

TERMINOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY: BUDDHISM AND THE GENEALOGY OF THE TERM ZONGJIAO

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There is no doubt that we live on one side of a great divide, where religion is something one thinks about rather than something one does.¹

In contemporary China and Taiwan, the hegemonic projection of uniformity of the meaning of the word *zongjiao* (宗教) that is used to represent the English term ‘religion’ in the discourse of policies and of academic analyses and that implies a coherent and exclusive system and a churchlike organisation is still contested and subverted by dissonant voices. Vincent Goossaert notes grassroots use of the term ‘superstition’ whereby practitioners choose to identify their own activities as belief not in ‘religion’ but in ‘superstition’ (*wo bu xin zongjiao, wo xin mixin* 我不信宗教我信迷信).² Recent field work in Taiwan highlights the discomfort of regular temple goers with having to identify with any one ‘teaching’ (*jiao* 教) over one’s normal reference to ‘paying respect/worshipping gods and buddhas’ (*bai shenfo* 拜神佛).³ However, the progressive affirmation in China of the notion of an exclusive religious identity based on contrastive conceptions of religious traditions is undeniable.

While research on religious topics has been constantly growing during the last decade, the emergence in the nineteenth century of a novel conception of religion – a notion that was at considerable variance with the ideas and practices of earlier periods – and of the terminology to describe it, are yet to be fully investigated. China, of course, lacked the lexical equivalent of the term ‘religion’ in its post-Reformation acceptance as a discrete feature of culture and a matter of individual

¹ Charles John Sommerville, *The Secularization of Early Modern England: From Religious Culture to Religious Faith*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, 9.

² Vincent Goossaert “The Concept of Religion in China and the West”, in: *Diogenes* 205, 19.

³ Ester-Maria Guggenmos, personal e-mail communication, 24 November 2008.

belief.⁴ The subject of the present short paper discusses the Buddhist bias intrinsic in the choice of the new term *zongjiao* to designate official discourse on religion in the twentieth century.

The work of Talal Asad may have alerted scholars everywhere to the problems involved in using the word ‘religion’ as if it were a universal category innocent of specifically European connotations.⁵ Yet, for the one fourth of humanity who live in East Asia and use forms of writing based on the Chinese script, most scholars still seem content to accept a simplified account of the origins of the modern Japanese word *shūkyō* and Chinese *zongjiao* that glosses over many of the complexities and ambiguities involved in its creation.⁶ What is offered here, then, is a step towards a fuller account of the history of the term that gives due weight to the crucial but complex developments in the mid-nineteenth century. We believe that these developments, while they resulted in the adoption by so many contemporary language users, for better or worse, of a term now regarded as their word corresponding to ‘religion’, may be seen as pointing to a background in earlier discourse on religious topics. A close look at the evidence does not suggest a neologism especially coined to meet the needs of contact with the West, and so conveying no more and no less than the connotations of the word in Europe and America, but something much more nuanced. As we are at pains to point out in our conclusions, we do not see our work as definitive, and we have also striven to be fairly concise in the presentation of our findings, which might at a number of points bear more extended discussion. Even so, it is hoped that this brief communication may serve as a stimulus to further debate, and especially further research.

⁴ For the situation in the late nineteenth century see Vincent Goossaert, “1898: The Beginning of the End for Chinese Religion?”, in: *The Journal of Asian Studies* 65 no. 2. (May 2006), 307–336. Cfr. Stephan Feuchtwang/Wang Ming-ming “The Politics of Culture or a Contest of Histories: Representation of Chinese Popular Religion”, in: *Dialectical Anthropology* 16 (1991), 251–272, for post 1978 official attitudes.

⁵ See Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993. Cfr. Ugo Bianchi (ed.), *The Notion of ‘Religion’ in Comparative Research: Selected Proceedings of the XVIth Congress of the International Association of the History of Religions*, Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 1994; Jordan Paper, *The Spirits are Drunk: Comparative Approaches to Chinese Religion*, Albany: SUNY Press, 1995.

⁶ In what follows, we have not considered the origins of the Korean term, since we assume that Korea was not significantly involved in bringing the two components of the term together. This assumption may be incorrect.

