work Conference³⁸ updated the CCP’s views. The address was later condensed into the “four phrases,” the last of which was appended to Jiang Zemin’s report at the Sixteenth Party Congress held in November 2002.³⁹ The four phrases are: (1) implement the Party’s religious policy thoroughly; (2) administer the religious affairs according to the law; (3) positively guide the mutual adaptation between religion and socialist society; and (4) insist on the principle of independence and self-administration.⁴⁰

C. Religious Organizations’ Involvement in the Elite Coalition

With the implementation of the new policies, all of the five major religions—Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism—have enjoyed three decades of growth and have multiplied their memberships and properties.⁴¹ According to the government’s incomplete statistics, in 2004 there were over 100 million religious

37. See generally, Kim-Kwong Chan, *China’s Socioeconomic Changes and the Implications for the Religion-State Dynamic in China*, 2004 BYU L. REV. 325.

38. The reliable full text of the document can be found on some government websites.

39. Jiang Zemin, *Build a Well-Off Society in an All-Round Way and Create a New Situation in Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics* (Nov. 8, 2002), <http://www.china-un.ch/eng/ljzg/smwx/t85795.htm> (unofficial English version of the report delivered at the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China).

40. *Id.* at V.1. The Chinese text of the four phrases is: “全面贯彻党的宗教信仰自由政策, 依法管理宗教事务, 积极引导宗教与社会主义社会相适应, 坚持独立自主自办的原则。”

41. *Cf.* Chan, *supra* note 37, at 334–35 (“The growth in religion includes the officially sanctioned faiths, such as Christianity and Buddhism, as well as . . . unsanctioned religious sects”); Ian Johnson, *The Rise of the Tao*, N.Y. TIMES, Nov. 5, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/07/magazine/07religion-t.html?pagewanted=all#> (“It is impossible to miss the religious building boom, with churches, temples and mosques dotting areas where none existed a few years ago.”).

followers,⁴² more than 110,000 religious venues, some 330,000 religious personnel, and at least 74 religious schools throughout China. This included 8 million laypersons, 4,000 clergy, and over 4,600 venues affiliated with Catholicism. Over 16 million lay persons, some 18,000 clergy, and 37,000 churches and temporary venues belonged to Protestant religions. Since the 1980s, approximately 600 Protestant churches have been reopened or newly organized each year in China; through 1995 to 2004, the annual increase rate of Protestants was above 5%.⁴³ In 2009, the Institute of World Religions conducted a large-scale sampling of 63,680 questionnaires from 2,718 villages and communities in 321 counties. The results indicate that there are 23 million Protestants in China.⁴⁴

This religious “boom” cost all levels of government substantial energy and money to vacate occupants from temples and churches and transplant residences for planned new religious buildings. The government also provided subsidies to repair and maintain the old religious buildings that were declared cultural relics. In 2002, for example, the central government appropriated 330 million yuan (\$46 million) for the second-stage rehabilitation of the three famous ancient lamasery compounds in Tibet (Potala, Norbuglinkha, and Sagya). These repairs were actually completed seven years later at a much higher price of 380 million yuan.⁴⁵ In some cases the government also reimbursed needy religious organizations for operating expenses. This financial

42. Johnson, *supra* note 41 (noting that previous surveys showed 100 million religious followers and more recent surveys suggest there are around 300 million religious followers).

43. These data came from the Central UFDW’s statistics in 2004. The annual increase rate is calculated by the author. The statistics are collected down-up through the governmental hierarchy and are restricted to a very small circle without public availability. Nevertheless, a slightly earlier version of similar numbers was announced in October 1997 in the bilingual white paper *Freedom of Religious Belief in China*, available at <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/zjxy/t36492.htm>. According to SARA, the Protestant believers numbered 10.57 million in 1995, and 16 million by the end of 2003. The equation is: $10.57 \times (1+x)^8 = 16$ (million). The resolution is 0.532. Thus, the annual rate is above 5%.

44. RELIGION BLUE BOOK: CHINESE RELIGION REPORT (2010) 190–212 (Jin Ze & Qiu Yonghui eds., 2011); see also *Survey: Over 23 Million Christians in China*, 9 CHINA LINKS NEWSL. 46 (Aug.–Sept. 2010), available at http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/links/china/docs/aug_sept_2010.pdf.

