PSYCHOANALYSIS IN CHINA

Edited by
David E. Scharff and Sverre Varvin

KARNAC

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Janine Wanlass, PhD. Director the International Psychotherapy Institute, Chevy Chase, Maryland. Psychologist and psychoanalyst in Salt Lake City, Utah, treating children, adolescents, adults, couples, and families. Graduate, the International Institute of Psychoanalytic Training at the International Psychotherapy Institute. Professor of psychology and counselling, and former director, masters in professional counselling programme, Westminster College. She has taught family and couple therapy and supervised clinicians in China since 2011.

Xiao Zeping, MD, PhD. Deputy director, Shanghai Health Bureau; chief psychiatrist and professor of psychiatry, the Medical School of Shanghai Jiao Tong University. Vice-president, the Pacific Rim College of Psychiatrists; chairman, the Chinese Psychiatric Hospital Association; chairman, Psychoanalysis Committee of the Chinese Mental Health Association; board member of the International Federation for Psychotherapy, the Chinese Psychiatry Society, and the Chinese Neuroscience Society's psychiatric division.

Xu Yong, MD. Studied Medicine at Shanghai Medical School, Fudan University. He specialised in psychiatry, psychosomatic medicine, and psychodynamic individual and group psychotherapy. Deputy director, Department of Training and Education, Shanghai Mental Health Center; faculty member, Department of Psychiatry, Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine; board member, Psychoanalytic Committee of the Chinese Mental Health Association, and board member, International Association of Group Psychotherapy and Group Processes.

Yang Yunping, MD, PhD. Professor, Beijing Anding Hospital, affiliated with Capital Medical University. Practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy for mentally disordered patients. IPA Candidate in Psychoanalysis. She also engages in improving psychoanalytic psychotherapy training programs and the IPA candidates' training programme in Beijing in co-operation with Prof. Sverre Varvin and analysts from the Norwegian and Danish Psychoanalytic Societies, and has co-operated with the IPA's China Committee.

Anders Zachrisson, Fil. Lic. Associate professor, Psychological Department, University of Oslo. Member and former president, Norwegian Psychoanalytic Society. Training and child psychoanalyst. Part-time private practice. Teacher in the Chinese-Norwegian psychoanalytic psychotherapy training programmes since 2007. Member, Collegium of the Psychoanalytic Institute of Eastern Europe's Child and Adolescent School, since 2003. Papers in *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, *The Scandinavian Psychoanalytic Review*, and other journals.

Zhong Jie, PhD. Psychology Department of Peking University. Advanced candidate, International Psychoanalytical Association's Chinese psychoanalytic training programme in Beijing.

INTRODUCTION

David E. Scharff and Sverre Varvin

Psychoanalysis has been known in China since at least 1927, when it was introduced in a small way. There was little clinical development at first, and what familiarity that did exist was later attacked and eradicated along with all things western in the period of Mao's dominance of all national policy including cultural matters. However, since the opening up of China that began with his death and that accelerated in the 1980s, psychoanalysis, along with other forms of psychotherapy, has been re-introduced and met with growing interest. This is not to say that analytic therapies have begun to dominate mental health thinking. In some ways, as is often true in the West, they reach readier acceptance in the academies than in the clinical world. Nevertheless, as China is having to grow mental health treatments from scratch, psychoanalysis is well in the mix, and by some accounts is becoming the most prevalent form of psychotherapy. And as in the West, a group of therapists is emerging from several disciplines that finds its ideas and methods intriguing.

It was in the 1980s that psychoanalysts from Germany first began to make systematic efforts to offer substantive training to the Chinese. This early effort combined offerings of behavioural therapies, systems family therapy, and psychoanalysis into seminars that were mainly located in Shanghai but also drew nationally from all over China. Later, a group from the Norwegian Psychoanalytic Society organised training programmes in Beijing and Wuhan specifically on psychoanalytic psychotherapy. Several senior psychiatrists and mental health professionals travelled abroad for extended periods of time, most notably to Germany, where they received a warm welcome and were often able to obtain personal treatment along with their education.

As the trainings gradually evolved to offer more specialisation, Chinese colleagues developed areas of interest, and many have chosen to focus on analytic ideas and methods. Some of the most influential mental health centres, for instance Shanghai Mental Health Center, the Wuhan Hospital for Psychotherapy, and Beijing's Anding Hospital, have developed internal training

programmes, sent trainees to external programmes, welcomed western teachers, and helped to organise several national congresses on psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. Many western colleagues have come to China to teach and offer supervision in these programmes, and new programmes like those offered by the China American Psychoanalytic Alliance (CAPA) or on psychoanalytic couple therapy in Beijing, offered by the International Psychotherapy Institute in Washington, DC, have expanded capacity and enhanced training.