To most modern writers on China the matter is simple: the Chinese language had no word for 'religion', and the modern term is simply a borrowing from Japanese.⁷ This certainly accounts for the proximate origin of the term in Chinese, and conveniently situates it amongst the many novel combinations of Chinese characters put together to express neologisms drawn from the vocabulary of European languages that first came into use in Japan in the late nineteenth century and were later transmitted to China, as reformers in that country looked to Japan for a model of modernization.⁸ If we turn to writers on Japan, however, we find a palpable sense of unease in the use of the word, a sense that somehow its semantic range is surprisingly restricted, together with some attempts at trying to uncover the roots of this phenomenon.⁹ One recent investigation would see the conjunction of the two Chinese characters employed in the term as going back rather earlier, to the eighteenth century writings of Tominaga Nakamoto (1715–1746), wherein they are already used to express a notion roughly equivalent to the European one of 'religion', but as the result of independent developments, not borrowing from Europe.¹⁰ Tominaga was certainly a thinker far ahead of his time, and the notion that he was already formulating some sort of disciplined study of religion is a very attractive one.¹¹ But unfortunately to the extent that this

⁷ This contention may be found as early as William Edward Soothill, *The Three Religions of China*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923, 14–15. A short analysis of missionary and Buddhist discourse is found in Francesca Tarocco, "The Making of Religion in Modern China", in: Nile Green/Mary Searle Chatterjie (eds.), *Religion, Language and Power*, New York: Routledge, 42–56.

⁸ As we shall see, though Federico Masini has questioned this general narrative up to a point in his pioneering study "The Formation of Modern Chinese Lexicon and its Evolution Towards a National Language: The Period from 1840 to 1898", in: *Journal of Chinese Linguistics*, Monograph Series number 6, 1993, he still sees the word *zongjiao* as having taken the course – hitherto regarded as unproblematic for most of China's modern intellectual vocabulary – from Japanese invention back to China. The earliest occurrence of *zongjiao* in China cited by Masini is the *Ribenguo zhi* (an account of the state of Japan, 1890).

⁹ For a good encapsulation of this sense of a problem, see Ian Reader, *Religion in Contemporary Japan*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991, 13–14.

¹⁰ Thus Michael Pye, "What is 'Religion' in East Asia?", in: Ugo Bianchi, (ed.), *The Notion of 'Religion' in Comparative Research: Selected Proceedings of the XVIth Congress of the International Association of the History of Religions*, Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1994, 115–122.

¹¹ Note Tim H. Barrett, "Tominaga our Contemporary", in: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, series 3, 3.1 (July, 1993), 245–252, which attempts to provide a reading of part of Tominaga's work bringing out some of his combination of erudition and critical sense.

argument is based upon this apparent specific innovation in the terminology that he employs in discussing religion, it must be set aside as deriving from nothing more than a mistranslation. Tominaga, in the passage in question, is discussing the range of doctrines that had formerly rivalled Buddhism, in the course of which he refers in passing to the Manichaeian heresy. How accurate his knowledge was, and whence he derived it, are interesting questions that cannot be entered into here. But it does certainly appear as though he speaks as if a certain “Futtotan transmitted two religions”, using the two Chinese characters meaning ‘main line or principle of doctrine’ and ‘teaching’ that go to make up the modern word *zongjiao*.¹²

In fact, research into the history of this famous heresy in China suggests that the apparent name is actually a title and that the reference is not to “two religions”, but to the “Teaching of the Two Principles”, an important work within the Manichaeian tradition well attested in Chinese sources that the dignitary is said to have been the first to transmit to China.¹³

This is not to say that the two characters meaning ‘main line/principle’ (*zong* 宗) and ‘teaching’ (*jiao* 教) do not occur in some relation to each other in pre-modern texts, but a full investigation of their relationship takes us back to China rather than Japan and requires a few words on the invention of the religious vocabulary there by Buddhists in early mediaeval times. *Zong* is a slightly tricky term, originally meaning the main ancestral line, and by extension anything else one looked back to and identified with, so that in more abstract contexts it is often translated ‘principle’. The move from a kinship term to indicate also an intellectual relationship parallels the same course taken by *jia* (家), originally ‘family’, but also used variously over time as a label grouping intellectual phenomena, and later *zu* (祖), used in both the literal and religious (specifically Zen) sense of patriarch.¹⁴ The second element, *jiao*, on the other hand, means, more or less, ‘teaching’. The two words, to judge by the recapitulation of earlier classifications of

¹² The translation is that of Michael Pye, in: Tominaga Nakamoto, *Emerging from Meditation*, London: Duckworth, 1990, 157.

¹³ For the work in question, see Samuel N. C. Lieu, *Manichaeism in Central Asia and China*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998, 114.147–148.162–163 and for the dignitary in question 84.