45. *Potala Palace, Norbulingka and Sakya Monastery Maintenance Works Started for Three Key Cultural Relics Protection*, CCTV.COM (June 26, 2002, 8:34 PM) <http://www.cctv.com/news/xwlb/20020626/345.html>; *Potala Palace, Norbulingka and Sakya Monastery Maintenance Works Completed Three Major Cultural Relics*, XINHUA NEWS AGENCY (Aug. 23, 2009, 10:47 PM), http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2009-08/23/content_11932451.htm; see also Jing Xiaolei, *Investing in Tibet’s Culture*, BEIJING REV., http://www.bjreview.com.cn/quotes/txt/200805/04/content_114130.htm (last updated May 4, 2008).

support enables religions to share in public prosperity and greatly consolidates the foundation of the elite coalition.

There are some conduits for religions to share power, ideas, and honor with public authorities. Religious personalities, having recovered from the injustices they suffered during the Cultural Revolution, became saint-like figures in their respective religions. As a result, thousands of younger persons have graduated from religious schools and become clergy, and many religious students who studied abroad have come back to serve their flocks.⁴⁶ Thousands of these religious leaders have ascended to be members of the gradually expanding elite coalition, the major organizations of which are the congresses, political consultant committees, and youth leagues at the national, provincial, municipal, and county levels. This provides an active and efficient way to represent the voices of the believers and

provides them a way to participate in the decision making, supervision, and policy-improving processes.

These coalition members are selected rather than elected. The selection procedure is confusing to outsiders and varies by zone, organization, and time period. The general pattern seems to be that the inner circle of one religious organization determines and submits the candidates to the related government and party organs—religious affairs bureaus, United Front Work Departments, congresses, or committees—for approval. Although the public opinion and reputations of the candidates are important variables for consideration, recognition within the elite groups plays a more direct role in the selection process.

III. THE ADAPTATION AND CONTRIBUTION OF RELIGIOUS CULTURE TO THE GESTATING CULTURAL HEGEMONY

A. Challenges that Have Prompted Remolding the Cultural Hegemony

There are certainly cultural factors behind Chinese success. Unlike European countries, North America, and “the four little dragons in East

46. The national statistics of graduates from the religious schools are not accessible, but some local governments have published their numbers. For example, the five religious schools in Shanghai Municipality have trained more than 1,000 graduates since the 1980s. Details are available at the Shanghai government website: <http://www.shmzw.gov.cn/gb/mzw/shzj/zjyx/index.html>. See also INFORMATION OFFICE OF THE STATE COUNCIL OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, FREEDOM OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF IN CHINA, at IV (Oct. 1997), available at <http://sa.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/zfbps/t154430.htm>.

Asia,” modern China has no dominant religious culture. The functioning cultural elements that have facilitated the fast growth of the reform era are the harmonious cultural bonds, which are a product of China’s long history. The people share a common national language, ethno-psychology, and customs. No religious background can be found in the existent political system. Laws may be incomplete but are quite simple and practical. The governing party sticks to Marxism as its leading ideology, and keeps honing new discourses and propagating new ideas to shape the national mindset. Therefore, it is easy for the government to reach agreement, and the execution of new ideas encounters low resistance.

This way of governance successfully holds mainland China in a monolithic configuration, but the legitimacy of the dominant ideology has faced great challenges in the post-Cold War years; tension between the ideal and social reality is becoming ever more salient. When confronted with sensitive questions, such as the yawning disparity between the rich and poor, human rights, democracy, freedom, and openness, the government often has no

consistent theories with which to defend itself, regardless of whether the charges come from home or abroad.⁴⁷

The post-Cold War global situation has also given the Chinese elite a tug. While the vocal discussions on Samuel Huntington’s theory on the conflicts of civilizations rippled through the nation,⁴⁸ the Kosovo and Iraq Wars, the September 11, 2001 incident, and the Color Revolutions in the former Soviet Union states made the Chinese elite think more deeply on how culture matters, even though they might not agree with Huntington’s conclusions.

B. Antonio Gramsci’s Theory of Cultural Hegemony

In 1992, *Selected Writings* by Gramsci was translated by the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau and published by Renmin Press.⁴⁹ Antonio Gramsci was a founder of the Communist movement in Italy.

47. See Bryan Edelman & James T. Richardson, *Falun Gong and the Law: Development of Legal Social Control in China*, 6 NOVA RELIGIO: J. ALTERNATIVE & EMERGENT RELIGIONS 312, 326–27 (2003).

