

study of Southern Song debates on just taxation demonstrates that the Yongjia thinkers envisioned a social order reliant on landed gentry—a “conservative realist” view that stood as a foil to Zhu Xi’s efforts to moralize the society and economy at the cost of the wealthy elite (p. 265). It will be intriguing to compare the defense raised by Yongjia thinkers for the independence of propertied local elites with that made by scholars within the orbit of Zhu Xi’s school of teaching.⁵

Shifting the focus to the ruled population, the last two chapters both provide important insights into the functioning of the Song state. Elad Alyagon reveals how the Song penal-military complex created a permanent lower class who were constantly resisting coercion, violence, and terror imposed by officials sharing Confucian values about benevolent governance. This study of lower-class resistance also suggests that state policies were sometimes “shaped by attitudes and activities at the bottom of society” (p. 300). Patricia Ebrey observes that the Song stood out from the Liao, Jin, and Yuan states, as it employed very limited forced relocation of civilians. This exceptionalism, Ebrey concludes, originated in the Song state’s stronger reliance on market principles to mobilize resources and human labor—an important effect of the Song commercial revolution.

Due to the nature of *State Power in China, 900–1325* as a collection of essays, a lack of a systematic analysis of the functioning of the Song state and state power is only to be expected. Overall, the chapters in this volume demonstrate how Song state power took effect in a context where diverse and internally fractious power cohabitants interacted with one another and with not-so-powerless subjects. As inspiring as they are, these essays predominantly explore these interactions from the perspective of factional politics and the state-elite relationship. Some other forms of tension between the power cohabitants, such as competition and negotiation among officials over everyday governance, await further exploration.

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China and Islam: The Prophet, the Party, and Law. By MATTHEW S. ERIE.
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As implied by the subtitle, *China and Islam: The Prophet, the Party, and Law* examines how the party-state interacts with Islam, with a specific focus on the relationship between state law and Shari’a law. In the case of the Hui minority, the two meet in a zone called the *minjian*, literally meaning “among the people,” where party-state and Hui come together to articulate needs, solve problems, and work toward their respective views of a good community. Matthew Erie, trained in Arabic, Chinese, and the law, brings his impressive credentials to bear on his thirteen years of fieldwork, mainly in Linxia, which is known as “China’s Little Mecca.” He has worked in archives in Linxia,

⁵See, e.g., Wang Bo’s challenge to Zhu Xi’s economic activism in Sukhee Lee, “Making Sense of the Master: Wang Bo’s ‘Localization’ of Neo-Confucianism in the Late Southern Song,” *T’oung Pao* 99, no. 1/3 (2013): 140–72.

Lanzhou, Beijing, Hong Kong, Harvard, and Princeton, consulting sources in Chinese and English, and conducted numerous interviews with Muslim clerics, Hui and Han officials engaged in work in ethnic minority affairs, and residents of the area. The result is a deeply researched and outstanding work of scholarship that questions the assumption that Islamic law is incompatible with state law.

The term *minjian* is used by Hui to describe people, places, and things not registered or sanctioned by state law, such as clerics, students, mosques, tombs, prayer halls, certain kinds of publications, and property transactions. It is practiced by rules that may be neither established nor systematic, are not necessarily legal, and are apt to exist where law is silent (pp. 12–13). In what might be called the sacralization of the polity, the party-state insists that Islam can be only a private, adult matter. The institution overseeing this is the China Islamic Association, typically abbreviated as Yi-Xie. Among its concerns are Hui teaching schools. Erie's research shows that a triangular relationship has emerged among Hui teaching schools and the party-state: the schools make claims for their authenticity both through and against the party-state and through and against other teaching schools. Far from being a unified entity, as frequently described in both party-state publications and foreign media, Hui opinion is divided on issues such as who is entitled to read the Koran during funeral ceremonies, with the Yi-Xie charged with interpreting Islamic law through both religious and socialist tenets. This process is characterized by negotiation, subterfuge, evasion, collaboration, and disagreement.

Certain areas are zones of atheism: party members and those who work in government offices do not wear white caps or headscarves, civil servants who work long hours do not pray regularly, and the government reserves the right to choose which and how many people will be allowed to make the hajj. Another area of sensitivity is the network of commercial connections to Muslims beyond China's borders. Although state policy encourages such commercial links, Beijing also fears that those who engage in them may be attracted by influences inimical to Chinese security.