But it turns out that offering training in these dedicated ways is a beginning that meets the complications of the large underlying cultural differences between East and West, and specifically between China with its more than 2500 years of rich cultural history, and the culture of the West with its roots in the Judeo-Christian tradition and the Greco-Roman heritage. Perhaps in the early days these differences were obscured by eagerness on both sides to teach and to learn. We had a rich tradition, "empirically tested" in the West; the Chinese had pressing and emerging needs and no developed means of thinking that could underpin a new mental health effort. The West had the means (not just analysis), and the East had the need.

Of course it turns out not to be such a simple encounter. The introduction of analytic thinking and methods has stirred great and growing interest, but caveats emerge, the most interesting of which involve these underlying cultural differences. In our experience, these differences impede the simplistic mentality that "we have the methods and they the need". There are much more interesting differences than that. Yes, the Chinese need to develop an effective mental health system, and to train clinicians for their extraordinarily large population with its pressing needs. The rapidity of their progress in doing so is impressive. They have taken advantage of the ways western societies have used treatments, hospitals, and pharmacology. They have begun also to invest in psychoanalysis as a major way of understanding and offering treatment. Not all mental health professionals accept analysis of course. Some of the contributions in this book document an inherent scepticism among psychiatrists and others that should not surprise us. But among a significant minority of providers, there is strong and resilient interest.

Precisely because there is such pressing practical need, there is a sense of urgency about training. There is pressure to introduce concepts, teach new ways of thinking, offer supervision, and begin to develop a future generation of indigenous Chinese analytic teachers. There begin to be articles, journals, and books in Chinese—both as translations of western texts, and increasingly as contributions by Chinese colleagues. While a new journal, *Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy in China*, devoted to publishing such articles will be launched by Karnac soon after the publication of this book, so far there has been only a scattering of articles in the literature on this great cultural encounter that now seems to have an importance beyond the practicality of treatment methods that are new to China. For instance, a recent slender volume by Christopher Bollas, *China on the Mind* (2013), draws a vivid picture of the different starting places for the deep structure of Chinese philosophical assumptions, and therefore of Chinese morality, that come into play throughout the mental and moral life of individuals. Tracing differences in western and eastern thought, Bollas contends that Chinese thinkers, in stressing adherence to family and group, and in arguing against individual autonomy, advised developing ways of being rather than doing. In contrast, the dominant western ethic supports the emergence of the individual from the group, stresses more oedipal aspects of development, and proposes weighing

doing over being. Bollas believes each structure assumes the other in a silent, unvoiced way, but emphasises these differences greatly.

Additionally, the amount of national and personal trauma in the last 150 years of Chinese history, and most especially in the last eighty to ninety years, culminating in the largest famine in human history during the Great Leap Forward of 1958–1962, and the systematic destruction of wealth, leadership, culture, and knowledge during the Cultural Revolution from 1966–1976, has left a legacy of trauma that is largely unaddressed inside China, and that has been only recently addressed in the West. (See, for instance, Tomas Plänkers' *Landscapes of the Chinese Soul: The Enduring Presence of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976)* (2013), and Chapter Three, Frank Dikötter's *Mao's Great Famine*, (2010), and Yang Jisheng's *Tombstone: The Great Chinese Famine 1958–1962* (2012).)

Other contributions have confirmed what we also hear about China today: that traditional values, family organisation, and patterns of living have changed radically in the last thirty years. There have been rapid shifts in the shape of the family under the one-child policy (which is under revision as this book goes to press); internal migration as economic factors have changed radically; reactions to the "opening up" of education, business, employment, and travel abroad. So on top of the deep structural philosophical differences, Chinese culture is changing radically with the extremely rapid modernisation. This affects patterns of family structure, family loyalty, and social orientation deeply. (See, for instance, Kleinman et al., *Deep China* (2011), and Hansen and Svarverud, *iChina: the Rise of the Individual in Modern Chinese Society* (2010).)

