

Buddhist institutions as social services providers: what implications for China's welfare regime?

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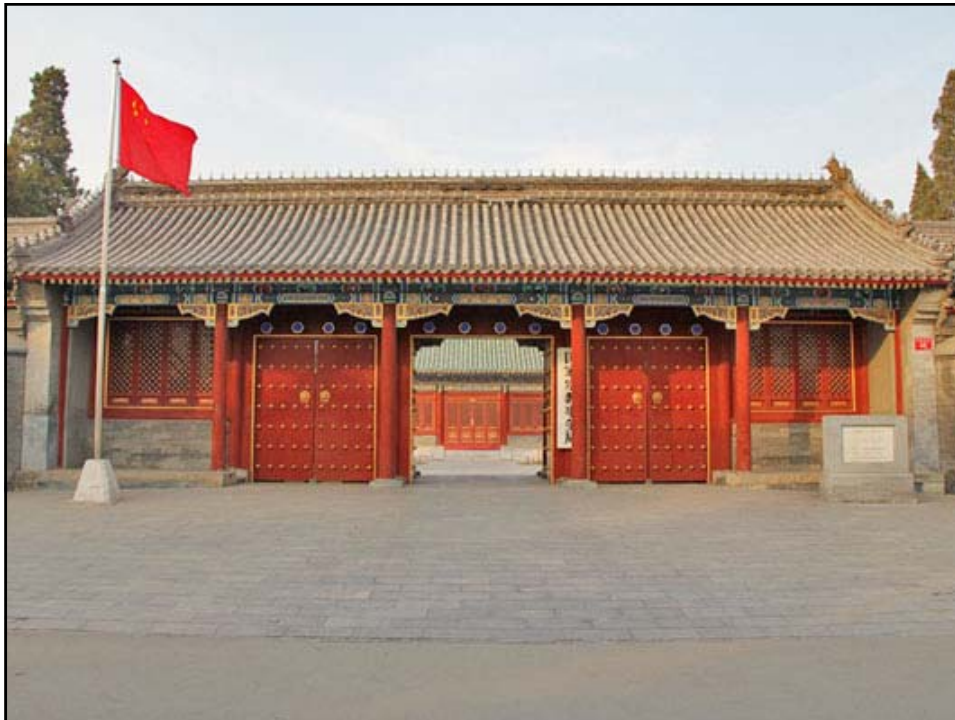
Parameters of China's social policies

- Borrowing from other models of social policies
 - Studies of welfare regimes with less role for state
 - Preference for regimes with + emphasis on markets & society
- Transition away from the communes
 - End of a comprehensive array of services in the 1980s
 - Lure of the market economy in the 1990s
 - Promises of developing welfare policies in the 2000s
 - Increasing liabilities in pensions require greater reliance on society
- Fragmented welfare regime
 - Devolution of responsibilities to local governments
 - Over-reliance on the market
 - Pilot experiments in selected counties



Religious institutions and social policy

- Legal obstacles
 - Uncertainties of legislations and regulations
 - Major change: 'opinion of 2012' on religion and public interest
 - Who has the final say?
 - State security bureaus ?
 - Economy, labor and social security, civil affairs ministries?
 - CCP United front work department?
 - Local governments' discretion
- Political obstacles
 - Commitments to historical materialism
 - Concerns over national unity and harmonious society
 - Control of 'sects' and 'feudal superstitions'



Legal-political context for religious NGOs

- Bases of political support
 - Party United front work departments (统战部)
 - Bureaus for religious affairs (民族宗教)
 - Religious associations (e.g. 佛教协会; 道教协会)
- Legal structure
 - Foundations (基金会) for raising money
 - Charitable associations (功德会) for delivery of services
- Scope of activities
 - *ad hoc* Emergency relief (救灾)
 - Institutionalized charities (慈善)
 - Public interest activities (公益事业)



A religious division of labor?