Another interesting finding is that Hui women have been able to use the PRC's laws to bolster their status *within* Islam, for example in regard to inheritance issues and property law. In commercial law, Erie's research in Ningxia found that Hui did not wish to follow Islamic law: they had no desire to live in accordance with Shari'a laws on finance. Hui will sometimes use Han lawyers to bring a case before the state's legal authorities, reasoning that they will get a more sympathetic hearing from the Han legal system. Conversely, Han may hire clerics to resolve disputes, since their fees are apt to be lower.

The party-state generally tolerates Hui practices in family and property law even when they contravene state law so long as these are not seen to directly jeopardize state interests. For example, the authorities want to be sure that land is transferred to those who will use it for its highest value, such as real estate developers. Negotiation and compromise are common. However, issues such as land transfer and how to deal with unregistered mosques and unrecorded property transfers frequently become murky and difficult to solve.

People's Mediation Committees (PMCs) exist to deal with these disputes, as they do in Han areas, with the party-state using PMCs comprised of Hui citizens to prevent conflicts from devolving into inter-ethnic or anti-state confrontations. These work reasonably well in Ningxia, the Hui being regarded as "good" Muslims—that is, less troublesome to the state than, say, Uyghurs—and not surprisingly there is far more suspicion, and hence far closer scrutiny, of the activities of PMCs in Xinjiang.

Even among "good Muslims," problems can get out of hand, as when a Hui in Linxia opened a karaoke bar, at least some of whose patrons were Hui as well. Clerics mobilized

popular anger at this perceived affront to Muslim tenets, and a riot ensued. When police found themselves unable to deal with it, they called on the clerics—the same ones who had incited their followers to action—and the riots ended. Unfortunately, we are not told how the police managed to persuade the clerics to do so. Two clerics were arrested and received prison sentences, being held in another town to reduce the possibility of a mob marching on the jail. In addition to indicating that tensions can arise even among Muslim groups regarded as less troublesome, it also illustrates that the Hui relationship with the party state is more nuanced than the clear-cut “us versus them” dichotomy that the foreign analyses frequently imply. The government must also mediate differences among the Hui in a way that is at least minimally acceptable to the disputants as well as consonant with official rules and regulations.

Erie concludes by observing that the party is trapped in its own ideological strait-jacket: reliance on Hui authorities and Islamic law is an important factor in maintaining social stability, yet the party cannot admit that it is dependent on them. Most recently, the party-state has endeavored to assert its authority by progressively shrinking the scope of the *minjian*. Whether this will achieve the desired results remains to be seen. The vexed relationship between secular and sacred power is, to be sure, not unique to the PRC. Religion has adapted and survived adverse circumstances before, in China as well as other societies, and Islam has proven itself remarkably resilient.

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Medicine and Memory in Tibet: Amchi Physicians in an Age of Reform. By
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In *Medicine and Memory in Tibet*, Theresia Hofer presents several years of ethnographic work in Tsang, particularly Ngamring, engaging three generations of *amchi* physicians from the most significant *Tsang Mentrong*—literally, “Medical Houses,” hosting a specific group, family, or lineage of Tibetan medical doctors—and historic monastic practices. She extends the Lévi-Straussian concept of the house as a form of social organization to broaden and sharpen scholarship on Tibetan medical knowledge transmission, for which *Tsang Mentrong* played a fundamental role outside the large, central medical institutions in pre-1950 central Tibet. She shows how though *Mentrong amchi* formed the majority of Tibetan physicians at this time, they became marginalized in both formalized policies and academic analysis due to exclusion from centralized government-supported entities and official narratives of *Sowa Rigpa*, or the “Science of Healing,” as Tibetan medicine is known.

Skillfully conducting an “ethnography of historicity” (p. 15), Hofer engages these absent voices of marginal actors through richly detailed oral life histories, offering accounts of Tibetan medical practice inspired by subaltern studies. In doing so, she employs practices of memory construction and historicized narrative, actively engaging tensions of enforced narratives, publicized memories, and the state’s ever-present gaze with personalized recollections of the past. Her work contributes a critical presentation of how *amchi*, previously in the most revered positions of social authority and continuity of medical lineages, experienced the waves of policies and reforms from the early 1950s to the millennial turn.