Inside China today, there is great hope, but there is also a sense of an uncertain future that is, perhaps, not surprising in a time of such great change. Gerard Lemos's *The End of the Chinese Dream* (2012) and demographic studies by such scholars as Nicholas Eberstadt of the American Heritage Foundation (2007, 2013, and personal communication, 2012) who have looked at the problems of an aging population without enough young people to support the elders, the lack of effective social security, and unstable internal migration to cities, underscore the widespread difficulties that face China as a nation and that therefore weigh, in varying degrees, on Chinese individuals. There is pressure to achieve in employment, pressure on the family—and pressure on individuals from every walk of life.

All these factors affect the encounter between western psychoanalysis and Chinese culture whenever an analyst or psychotherapist assesses or treats patients in China, whether the therapist is Chinese or western. In constructing this book, and in inviting contributors from China and the West, we have felt that this sort of difference is crucial to the encounter to which we and our colleagues are devoted. Therefore we have attempted to include considerations of all these matters, because, unlike our experience when we work in a culture in which we also live and breathe, we cannot take them for granted. We have taken pains to include chapters on the philosophical structure of Chinese thought, problems in training, and issues in the encounter between Chinese psychotherapy students and their western teachers—and between Chinese analytic therapists and their own patients. In doing so, we have tried, within the limitations of a single volume, to cover the waterfront of concerns that have come to our attention during our own encounters with China and our Chinese colleagues and students. We have done this by inviting many Chinese colleagues to contribute to the volume, and hope that we have, in this way, made a unique contribution to our continuing efforts.

The book is constructed in four sections. The chapters of Part I examine issues in Chinese culture and history that form a crucial background to mental health programmes, training, and intervention. We begin with a research paper by Mette Halskov Hansen and Cuiming Pang that examines the changing face of collective, family, and individual identity in rural Chinese youth. While it is imprecise to extrapolate in a straight line to urban youth, the implications for all of China are nevertheless clear. Antje Haag has had extensive experience teaching psychotherapy in China, being one of the first westerners to immerse herself in this process. Her paper gives her more impressionistic sense of changes in the Chinese self as she taught psychotherapy over many years. Then Thomas Plänkers, probably the foremost psychoanalytic researcher on Chinese trauma, extrapolates from his research to think about the widespread effect of trauma on Chinese and Chinese individuals. Hsuan-Yang Huang, a Taiwanese-trained psychiatrist and Harvard anthropology PhD, writes about the transformation of popular religion in modern China as a background for psychoanalytic work. Lin Tao, a Beijing-trained psychiatrist who is the first graduate of the IPA's psychoanalytic training in Beijing, and who has also studied for several years at the Tavistock Centre in London, writes about the relevance of understanding Buddhism and Taoism for analytic practice. Li Ming, an academic psychologist in China who also spent a year at Yale, helps us to understand the application of the principles of Yin and Yang to mental health practice. José Saporta gives us a deeply philosophical piece on the meeting of psychoanalytic and Chinese cultures, and this is augmented by Sverre Varvin's discussion of his chapter. Elise Snyder, founder of the China American Psychoanalytic Alliance, discusses her quite different view of cross-cultural issues, holding that the cultural differences have relatively little impact on our work in teaching psychoanalytic theory and technique in China. Alf Gerlach contributes a unique ethno-psychoanalytic research chapter on the vivid forms castration fears play in some ethnic Chinese subcultures. David Scharff concludes this section with a primer on modern China that summarises a number of currents in modern Chinese history and society that affect many of the students and patients we encounter.

Part II deals with the specific development of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy in China. Sverre Varvin and Bent Rosenbaum offer a conceptual piece on differences in behaviour and ways of thinking that influence the introduction of psychoanalytic therapies. Yang Yunping, professor at Anding Psychiatric Hospital in Beijing and a major force for the development of psychoanalysis, talks about poverty, deprivation, and resilience and their effects on individual development. Zhong Jie, a psychologist at Peking University and an advanced psychoanalytic candidate, describes the problems with the way psychotherapy introduces conflict to patients. Shi Qijia, chief of Wuhan Institute for Mental Health, and a major figure in Chinese psychoanalytic development, describes his view of the development of psychoanalysis. Wang Zhiyan and Anders Zachrisson describe their experience with teaching about transference and countertransference in China. The section closes with a highly imaginative integration, as Irmgard Dettbarn from Germany, the first IPA analyst to offer training analyses in China, fashions a myth from Chinese and western sources that is then discussed analytically by Rainer Rehberger and Sverre Varvin.

