

ethnisch heterogenen, ambivalenten Grenz-zonen, „... those uncertain places, those places where one might be in several places all at once, and one might even be several different persons...“ (S. 6), wo eine zeitweise Aussetzung sowohl des Rechts als auch von alltäglichen Routinen stattfindet.

Beispielhaft dafür ist der Beitrag von Pairoon Hengsuwan über einen birmanischen Soldaten, der in einem Militärcamp an der Grenze zu Thailand von einer Landmine zerfetzt, dann in einem thailändischen Krankenhaus behandelt wird, schließlich aber vorzeitig auf Geheiß des birmanischen Militärs zurückgeführt wird. Die Fallstudie zeigt nicht nur den permanenten Ausnahmezustand und die latente Gewalt an der birmanisch-thailändischen Staatsgrenze, der die Bewohner alltäglich ausgesetzt sind. Hinzu kommen noch potenziell tödliche bürokratische und diplomatische Irrungen und Wirrungen, die diesen vielschichtigen Grenzraum prägen.

Von Versuchen der Selbstermächtigung in prekären transnationalen Sozialräumen handelt der Beitrag von Wang Yueping. Am Beispiel von vietnamesischen Ehefrauen in Zhuang-Gemeinschaften – eine taisprachige Minderheit in China – wird gezeigt, wie Heiratsmigrantinnen in einem fremden Umfeld sozialen und emotionalen Halt schaffen können. Sie lassen sich von einer lokalen Stieffamilie quasi adoptieren und knüpfen damit ein eigenes Verwandtschaftsnetzwerk mit gegenseitigen Rechten und Pflichten. So erhalten sie ein soziales Gegengewicht zur Familie ihres Gatten.

Die Beiträge von Busarin Lertchavalitsakul (Shan in Thailand) und Wasan Panyagaew (Tai Lue in China) wiederum illustrieren die Grenzmobilität und Alltagspraktiken ethnischer Minoritäten in unterschiedlichen politischen und wirtschaftlichen Kontexten. In beiden Kapiteln sind es Koch- und Essgewohnheiten, die eine habituelle und affektive Brücke zu den jeweiligen Herkunftsgemeinschaften schlagen, dabei Fokus der alltäglichen Auseinandersetzung mit

Fragen von Zugehörigkeit und Entfremdung sind.

Diese und andere Beiträge sind zwar von schwankendem theoretischem Anspruch und empirischem Gehalt, liefern jedoch allesamt aufschlussreiche Einblicke zu den diversen regionalen Migrationsdynamiken und entsprechenden transnationalen Lebenswelten Südostasiens.

Oliver Tappe

Monika Gänßbauer: Popular Belief in Contemporary China. A Discourse Analysis

Bochum/Freiburg: projekt verlag, 2015.
169 S., 13,80 EUR

Western publications on Chinese popular belief are quite numerous, but an examination on explicitly Chinese discourses has been missing until now. This gap is now filled by Monika Gänßbauer's work, which is of essential importance for everyone concerned with research in this area and beyond. Her book discusses fundamental concepts used by Chinese scholars that can be related to western terms of religion. In doing so, the author focuses mainly on what is labeled either as *minjian zongjiao* ("popular religion") or *minjian xinyang* ("popular belief") within the context of Mainland China. The result is a concise and thoroughly researched study that is also pleasant to read.

The volume is divided into seven chapters examining different fields of discourse. However, the main focus is on the outline of several theoretical approaches to the field of (popular) belief and (popular) religion within Chinese academia given in chapter 3. All Chinese scholars currently working in the relevant fields included in this volume are introduced by providing basic data on their institutional affiliations, which indicates their political and academic backgrounds. Basic ideas are thoroughly introduced and illustrated by quotations of key statements in English translation.

In the introduction it is noted that while drawing on the methods of “discourse analysis,” the scope of the discussion is limited to central political and academic positions exclusively from within the PRC between the years 2000 and 2015. The publication was motivated not only by the fact that in the religious field “many Chinese intellectuals are [...] radically re-evaluating their own cultural identity and the influence exerted on them by the West” (p. 10), but also by the author’s feeling that these very Chinese discourses mostly take place separated from Western scholarship. Thus, the intention of this book is “to make accessible to readers outside of China the various arguments and counter-arguments put by Chinese participants in the contemporary Chinese discourse on belief, religion and quite particularly popular belief” (p. 11).

Chapter 1 starts with an outline of the discursive field of “Research into Religion in China Today” (p. 18). As it is shown, Chinese research in this field is rather contested between different perspectives, goals and participants (especially between those of political and of scholarly backgrounds). Additionally, what may be called popular belief should gain more scholarly attention, since this field has become an important part of everyday life during the last decades but has not been adequately noticed by governmental authorities.

In Chapter 2 the interrelation between belief and politics is examined. Many Chinese scholars assert that there is not only a lack of knowledge about popular belief by members of the powerful political authorities, but political reservations about popular beliefs (often disparaged as “superstitions”) are also still prevailing.