48. See Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations?*, 72 FOREIGN AFF. 22 (1993).

49. ANTONIO GRAMSCI, *SELECTED WRITINGS* (Central Compilation and Translation Bureau trans., Renmin Press 1992).

He spent a lot of energy discussing issues affecting Marxist theory in his Prison Notebooks after the worldwide economic depression of the early 1930s, when Marxism failed to materialize in the most advanced capitalist nations.⁵⁰ Although Marxism did not become widespread, it was not defeated either. Capitalist governments managed to survive the economic and political crisis and stabilize themselves by making socialist compromises and transformations. This situation created the need for new theories to explain the extraordinary resilience of capitalism and for new strategies different from those that had worked in Russia. Gramsci's theory was developed in opposition to Idealist philosophers, represented by Benedetto Croce,⁵¹ and to the mechanist materialists, represented by Karl Kautsky,⁵² as well as other theorists of the Second International.⁵³ Gramsci opposed Kautsky's idea of political inactivity, which proposed that the lower classes wait passively for the "objective moment" when the crises of capitalism produces system collapse, but he agreed with Lenin and Luxemburg that class struggle could create conditions for socialist revolution. He especially emphasized cultural struggle, which resembles Croceanism to some degree.⁵⁴ To develop this cultural struggle, he put the concept of cultural hegemony at the center of his vast and loose network of ideas.

What is most interesting to contemporary Chinese intellectuals is Gramsci's departure from the definition of hegemony, which was widely accepted to be a strategy of political leadership that was based upon a

50. See ANTONIO GRAMSCI, *Americanism and Fordism*, SELECTIONS FROM THE PRISON NOTEBOOKS 277 (Quintin Hoare & Geoffrey Nowell Smith eds., trans., 1971).

51. Widely regarded as the "foremost Italian philosopher of the first half of the 20th century," Croce thoroughly studied and eventually rejected Marxism before founding *La Critica*, "a journal of cultural criticism, in which . . . he published nearly all his writings and reviewed all of the most important historical, philosophical, and literary work that was being produced in Europe at the time." A. Robert Caponigri, *Benedetto Croce*, BRITANNICA, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/143635/Benedetto-Croce#> (last visited Sept. 4, 2011).

52. A leading Marxist theorist during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Kautsky's writings made him "largely responsible for Marxism's early spread." *Kautsky, Karl*, ENCYCLOPEDIA.COM, http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Karl_Johann_Kautsky.aspx (last visited Sept. 4, 2011). For Kautsky's view on materialism, see KARL KAUTSKY, *ETHICS AND THE MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY* (John B. Askew trans., 1906), available at <http://snap3.uas.mx/RECURSO1/pensamiento%20economico/LECTURAS%20HISTORIA%20DEL%20PENSAMIENTO%20ECON%20MICO.%20INGL%90S/Kautsky.%20Ethics%20and%20the%20Materialist%20Conception%20of%20History.pdf>.

53. See GRAMSCI, *supra* note 50, at 343 n.28.

54. *Id.* at xxiii (noting that Gramsci critiqued Crocean philosophy's reduction of the "struggle of opposites to a merely conceptual dialectic" because it inadequately addressed the "real conflicts" inherent in a class society).

fundamental alliance with the peasantry (Lenin and Mao). He articulated that it is not the economic foundation that determines power structure directly, but rather cultural hegemony. His version of Marxism repudiates linear and mechanistic thinking, which reduces culture and ideas, including religion, to direct, passive reflections of economic forces. He views culture as a semiautonomous sphere of society that plays an important mediating role in the totality of social life. Revolution struggle, for Gramsci, is ultimately a matter of education. Education in Italy at that time was still a rigidly bourgeois affair. In his view, the lower classes must generate their own “organic intellectuals”⁵⁵ capable of creating new forms of hegemony by shattering the universalistic claims of old worldviews. These organic intellectuals can function within the ranks of a social stratum or class in an educative or leadership role in association with trade unions, workers’ councils, and especially political parties.⁵⁶ The professionals—such as managers, engineers, advertisers, scholars, and journalists—are the organic intellectuals of bourgeoisie, but clergy are not organic to either the proletariat or bourgeoisie. They are traditional intellectuals who appear to serve universal values, but whose careers, regardless of their class of origin, are tied to the church, which is rooted in earlier social formations such as feudalism.⁵⁷ Thus, Gramsci shares the common Marxist view that religion is the residue of past time, but he provides a more concrete analysis. For Gramsci, religion never exists without conflicting with ideas that express the “protest of the oppressed.” The example is popular religion, which is a conception of life and the world that, on many points, conflicts with official conceptions of the world. “Every religion . . . is in reality a multiplicity of distinct and often contradictory religions” that vary along class lines.⁵⁸ Gramsci even believed that popular religion in Italy was, at best, a source of passive resistance.