Part III details issues in forming training programmes and offering training in China. Sverre Varvin of Norway and Alf Gerlach from Germany describe the early years of psychotherapy and psychoanalytic training in China. Xu Yong and his colleagues from the Shanghai Mental

Health Center describe the pioneering efforts there. Ralph and Lana Fishkin describe the ground-breaking programmes offered by the China American Psychoanalytic Alliance. Alf Gerlach describes the expansion of the Sino-German programme into the teaching of group psychotherapy. Li Yawen, another of the advanced IPA candidates in Beijing, offers a research paper on the attitudes and degree of training among professionals in Chinese psychotherapy. Siri Erika Gullestad discusses her experience offering psychotherapy supervision to Chinese trainees. This is followed by two papers by Chinese students: Gao Jun, a recent PhD at Peking University in Beijing, now assistant professor at Fudan University in Shanghai and leading translator for Chinese psychotherapy training, gives her experience, and Qi Wei gives her experience as a medical student and psychiatry resident in Shanghai. Liu Yiling, another recent IPA analytic graduate in Beijing, offers a paper on how she now sees and teaches, psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic assessment and early treatment. The section closes with Caroline Sehon's description of her experiences offering consultation and teaching psychoanalytic assessment in a setting that had not had the benefit of these training programmes.

Part IV is quite different. It consists of four chapters focussing on Chinese couples in assessment and treatment, three couples from the mainland and one from Taiwan. Jill Savege Scharff and David Scharff open with a description of assessment and brief therapy with a couple that illustrates cultural differences both within China and between China and the United States. Shi Qijia and David Scharff discuss cultural factors and the use of the concept of projective identification in understanding a couple that Dr Shi assessed. Janine Wanlass describes another couple that she saw for assessment and brief therapy together with David Scharff. The final chapter by Teng Hui-Wen, a Taiwanese psychiatrist with Jungian analytic training and with training at the Tavistock Clinic in London, vividly illustrates a couple therapy in which cultural difference set up almost impossible conflict.

We close with a brief epilogue by the editors about our experience and lessons we have drawn from our own study.

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CHAPTER FOUR

The religious context of China's psycho-boom

Hsuan-Ying Huang

Introduction

Urban China has witnessed an unprecedented flourishing of western psychological counselling and psychotherapy. Though psychotherapy was reintroduced into the country soon after the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), it was not until a decade ago that the enterprise got the momentum for growth and veered towards a rather different direction. Two events stood out at that turning point: the launch of a certification system for psychological counselors (*xinli zixun shi*) by the Ministry of Labour in 2003 and the broadcasting of a therapy programme, *Psychological Interviews* (*xinli fangtan*), on the state-run CCTV (China Central Television) at the end of 2004. Since then, a "psycho-boom" (*xinli re*) that encompasses a wide variety of phenomena has emerged amidst rapid economic development and massive societal changes. The boom has made a significant impact on the formal mental health sectors, including psychiatry, psychology, and school counselling. Beyond that, it has surpassed the scope of introducing a new set of treatment modalities or establishing a new clinical discipline and grown into a faddish trend of learning psychotherapy or becoming a therapist, mostly through short-term training. Accompanying the craze is the blossoming of private counselling centres, clinics, and training agencies, many of which embrace a commercial mindset and move quickly into the new market territory. (For a fuller description of the psycho-boom, see Huang, 2013.)

One of the most intriguing characteristics of the boom is the popularity of psychoanalysis, which overshadows all the other approaches and has lately caught media attention from the West (for example, see Osnos, 2011, Tatlow, 2010, & Wan, 2010). This is distinct from the impressions of earlier visitors (Halberstadt-Freud, 1991) or the age-old speculation that psychoanalysis is unsuitable for the Chinese (Ng, 1985). Though in China psychoanalysis tends to be conceived in extraordinarily flexible and sometimes idiosyncratic ways, the extent to which

things related to it are welcomed is still remarkable. On the professional side, there is a small but robust community of psychodynamically oriented therapists who are pretty influential in the larger sphere of the boom. The appearance of such a group could be traced back to the legendary Sino-German course (*zhong de ban*) in the late 1990s in which many of the movement's leaders experienced their initiation. The international community has since then become more and more engaged with development in China, as shown in the continuation of the Sino-German course, the emergence of the Sino-Norwegian course (*zhong nuo ban*) and the China American Psychoanalytic Alliance (CAPA), the teaching of psychoanalytic couple therapy in programmes at Peking University and the Beijing Mental Health Association, and the direct-candidate training by the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA). Given these recent developments, it is little wonder that IPA decided to hold its highly symbolic first Asian conference in Beijing in October 2010.