Chapter 3 may be regarded as the core of the book. It provides a discussion of a wide range of theoretical approaches to “religion” starting with the still important Marxist perspective, but then also introduces opposing positions. Some opinions take religious belief as just one category of belief. Additio-

nally, many scholars see a more or less strong opposition between science and belief (mostly with a preference for the former), but some others do find ways to deal with belief or religion more positively. Nevertheless, the question remains whether or not popular belief can actually be understood as religion, and where possible dividing lines are to be drawn. In this respect the author addresses discussions on the applicability of concepts like “elite culture” and “popular culture” that are inspired by the “great/little tradition” distinction in Western religious theories.

The last point directs to chapter 4. This chapter focuses on discursive threads concerning the fields of indigeneity and criticisms of western approaches, which to some Chinese scholars are not only insufficient for the Chinese context but are also an expression of western cultural and intellectual hegemony. Thus to various degrees a need for finding indigenous approaches and a specific Chinese terminology is articulated.

Chapter 5 examines the social context of Chinese popular belief. For instance this includes its relation to other officially recognized religions, namely the recently emerging Christianity. Furthermore, popular belief did not cease during the Maoist period and now experiences a strong revival that demands state authorities to find ways to deal with these developments. Still other fields of examination are the legally unsettled status, religious changes in the context of a modernizing society, and the ambiguity between official atheism and communist cadres believing in popular deities.

In chapter 6 the author addresses how discourses on how popular forms of belief can be legitimated. Key phrases are “popular belief as a part of China’s intangible cultural heritage” (p. 104) and the “intensified scientific engagement with popular belief” (p. 104). Here popular belief is seen as a fundamental part of a Chinese cultural system and as something that can result in positive effects, such as the ability to create

social stability and peace, to morally enhance the Chinese masses, to establish a civil society (or at least a public life), or to modernize China.

Chapter 7 introduces “an intensified critical engagement with popular religion in China and an alteration of the structures defining the relations between belief and power” (p. 120) into the proposals and demands deriving from the previously discussed discursive threads. For many scholars a more tolerant attitude among state authorities and an improved legal status of popular belief (not “superstition”!) seems to be necessary. Thus, the chapter also introduces some experimental areas where new ways of dealing with popular cults are tested.

Finally, a detailed conclusion does not only summarize the previously portrayed discursive threads but also relates them to some findings of Western research. The author admits her own surprise while working on this book that the Chinese discourse in the field of popular belief is much broader than she (and probably many other scholars) thought. However, both in western and in eastern discourses this very dichotomy of “East” and “West,” “We” and “the Other” is still prevailing. It is the hope of the author that someday this separation may be overcome.

With this volume the reader gains unprecedented and up-to-date insight into a field of Chinese discourse that is important in respect to scholarship. Questions on how to deal with popular belief within the PRC point to very fundamental and sensitive issues concerning the relation of politics, society and culture. Nevertheless, most of these debates are unavailable to scholars without sufficient language skills. Besides, even for those trained in Sinology it is a very valuable achievement to summarize the many Chinese discourses in a single book. In this respect, the author does not only give a thorough and comprehensive description of the various discursive threads in modern Chinese academia, but also manages to make

links to western scholarship wherever possible which thus enables the reader to relate them to an even greater context.

Andreas Berndt

Harro von Senger und Marcel Senn (Hgg.): Maoismus oder Sinomarxismus? Rechtswissenschaftlich-sinologische Tagung an der Universität Zürich, 5. und 6. Dezember 2014

Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016.
300 S., 54,00 EUR

Bei dem vorliegenden Band „Maoismus oder Sinomarxismus?“, herausgegeben von Harro von Senger und Marcel Senn, handelt es sich um den Tagungsband der, laut den Herausgebern, ersten „im Westen durchgeführte(n) wissenschaftliche(n) Tagung zum Thema Sinomarxismus“ (S. 3).

Die Herausgeber definieren „Sinomarxismus“ als ein „spezifisch chinesische(s) Verständnis des Marxismus“ (S. 9), das in Anlehnung an englische Übersetzungen der selbstgewählten Termini der Kommunistischen Partei Chinas (KPCh) innerhalb der Publikation auch als „chinesischer Marxismus“ bezeichnet wird. Dabei plädieren von Senger und Senn für den Begriff des „Sinomarxismus“, weil dieser eine analytische Schärfe besitze, die der Terminus „Maoismus“ aus geschichtlichen, philosophischen und gesellschaftlichen Gründen nie besessen habe. Besonders in der westlichen Debatte beziehe man sich, spräche man von Maoismus, in der Regel auf die letzten beiden Jahrzehnte maoistischer Politik und lasse somit die frühen Jahre außer Acht. Sinomarxismus sei in Abgrenzung dazu ein „handlungsorientierter, politikwissenschaftlicher Terminus, den die Volksrepublik China auch selbst“ verwendete (S. 288).

Die ersten beiden Teile des Bandes beschäftigen sich mit den Ursprüngen, Hintergründen und Bedeutungen von Maoismus und Sinomarxismus in Geschichte, Wirtschaft und Philosophie. So untersucht Daniel Leese