Furthermore, Gramsci extended hegemony to include the bourgeoisie as well as other social classes. Although one class would inevitably become the hegemonic class, this view “presupposes that account be taken of the interests and tendencies of the groups over which hegemony is to be exercised, and that a certain compromise equilibrium should be formed.”⁵⁹ In other words, the dominant class will not only exert a

55. *Id.* at 3.

56. *Id.* at 3–4.

57. *Id.* at 22.

58. *Id.* at 420.

59. *Id.* at 161; ANTONIO GRAMSCI, *Hegemony, Relations of Force, Historical Bloc*, in AN

moral-intellectual leadership but will also go beyond its own “economic-corporate” interests in order to ally itself within a social bloc of forces (a historical bloc) that represents a basis of compromise and consent.⁶⁰ In a sense, he supposed that the triumphant group was evolving to represent the universal advancement of society beyond the pitfalls of capitalism. This moral and intellectual leadership in hegemony is Gramsci’s addition to Lenin’s views.

There are two ways a class can become hegemonic: transformation and expansion. Transformation is how the Moderate Party of Risorgimento won forces for unification.⁶¹ A gradual but continuous absorption, even of antagonistic groups, resulted in a bastard hegemony, merely passive consensus, the neutralization of the masses, and a “passive revolution.”⁶² Expansive hegemony operates by means of active consensus, the adoption of popular interests by the hegemonic class, and the creation of “national-popular will.”⁶³ Only a fundamental class (which occupies one of the two poles in relations of production) can become hegemonic, as hegemony is ethico-political and economic. Sooner or later, the bourgeoisie comes up against limits of its hegemony because it is an exploiting class and then uses the police, allowing the working class to bring about expansive hegemony.⁶⁴

Gramsci’s theory seems more consonant with the Marxist context in China than Huntington’s. His theory was read, discussed, and applied to explain and guide government policy. The party and government spoke frequently of the cultural issues. In his report at the Sixteenth Party Congress held in November 2002, President Jiang Zemin said that China should

[a]ttach equal importance to both material and spiritual civilization and run the country by combining the rule of law with the rule of virtue. Socialist spiritual civilization is an important attribute of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Basing ourselves on China’s realities, we must carry forward the fine tradition of our national culture and absorb the achievements of foreign cultures in building socialist spiritual civilization. We should unceasingly upgrade the ideological and ethical

ANTONIO GRAMSCI READER: SELECTED WRITINGS, 1916-1935, at 189, 211 (David Forgacs ed., 2000) [hereinafter GRAMSCI READER].

60. See GRAMSCI, *supra* note 50, at 161.

61. See *id.* at 57–59.

62. *Id.*

63. *Id.* at 130–133.

64. See GRAMSCI READER, *supra* note 59, at 189–221.

standards as well as the scientific and cultural qualities of the entire people so as to provide a strong motivation and intellectual support for the modernization drive.⁶⁵

The party and the government realized the importance of culture, and adopted a two-hand strategy: to ally and regulate. The government keeps tight control of ideology and censors the media and internet to block subversive dissidents from being heard, while at the same time compromising with, absorbing, and supporting other

mainstream ideologies, including those of the functional religious organizations.⁶⁶

C. Religions' Engagement in Cultural Hegemony

In order to respond to the hegemonic actions of the government, the five major religious organizations all propagate discourses relevant to their own doctrines in the name of serving society and promoting people's well-being, reflected in the slogans of these religious organizations.⁶⁷ The "humanistic Buddhism," coined by Master Taixu in the 1920s and elaborated by Zhao Puchu, the former president of the Chinese Buddhist Association, has been a common public doctrine in modern Chinese Buddhist history. The theology of love, formulated by Bishop Ding Guangxun, the former president of the Chinese Christian Council, is the working theological thought in China today.⁶⁸

As Janice Wickeri, the editor of Bishop Ding's collected writings *Love Never Ends*, commented,

Beginning with God as Lover rather than with human beings as sinners

65. Zemin, *supra* note 39, at I.5.

66. Randy James, *A Brief History of: Chinese Internet Censorship*, TIME, Mar. 18, 2009, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1885961,00.html>.