How to make sense of the psycho-boom in urban China, including the fascination with psychoanalysis, at this particular moment? To answer this question, a comprehensive assessment of the social, cultural, and historical backgrounds of the movement, along with a parallel investigation on what is happening on the ground and even more importantly, in the psyches of today's urbanites, is needed. While acknowledging the immensity of the question, here I attempt to approach it from one particular aspect of Chinese culture that constitutes a crucial context of the boom—popular religion and its transformation. My treatment of the issue could only be cursory, since I am a medical anthropologist and not an expert on Chinese popular religion. However, I share the view of most anthropologists of China that take popular religion as an essential element of Chinese society through which the convoluted trajectory of modern China can be elucidated. I hope these rough sketches can fill in a critical blank and open up discussion and inquiry that is not customarily pursued by people involved in the movement.

Religion and psychoanalysis

To explore the rise of psychotherapy or psychoanalysis in the context of religious change is not new, but the relationships between these two fields cannot be easily unpacked. Freud has a lifelong interest in religion and is himself a pioneer in applying psychoanalytic theories to explain this cross-cultural institution (1913, 1927, 1939), not to mention the direct treatment of the subject in the Jungian tradition. In social sciences, the proposition that the popularisation of psychotherapy is associated with the decline of religion in the West, or the historical process of modernisation/secularisation, is constantly made (for example, see Berger, 1965 & Rieff, 1966). The parallel seems to be well acknowledged within psychoanalytic circles. It may not be a coincidence that Freud (1926) brings up the image of "secular pastoral worker" to characterise the analyst's job. In fact, psychoanalytic associations, the major organisations in support of training and other activities, are often compared to sectarian groups while the endless conflicts and struggles in the discipline's history are seen as wars against the heretics. This aspect of the psychoanalytic movement is nicely captured in many studies, including Turkle's (1992) ethnography on the French psychoanalytic circle of Lacan's time, Gellner's (2003) anthropological critique of the movement, and Kirsner's (2009) research on four analytic institutes in the United States.

To complicate the replacement/succession relationship further, the French historian/philosopher Michel Foucault (1978) sees continuity between psychoanalysis and Christianity based on their shared reliance on confession. This seems to consider psychoanalysis as a derivative of Christianity and thus places it at the very heart of western civilisation. This story does not follow the plot of dynastic succession or sequential evolution neatly. Reverse adoption happens with the appearance of pastoral counselling in the church system. A trend of fusion, either between different religions or mixing up religious and psychological discourses, also marks New Age and many other new religious movements. Today religion still thrives in some western countries, particularly in the United States, while psychoanalysis, having had its prime time in American psychiatry before the pharmaceutical revolution in the 1960s, has begun a long, bitter road of decline. However, if we shift our attention to the larger picture, the global situation of religions, new religions, quasi-religions, spiritualities, and psychotherapies would constitute a bewilderingly complex landscape in which perhaps only one thing holds valid—the escalation of transnational encounters and the emergence of numerous interesting local responses in these cross-cultural exchanges.

Anthropology and popular religion

The introduction of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis into China is not a unilateral transmission. Instead it is a dialogic process confounded by mutual imagining. In this encounter, the issue of culture naturally comes to the fore. When trying to grapple with Chinese civilisation, people often refer to a few grand doctrines, typically Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism (for the latest examples, see Scharff, 2011 & Zhong, 2011). While these magnificent traditions call for elaborated descriptions and expositions that are never quite adequate, their relevance to the contemporary moment and everyday life is usually left unarticulated. The same top-down approach is common when native Chinese describe their own culture, either as a historical narrative or as illustration of how to indigenise the imported technologies. Meanwhile, though these traditions are deemed religious in nature (perhaps less so for Confucianism), it is not unusual to hear comments such as "We Chinese are never religious", "Chinese don't believe in any religion", or "Religion never plays an important role in Chinese history or society". There seems to be an overt contradiction in these statements: these traditions are alluded to ritualistically at some times but discredited at others.

This is where I think a perspective informed by anthropology and studies of popular religion might help. The anthropological ideal is to immerse in the local world, understand the native's point of view, and examine the world the researcher temporarily inhabits from a standpoint that is inherently comparative. Popular religion, referring to folk religion, religion of the laity, or the pervasive religious beliefs, values, and practices in a society, is opposed to the conventional emphasis on the elite, the clergy, and the institutionalised sector of religion. This is particularly pertinent for traditional Chinese society where most religious life can not be summed up in a few discrete categories. As the sociologist C. K. Yang points out, Chinese religious life is diffuse and "woven into the fabric of traditional civil morals and political life" (1961, p. 152).