- International RNGOs
 - Early stage of reform policy: Amity and World Vision
 - Throughout the 1990s: Taiwan and HK-based Buddhists
 - A learning strategy
- National RNGOs
 - Evidence of social services provisions by all of the 5 religions
 - Support for schools, clinics, elderly homes
 - Preference for Buddhists? Anecdotal more than evidence-based: important work from Christians as well
- Path dependency of previous charitable activities
 - Christian role in higher education in XIXth Century
 - Buddhists provision of relief during WWII (Red Swastika)



An overview of Buddhist charities

- Performance of charity since the reform period
 - 1984: evidence of projects noted in Fayin
 - 1994: founding of Nanputuo charity in Xiamen
 - Others since: Yufu si; bailin si; longquan si
- Different paths to institutionalization
 - Depending on local circumstances
 - Associations, foundations, merit societies
- Wide range of activities
 - Emergency relief for victims of natural disaster
 - Help to orphans, elderly, counselling
 - No preaching
 - An involvement that pales relative to Hong Kong and Taiwan



A preference for Buddhists?

- Objective advantages of Buddhists
 - Largest religion according to statistics
 - Historical precedents of provision of social services until 1949
 - A contemporary theology compatible with Marxism
 - The support of “compatriots” in Taiwan
 - Outreach possible outside China
- Limits to the other religions
 - “Fear of infiltration” from Protestant Christianity
 - Uncertainty about Daoism, communal religions, Islam
- What the evidence on the field has told us
 - Buddhist enthusiasm but resources limited
 - Volatility of relations with Taiwan

真情回报，共同奉献
——玉佛禅寺法师、志愿者赴上海儿童医院慰问贫困病童与护士

5月12日，是汶川地震一周年的纪念日，也是“国际护士节”。玉佛寺上午举行了为灾区同胞祈福的法会，下午法师和志愿者们又来到上海儿童医院，看望了在儿童医院接受治疗的贫困重症儿童，跟他们一起做游戏，并给他们送上了文具、食品等礼物，表达了佛教界对他们的爱意，希望他们能感受到社会的关心，使这些不幸的孩子能和其他小朋友一样，在祖国的同一片蓝天下健康幸福成长。同时法师和志愿者们还慰问了看护重症病童的护士，她们以人道、慈悲的精神，以爱心、耐心、细心、责任心，关心、爱护着重症儿童，为维护人民群众的健康而无私奉献、默默耕耘。

一年一度患病的儿童却奔跑的愿望。欢乐的儿童节，红、蓝宝中，和医院，愿他

玉佛禅寺 慈善专栏

上海玉佛禅寺寺务处主办
第7期

玉佛寺举办纪念汶川地震一周年超度祈福法会

为纪念汶川地震一周年，玉佛寺在“5.12”当日隆重举行超度祈福法会，希望通过诵经祈福，仰诸佛菩萨慈悲愿力、集僧俗大众虔诚愿心，祈愿灾区亡灵早登莲邦，回归安养；祝愿灾区人民身心安康、生活幸福。

2008的“5.12”，蜀地震撼，举世震惊。山崩地裂的一瞬间，家园毁损，生灵涂炭，天地含悲。当此之时，全国上下，同心协力，守望相助，真情援手，众志成城。

大灾面前，玉佛寺僧俗大众在觉醒大和尚领导下，秉持佛教“无缘大慈，同体大悲”的基本理念，践行“救死扶伤，慈济社会”的佛教教导，积极行动，有钱出钱，有力出力，尽己所能，为抗震救灾作出了自己应有的贡献。

保之
旨，从心做起
质，建设人
力践行环保
绿色消费有
性快餐容器
员参加资源
着手，节约

The outlook for religious charities

- A favorable policy environment for organized religions in general
 - Government's concerns over public morality
 - Public visibility of religion as a source of soft power
 - Religious traditions' traditions of succor to vulnerable people
- Social capital of Buddhists to be tapped
 - Resources of the global diaspora
 - Support from Taiwan and HKSAR Buddhist foundations
 - Local governments interest in tourism revenues generated by temples and the fall-out of FDI
- Residual institutional resistance
 - Bureaucracy of religious affairs' monopoly
 - Security apparatus' fear of instability



What is to be learned?

- A pragmatic approach to Chinese governance
 - Pitman Potter's idea of selective adaptation
 - Adopting welfare regimes from industrialized societies
 - Adapting them to Chinese conditions
- Chinese conditions
 - Universalist commitments in welfare provisions
 - Diversity of religious institutions
- A transferable model?
 - Multi-religious societies
 - Welfare regimes in the making
 - Variety of path dependencies