67. The slogan of Buddhism is "honor the world and benefit all sentient beings"; the slogan of Daoism is "realize divinity through virtuous deeds"; Islam's slogan is "pray to Allah to have great happiness in this life and afterlife"; the slogan of Catholics and Protestants is "glorify God and benefit human beings." The Chinese characters for these slogans are: "庄严国土,利乐有情"; "功德成神"; "两世吉庆"; "荣神益人". The former president of Chinese Christian Council, Ding Guangxun, proposed a new theory, which has a name "Love of Theology."

68. K. H. TING, *LOVE NEVER ENDS: PAPERS BY K. H. TING* (Janice Wickeri, ed., 2000) [hereinafter TING, *LOVE NEVER ENDS*]. Other editions of this book are also available in the United States: K. H. TING, *GOD IS LOVE: COLLECTED WRITINGS OF BISHOP K. H. TING* (2004); K. H. TING, *A CHINESE CONTRIBUTION TO ECUMENICAL THEOLOGY: SELECTED WRITINGS OF BISHOP K. H. TING* (Janice & Philip Wickeri eds., 2002) [hereinafter TING, *A CHINESE CONTRIBUTION*].

marks a significant point of departure for a minority Christianity reaching out to the broader society. By making it possible to affirm the good found outside the Christian community, this approach offers a Christian perspective on the accommodation between Christianity and secular society . . . [which] could be very important for the future of the church in China, promoting Christian participation in the larger

society and unity within a church with strong fundamentalist tendencies.⁶⁹

The traditional mainstream teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism all teach that human beings are born from Dao or Buddha; hence human nature is of Dao or Buddha. In other words, human beings are originally good or innocent. The Chinese Marxism before the reformed era deemed that there is only human nature of classes; no human nature can transcend the limitation of its class. Many post-Mao Chinese scholars agree that there is a common human nature that is universally good.⁷⁰ Christian teachings that begin with original sin are quite exotic in this context. Fundamentalist Christian views preach extensively on the distinction between believers and nonbelievers and narrow down the purpose of being a Christian to only salvation. These views make it very difficult for the minority Christians to get along well with mainstream society in China. If instead the emphasis of Christian teachings in China was put on God's love, they would be more acceptable to the Chinese population.

Harmony is a fundamental concept in traditional Chinese philosophy and a lofty social ideal that has been cherished by the Chinese people for thousands of years. Chinese scholars had discussed concepts relating to harmony for decades before President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao advocated the "peaceful rise," "harmonious society," and "scientific development" theories and planned to develop cultural hegemony accordingly. President Hu and Premier Wen also extended the ideal of harmony to international relationships.⁷¹ Chinese religions have played

69. TING, LOVE NEVER ENDS, *supra* note 68.

70. Huang Nansen (黄楠森), *On the Universality and Class Nature of Human Right* (论人权的普遍性和阶级性), <http://www.humanrightschina.org/china/rqzt/zt20020041210143916.htm>. Professor Huang is a famous Marxist philosopher from Peking University.

71. Professor Zhang Liwen (张立文), from Renmin University, Tang Yijie (汤一介) and Xu Kangsheng (许抗生), both from Peking University, are prominent proponents of the traditional Chinese philosophy of harmony. Professor Zheng Bijian (郑必坚), from Party School of the CCP Central Committee, has strong influence on the application of these theories to the hegemonic

the role of ambassador of peace in the world for years. They participate actively in international religious organizations and provide charity to needy people in other countries, such as the victims of the Indonesian tsunami. By early February 2005, religious organizations in China had donated over tens of millions yuan to tsunami victims, including about twelve million yuan (1.5 million US dollars) from the Buddhist organizations, which was the largest donation that the Red Cross of China received.⁷²

An international Buddhist forum was hosted on April 13–17, 2006, for the first time since Buddhism spread to China over 2,000 years ago.⁷³ About 1,000 monks and scholars on Buddhism from more than 30 countries attended the conference in the scenic cities of Hangzhou and nearby Zhoushan in eastern Zhejiang province. The theme of the forum was “A Harmonious World Begins in the Mind.” Ye Xiaowen said at a meeting with the board of the Chinese Buddhist Association in Jiangsu province in March 2006, “The ‘harmonious world’ theory . . . will help dispel doubts in the international community about China’s continued development and refute the absurd China threat theory.”⁷⁴ “It is desirable for Buddhist affairs to help civilian rule.”⁷⁵ The present director of SARA commented that