The Chinese case offers further challenges to the western notion of religion. The anthropologist Talal Asad (1993) argues that the current conception of religion is produced in the shift to

secular pluralism in the West, and that the process is inseparable from the power relationships that have shaped its evolution. This insight brings us to the historical conditions of the same category in China, where recent transformation is largely situated in the Middle Kingdom's encounter with the West. The earliest Jesuit mission led by Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) skillfully resorted to Chinese classics and local customs to reinterpret the foreign religion until it came to appear to be just another moral or philosophical teaching. This highly adapted version won the hearts of many high-ranking officials and important literati, but the ingenious strategy was soon condemned by the Roman Church (Gernet, 1985). A more decisive encounter happened in the nineteenth century when the Qing Empire was encroached on by the colonial powers. As the historian Chen Hsi-yuan (2002) describes, Peng Guang-Yu, the official representative of Confucianism to the Chicago Expo in 1893, once made up a Sino-centric (or more accurately, state-Confucianism-centric) translation. He argued that there was no equivalent of the western concept of religion in Chinese. The word applied to the three great traditions was "*jiao*", literally meaning "teaching" or "instruction". The notion had a strong moral connotation, as it was connected to an ideal world view or cosmology, which was quite different from the western religious imagination that was based on the demands of God. Western religion, was understood by Peng as worshipping and serving the deities, which he thought to be comparable to "*wu*" or "*zhu*" in Chinese, which literally meant "magic" or "witchcraft." However, "*zongjiao*", the *kanji* (Chinese characters) notion that was coined by the Japanese scholars during the Meiji Restoration and then introduced into China by late-Qing reformist intellectuals, gained currency and became the dominant expression used to articulate religious issues and experiences in the early twentieth century. Now it is almost impossible to think about anything related to religion in Chinese without this borrowed vocabulary.

Chinese popular religion

Chinese popular religion seems diffuse, complex, and, perhaps, disorganised for people more familiar with monotheistic traditions and the western concept of religion; they may find it difficult to define such components as canon, clergy, liturgy, and monasteries. The question of how to perceive a cultural unity in a vast and diverse body of practices has long been a vexing issue for scholars studying Chinese religion. As Goossaert and Palmer (2011, pp. 20–21) describe, despite the absence of a unified theology based on a single sacred canon, lay and religious communities share a common system of cosmological concepts that allow different interpretations. This Chinese cosmology, which can be traced back more than two thousand years, elaborates on the basic rules of the universe: how the spiritual and the material worlds operate, how things with different qualities interact with each other, and how efficacy or magical power (*ling*) can be produced. These ideas, combining elements from the three great traditions, form the repertoire of the religious beliefs and values of the common people. Goossaert and Palmer (2011, p. 22) also point out that the three traditions are far from self-contained institutions. They provide systems of meanings, practices, and distinct paths to redemption or moral perfection for the whole society, and have coexisted in the popular sphere for many centuries. Confucianism, as the ideology privileged by the state, is exclusively associated with official ceremonies and

education, while Buddhist and Taoist specialists are chiefly involved with the rituals connected to the communal life or the individual's life cycle.

A useful way to approach the Chinese religious life is to start from the fundamental social organisation of Chinese society—the family. The anthropologist Arthur Wolf (1975) provides a classic description of household-centred religious activities based on his ethnographic research in post-war rural Taiwan. The family would burn three sticks of incense every morning and evening, each placed at a distinct location in the house, respectively worshipping three kinds of spirits: household gods, the family's immediate ancestors, and wandering ghosts. He argues that these categories correspond to the social relationships critical in the family's social world. First, the gods tally with the officials who are in charge of civil affairs and occupy different positions in the bureaucratic hierarchy; the best examples would be a series of gods whose jurisdictions range from the household to the township: Stove God (*zao shen*), Earth God (*tudi gong*), and City God (*cheng huang*). Second, the ancestors represent the line of descent and the various degrees of obligations people have toward their kinsmen. These responsibilities do not disappear with their deaths. Traditionally, each household would have an altar in the living room where the deceased members of family lineage are enshrined and worshiped. Lastly, the ghosts correspond to the family members for whom one is not responsible, or to strangers. These potentially dangerous entities could only be worshiped outside the back door.

Another way to understand popular religious life is to look at the principal site of lay religious activities, the temples of communal worship. These temples are different from the Buddhist or Taoist monasteries that serve as the training centres for monks or Taoist priests; they are located in communities with overlapping territories. In traditional settings, Chinese villages and towns usually have an exceedingly high density of temples. Many of the gods enshrined there are local spirits who are entangled with the collective memories of the villagers, for example, the people of virtue sanctified after their deaths. There are also a number of famous deities who are worshipped across the country: Nazha, a rebellious figure in popular mythology; Lord Guan, a heroic and loyal general in the Three Kingdom period (220–280); and Matsu, the guardian of fishermen and sailors who was honoured by the imperial court with different titles and eventually promoted to "the Empress of Heaven" (*tien hou*) in early Qing Dynasty. Some temples enjoy exceptional popularity either in the neighborhood or in a larger region. Festivals are held periodically, requiring the feverish participation of the whole community, while on ordinary days people make frequent visits, praying for blessings, and sometimes seeking divinations and healing rituals. These temples constitute centres of social life, economic activity, and political negotiation in the agrarian society. (For a contemporary example situated in northwestern China, see Chau, 2006.)

Transformation of the religious landscape

The picture I described above has largely disappeared in China's urban areas. Most people attribute the decline to the suppression of religion since the founding of the People's Republic, particularly the massive destruction during the Cultural Revolution. However, as Goossaert (2005) argues, this period can also be seen as the radicalisation of a longer process that began in

the late Qing Dynasty when the empire first experienced defeat and humiliation in the colonial encounter. After that, the country went through a tortuous and difficult process of questioning its own culture and pursuing modernity from elsewhere, alternately taking the liberal West and the socialist Soviet Union as models. It is under these circumstances that the western (or more precisely, the Judeo-Christian) concept of religion was adopted, first by the intellectuals and subsequently by both the Nationalist and Communist regimes, seeing it as a necessary step to building a modern nation. A new dichotomy was invented that separated legitimate religion from superstition (*mixin*), a dubious category deserving reorganisation and, during extremist political campaigns, elimination. Among the three great traditions, Confucianism lost its esteemed status as the official ideology with the fall of the empire; after a failed attempt to make it the national religion, it even lost its standing as a religion. Even today, the Chinese government only recognises five religions: Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism.

Both the popular religions and the officially recognised ones were relentlessly repudiated during the Cultural Revolution. In fact, radical Maoism is often interpreted as having been a "political religion" (Zuo, 1991), and it has been compared to millenarian religious movements in Chinese history. In the early 1980s, the state made a clear statement regarding its religious policy, retreating from the radical position and assuring freedom for the five officially approved religions (Potter, 2003). The dramatic revival of popular religion that has followed was unexpected. The trend started from the coastal region that benefited most from both the economic reform and close ties with overseas Chinese; it quickly extended inland. Many temples were rebuilt from those destroyed in the Cultural Revolution, but there were also many more new temples. They easily attracted large populations of "followers", or more precisely, people willing to participate in various temple affairs and activities. Extravagant temple festivals were organised regularly, and traditional rituals were reinstated. Today these practices are often described as "folk beliefs" (*minjian xinyang*), a legitimate category of "cultural heritage" (*wenhua yichan*) that is differentiated from religion. However, the revival is mainly a rural phenomenon. In the cities, temple building is limited to those that can serve as tourist destinations.

It is not uncommon to hear people chastising the post-reform cities as materialistic spaces that suffer from an irreversible spiritual void or moral crisis. The mysterious absence of religious revival there might be seen as the best evidence. Yet if we broaden the scope of religion and attend to the rise of quasi-religious activities or alternative expressions of religiosities, a rather different picture surfaces. Before the crackdown on Falun Gong in 1999, Qigong, a reinvented traditional self-cultivation practice, had become extremely popular in the cities, and religious orientations were developed in some of its branches, including Falun Gong. (For ethnographic accounts of the Qigong boom, see Chen, 2003, Ownby, 2008, & Palmer, 2007.) More recently, during my fieldwork in Beijing (2009–2011), I observed the consequences of the gradual loosening of restrictions on religious publications. Hundreds of books, including many bestsellers by the masters of "worldly Buddhism" (*renjian fojiao*) in Taiwan and a series of New Age classics such as the works of Krishnamutri and Osho, have finally been introduced into the Chinese market. Yoga, meditation, astrology, and other mind/body/spiritual discourses or practices have become popular among the middle class. Also, there seems to be a "spiritual turn" in the psycho-boom; therapeutic modalities with a quasi-religious affinity, such as sand-play

and mindfulness, are burgeoning. Some therapists have shifted their aspirations of learning psychotherapy to spiritual quests, while many more are open to these influences.