[t]he relationship of religion with politics in China, has learned from

discourses. Their sample papers are on file with the author: Zhang, *Carry Forward the Harmony Culture, and Construct a Harmonious World: the Contemporary Values of Harmony Thought from Chinese Tradition* (弘扬和谐文化 构建和谐世界——中国传统和谐思想的当代价值); Tang, *A Modern Annotation of Confucian Harmony Idea* (儒家“和谐”思想的现代诠释); Xu, *Harmonious Society Follows the Way of Dao* (和谐社会 法道而行); Zheng, *Harmonious Society, an Important Theoretical Innovation* (和谐社会·又一重大理论创新).

72. *Chinese Religious Tsunami Relief Donations*, XINHUA NEWS AGENCY, (Feb. 7, 2005, 7:02 PM), <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/ydyhx/zgys.htm>.

73. *China Supports Buddhism in Building Harmonious World*, CHINA RADIO INTERNATIONAL (April 13, 2006, 12:29 AM), <http://english.cri.cn/811/2006/04/13/198@76750.htm>; *First World Buddhist Forum Opens in Hangzhou*, CHINA DAILY (April 13, 2006, 10:31 AM), http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2006-04/13/content_566998.htm.

74. *China Hopes Buddhist Forum Will Counter Threat Theory*, WORLD WIDE RELIGIOUS NEWS (March 27, 2006), <http://wwrn.org/articles/20968/?&place=china/taiwan§ion=buddhism>.

75. On February 24, 2006, Ye Xiao gave a speech at the Seventh III International Buddhist Forum. The topic was “Make concerted efforts to have a better International Buddhist Forum.” In this speech, he stated that the purpose of having the International Buddhist Forum was to help the Chinese government to rule people and manage the country. He said, “It is a precious great opportunity to come upon this excellent time, we should use Buddhism as a tool to help the government to rule and develop this country.” For the whole speech, see <http://www.wuys.com/paper/wbf/034.asp>. A copy is on file with the author: 齐心协力办好世界佛教论坛.

both those of the ancient China and the western countries, but differs from them in some ways. It is a new type with its own characteristics suited for the Chinese socialism. It takes the separation of church from state as its base, while the harmony of church with state as its value orientation. That is to say, to insist on the separation principle, and form a clear border between the state and church, in case the state replaces the church or vice versa. By doing so, we installed system security, while do not regard separation as the ultimate end of dealing with the relationship. On the contrary, we should realize the harmonious relationship between the state and church, and build up friendly interaction between them.⁷⁶

IV. RESISTANCE AND RESOLUTION

A. *Domestic Resistance and Resolution*

Of course, the elite coalition and cultural hegemony have encountered resistance from both domestic and foreign sources. The domestic ones are: (1) “the various crimes on the pretext of religion,” among which the Islamic extremists of the Eastern Turkistan independence movement and Lamaist Splittists of the Tibetan independence movement are the most audible; (2) the *Xiejiao* or destructive cults, among which Falun Gong is the most visible;⁷⁷ (3) the dysfunctional religious groups, which neither violate the regulations and laws nor join the coalition and hegemony, being commonly called “underground churches” in Catholicism and “family gatherings” in Protestantism;⁷⁸ and (4) the peripheral religious elements, including folk religious practices and some newly imported religions both for expatriate and local believers, which fall beyond the current official definition of religion.⁷⁹ The last category exists as a resistance not because they act against the government or are not happy to register; on the contrary, they are pushing to get legal status. Furthermore, there are longstanding disagreements on their recognition and treatment with anxiety over whether a Pandora’s box may be opened if they are recognized. The

76. Wang Lian, *The Current Relationship Between the Chinese Government and Religious Groups*, STUDY TIMES, Nov. 23, 2009.

77. BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR, U.S. DEP’T OF STATE, INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT 2004: CHINA (INCLUDES TIBET, HONG KONG, AND MACAU), available at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2004/35396.htm>.

78. The Chinese government does not call them “family churches.”

79. See Preeti Bhattacharji, *Religion in China*, COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS (May 16, 2008), <http://www.cfr.org/china/religion-china/p16272>.

greatest

fear is that any religious group could then claim the benefits of official recognition and the current policy would fail to continue.