The rise of Christianity

To see Christianity as a kind of Chinese popular religion may seem counter-intuitive. However, this western creation has existed on Chinese soil for four centuries, during which its ebb and flow has been inevitably intertwined with the tumult of modern China. As early as the mid-nineteenth century, the spread of faith inspired an indigenous religious movement, the Taiping Rebellion, whose "Heavenly Kingdom" for a time occupied most of Southern China. The late Qing period saw the expansion of Christian influence even though the church was increasingly targeted by anti-western sentiment, resulting in tragedies such as the slaughter of missionaries and their followers in the Boxer Uprising (1900). Christianity had relatively steady growth during the Republican period (1912–1949) despite the unremitting political turmoil and the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. A number of the top Nationalist leaders were Protestants, including Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek. In the same period several independent Chinese churches without foreign leadership also emerged. The religious climate drastically changed after the Communist Party came to power in 1949. Western missionaries were expelled and the affiliation of the Catholic Church with the Vatican was severed. The burgeoning enterprise was suppressed, put under state control, and eventually "eradicated" by the atheist state during the Cultural Revolution. (For a comprehensive historical account, see Bays, 2012.)

The growth of Christianity during the past three decades might seem like a miraculous return of the repressed. As the historian Bays (2003) indicates in the oft-cited statement, "Today, on any given Sunday there are almost certainly more Protestants in church in China than in all of Europe." The sheer scale of the Christian population and the speed of its expansion are astounding. Bays also describes the conflicting claims in the "numbers game", and the difficulties of assessing the reality, mainly due to the fact that the official statistics only count those registered to state-approved churches. Using the market metaphor, the sociologist Yang (2006) divides the religious landscape into three sectors: the red (official), black (illegal), and grey (ambiguous), among which the grey zone probably accounts for the most dramatic growth of Christianity in China. House churches, which are now prevalent, would fall into this category. The latest Blue Book by the China Academy of Social Sciences (Jin & Qiu, 2011) estimates that there are 23 million Protestants and 5.7 million Catholics in the country, but many observers believe the actual number should be at least double or triple.

In the religious revival of the reform period, only the quasi-religious Qigong fever achieved a similar level of popularity at its climax. During the 1980s and 1990s, the development of Christianity largely followed the course of native popular religions as principally a rural phenomenon. The sociologist Madsen (2001) and the historian Bays (2003) have pointed out the assimilation of Catholic and Protestant churches into the culture of the countryside, where both religions spurred a number of sectarian movements that were later prohibited by the state as "cults". More recently, the Protestant church has begun to thrive in urban areas and among the relatively well-educated, middle-class population by stressing a rather different orientation—its association with modernity and cosmopolitanism (Yang, 2005). This tentative success would

mark a distinct accomplishment for the foreign religion—the re-enchantment of China's secular cities.

Conclusion

The psycho-boom in urban China has formed an arena in which not only western treatment modalities are imported, but practitioners from various cultures can meet, comprehend, and share with each other. In this article, I begin with the entangled relationships between religion and psychoanalysis in the West, and argue that to understand the boom, further inquiries into its religious context are needed. I also contend that the endeavour should not be restricted to a static view from the great traditions and that a perspective informed by anthropology and the studies of popular religion can be more fruitful. I provide a brief outline of Chinese popular religion and delineate its transformation in the history of modern China. While trying to do justice to the historical complexities, I also touch upon some of the most interesting recent and current developments occurring slightly ahead of or during the period of the psycho-boom.

The narrative presented here has several limitations. To mention a few: it is focused on Han Chinese without any mention of ethnic minorities and their religious conditions. Also, I am not able to deal with the long history of Islam in China, particularly how this foreign religion has been indigenised quite early by the Muslims (*hui*) in ethnically Chinese and non-Han populations. Lastly, despite my efforts to catch up with the latest developments, it is virtually impossible to do so for such a vast and rapidly changing society. I believe the religious landscape will become even more diversified, dynamic, and vibrant in the near future, as the state maintains its policy to open up, slowly but steadily, with the country's increasing wealth and confidence. In optimistic mood, I cannot help but ask, "What will happen to the psycho-boom and the massive interests in psychoanalysis as this complex culture continues to evolve?"

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