The government resolves each of these issues in various ways. It punishes crimes and *Xiejiao* (destructive cults) “relentlessly according to the law.”⁸⁰ As to the noncooperative religious groups, there is a gray area. It is complicated because there are various motivations for some religious groups not being willing to join recognized organizations or register with the government: some group leaders are skeptical of the policy of religious freedom because of the experiences with the Cultural Revolution,⁸¹ some have a difficult relationship with the leaders of recognized religious organizations,⁸² and some have their theological reasons. For example, a group may be very spiritual and reject registration as profane, especially with a government that has an atheist ideology.⁸³ The government once was very alert to these groups, but time has proven that they do not pose serious dangers to the social order.⁸⁴ Thus, the government neither supports nor tries to disperse them as long as they do not challenge the law and order (for example, by igniting massive riots). However, these groups naturally have to pay some price for their disobedience. One example is that such groups are denied legal person status, which is necessary for benefits such as real estate ownership and tax exemption.⁸⁵

There are widespread folk religious practices in China, including ancestor worship, worship of local deities, *Feng Shui*, fortune telling, and other community traditions.⁸⁶ The official policy is to treat these practices as “contradictions within the people.”⁸⁷ In most cases, publicity

80. “To punish relentlessly according to law” (依法严惩) is an often-heard newspeak of the Chinese government. See generally Kristin Kupfer, *Christian-Inspired Groups in the People's Republic of China After 1978: Reaction of State and Party Authorities*, 51 *SOCIAL COMPASS* 273, 274–76 (2004).

81. See Bhattacharji, *supra* note 79.

82. See *id.*

83. *Id.*

84. See *id.*

85. *Id.*

86. *Feng Shui Booms in China*, BBC NEWS (Mar. 8, 2001, 5:31 PM), http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/monitoring/media_reports/1207420.stm.

87. This phrase comes from an influential speech by Mao Zedong. Mao Zedong, Chairman of the Communist Party of China, *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People*, Address before the Eleventh Session (Enlarged) of the Supreme State Conference (Feb. 27, 1957), in *PEOPLE'S DAILY*, June 19, 1957, available at

campaigns are used to convince individuals of the error of their ways.⁸⁸ In a few cases, where practices are deemed to “bring about damages to the property or health of the people,” or to “endanger the national security or social order,” the Criminal Code is applied. Thanks to the untiring defense of some liberal scholars, the situation is relaxing. In 2002, the Beijing municipal government announced its latest revision of religious regulations and dropped the clause about banned “superstitious activities.”⁸⁹ At the National Religious Work Conference held in January 2004, the government decided to set up a new unit within SARA to deal with folk religions.⁹⁰ This is a sign that the government is conceding the existence of this cultural heritage under the mantle of religious affairs.

B. Foreign Resistance and Resolution

The outside challenges come from (1) “the foreign hostile forces” who do not like Marxism and the Chinese system of governance and hence try to undermine them through the channel of religion; (2) some

http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-/mswv5_58.htm. Mao divided contradictions among the people into two categories: contradictions within the people, or domestic social unrest, and those between the enemy and ourselves. The former is compromising and can be addressed with peaceful methods but the latter is uncompromising and only can be resolved with violent methods.

88. BBC NEWS, *supra* note 86.

89. The Chinese constitution states:

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 art. 36 (1982) (China) (The Chinese characters of this article are: **第三十六条** 中华人民共和国公民有宗教信仰自由。任何国家机关、社会团体和个人不得强制公民信仰宗教或者不信仰宗教，不得歧视信仰宗教的公民和不信仰宗教的公民。国家保护正常的宗教活动。任何人不得利用宗教进行破坏社会秩序、损害公民身体健康、妨碍国家教育制度的活动。宗教团体和宗教事务不受外国势力的支配。).

90. DECREE ON RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS OF BEIJING MUNICIPALITY (北京市宗教事务条例), available at <http://www.bjethnic.gov.cn/zcfg/PolicyDetail.asp?id=5289&pos=45>. It was years later that Chinese media noticed that SARA had set up a new department dealing with folk religion and religions other than the five major ones—Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism. See *State Bureau of Religious Affairs Special Institutions to Manage the New Civil Religion*, FUN WITH HI (Aug. 3, 2007, 10:18 AM), http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4dd11cfa01000ays.html; cf. Richard Madsen, *The Upsurge of Religion in China*, 21 J. DEMOCRACY 58, 61 (2010) (“Yet SARA has no jurisdiction over any form of religion that has not received official recognition [F]olk religions are . . . defined . . . as ‘feudal superstition’ [And] none of these activities are under the purview of SARA.”).

foreign religious groups who are “trying to restore their lost dominance over Chinese churches;”⁹¹ and (3) Western governments (especially the government of the United States) and human right organizations, who always keep an eye on Chinese religious freedom and try to censure or even sanction the Chinese government.

According to Decree 144 of the State Council and its supplement concerning the religious life of foreigners in China,⁹² foreigners are free to join church services but are not allowed to establish religious organizations in China. In some metropolitan cities, like Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, which have significant foreign populations, there are registered “temporary venues” for religious services that the foreign congregations rent. For example, there are two temporary venues for the Protestant congregations of foreigners: one is in the Twenty-First Century Hotel in Chaoyang District and the other is in the concert hall of the National Library in Haidian District. Both of them are located in a central place where the foreign population is dense and can hold more than 2,000 people. The Mormon Church also has temporary venues in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.⁹³

The government also is refining its policy in hopes that religion can cushion the transformations while China enters the WTO and other international organizations. The government admits that globalization may trigger new waves of foreign religious influence. The religious organizations are encouraged to cultivate positive relationships with their friendly foreign counterparts while filtering unwanted foreign impacts. As Ye Xiaowen stressed, Chinese churches must step up their anti-infiltration efforts to block hostile foreign groups from establishing footholds in China.⁹⁴

91. See Madsen, *supra* note 90, at 68–70 (discussing the problems of both Catholicism and Islam, and China’s attempt to keep both from gaining too much influence).

92. The two national regulations on foreigners’ religious activities in China are Decree 144 of State Council: Regulations on the Management of Religious Activities of Foreigners in China (promulgated by the State Council, January 31, 1994), available at http://www.uibe.edu.cn/upload/up_dfs/clxsfg3.htm, and Specific Rules for Implementing the Regulations on the Management of Religious Activities of Foreigner in China, available at <http://sara.gov.cn/GB/zcfg/gz/948ea802-0a1c-11da-9f13-93180af1bb1a.html>.

93. In order to regulate the religious affairs of the foreigners in China, the State Council issued an order, Administration of Religious Activities of Aliens within the Territory of the People’s Republic of China in 1994, and its implementing provisions in 2000. Both have function similar to law. The full texts are available at <http://sara.gov.cn/gb/zcfg/gz/20100423-01-948ea802-0a1c-11da-9f13-93180af1bb1a.html>.

94. Ye Xiaowen gave a speech at the open ceremony of Seventh Chinese Christian Forum. See Xiaowen, *supra* note 36, at 11–13.

V. CONCLUSION

According to the official representation of the CCP, the Marxism to which the Party holds fast is an “incessantly developing Marxism.” Marxism has become a useful label for the group in power to legitimize their ideology, even though most of its connotations have been replaced. Having the largest membership among the world’s political parties at 78 million, the CCP cannot only represent one or two classes. As its revised charter stipulates, the Party is the vanguard team of not only the Chinese workers but also the Chinese people and other nationalities.⁹⁵ No longer limiting the class background of its members, the recruiting policy emphasizes that target members should be “good at both talent and virtue” (“*Decai Jianbei*”), and opens its door to top college students and entrepreneurs. The Party itself is becoming an elite organization. The upper layers of this organization attract the upper layers of religious and many other circles to form an even larger coalition. It seems that this way of governance has been successful so far in sustaining rapid development and political stability.

However, how long can this style of governance sustain itself? There are severe challenges behind the great expectations. We are not sure how, when, and to what extent these crises can be solved. Even though I would like to believe that the elites in power could tackle all problems to a satisfactory degree, can we believe that they will be able to keep unity within the coalition and make the stage open to more talented, virtuous, and ambitious elites? In other words, how can the power of an elite coalition keep from degenerating and coagulating in a homogenous inner circle?

It was radical leftists within the CCP that once tried to exterminate traditional culture so as to monopolize or “purify” the state ideology. Nowadays it seems that the Party is turning back to traditional heritages for cultural hegemony. Can an assertive, official ideology be humble and honest enough to learn from traditional wisdom that is more than 5,000 years old? Can Marxism, when combined with traditional culture and free market forces, amount to a dominant national cultural system? Only time will tell.

95. The Chinese version of the CCP’s new charter is available at http://news.ewe.com.cn/show_news.php?blockid=81&articleid=9025.