¹⁴ On the former term, see Mark Csikszentmihályi/Michael Nylan, “Constructing Lineages and Inventing Traditions Through Exemplary Figures in Early China”, in: *T'oung-pao* 89 (2003), 59–99; on the latter, note Tim H. Barrett “Kill the Patriarchs!”, in: Tadeusz Skorupski (ed.), *The Buddhist Forum*, I, London: SOAS, 1990, 87–97.

varieties of Buddhism by the great Chinese Buddhist thinker Fazang (642–712), had first been brought together in the sixth century by one or two scholar-monks who differentiated strand in Buddhist thought as different 'principle-teachings', combining the two terms, though other similar terms were also current.¹⁵ This terminology, moreover, did not become established. Fazang himself classified the strands of Buddhist thought into five teachings and ten principles, with the first term covering obvious distinctions and the second the more subtle doctrinal positions, particularly those differentiating the 'teachings' lumped together as outside the scope of developed Mahāyāna Buddhism, but does not conjoin the two terms himself in his own analysis.¹⁶ It seems furthermore unlikely that Fazang's work, a somewhat dense philosophical piece, perpetuated the use of the compound term *zongjiao*, though it was intensively studied after its export to Japan amongst the Buddhist clergy there – more so, it seems, than eventually became the case in China.¹⁷ The combination of *zong* and *jiao* appears to have remained a slightly *ad hoc* one, as is evidenced by the fact that in commentary we sometimes find the collocation *jiaozong* (教宗), or the Japanese equivalent, reversing what to us has become the normal order of the two components.¹⁸ This is true also in a work by one

¹⁵ Fazang seems not to have been the first great master of the Sui-Tang period to allude to these earlier classifications, but his remarks are the most explicit; cf. Mochizuki Shinkō, *Bukkyō Daijiten*, Tokyo: Sekai seiten kankō kyōkai, 1957–68, 2229–2230; Suzuki Norihisa, *Meiji shūkyō shichō no kenkyū*, Tokyo: Daigaku shuppansha, 1979, 14.

¹⁶ Fazang, *Huayan yicheng jiao yi fen qi zhang*, 1, 480c–481b, in the Taishō edition of the Canon, vol. 45, text no. 1866. Later exegetes generally refer to this text by the shorter, unofficial title of *Huayan Wujiao zhang*. For an attempt at conveying its thought in English, see Francis H. Cook, *Hua-yen Buddhism: The Jewel Net of Indra*, University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1977.

¹⁷ Kamata Shigeo, *Kegongaku kenkyū shiryō shūsei*, Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku Tōyō bunka kenkyūjo, 1983, 247–304, provides a very useful survey of the history of commentary on this text in East Asia. The main text itself was included in the official, government produced imperial canon under late imperial dynasties, including that of the final Manchu dynasty, but by the nineteenth century seems to have been little studied, to judge by the Chinese interest in Japanese editions and commentaries, once contact between fellow Buddhists in these countries had been re-established towards the end of the imperial period: note Chen Jidong, *Shin-matsu Bukkyō no kenkyū*, Tokyo: Sankibō, 2003, 511.514. 538.564.577.

¹⁸ Nakamura Hajime, *Bukkyōgo daijiten*, Tokyo: Tokyo shoseki, 1975, 231c, cites an example of the two elements in reverse order from a medieval Japanese commentary on a work in the same tradition as Fazang by Gyōnen (1240–1321); according to Suzuki, *Meiji shūkyō*, 14, this monk also used the elements in the more usual order in one of his other compositions.

of Fazang's later successors in his line of exegetical thought, Zongmi (780–841), which we take to be far more significant to the history of *zongjiao*.¹⁹

His is an introductory work outlining his overall view of the Zen tradition, to which he also adhered, in relation to other varieties of Buddhism.²⁰ In two instances, (one from the preface, which is by Zongmi's lay patron), the collocation *jiaozong* seems to be used to indicate a doctrinally distinct strand of Buddhism, or rather a strand distinct from the field of Zen with which the author concerns himself, but in a third passage, *zongjiao* is used for something more inclusive, the teaching of the entire lineage of Zen masters stretching back through Bodhidharma to the Buddha himself, a usage more concrete than in Fazang, and one no doubt prompted by the prominence in Zen of more pseudo-familial terminology than elsewhere.²¹ Zongmi's Zen writings, unlike the doctrinal treatises of Fazang, made little headway in Japan, but were immensely influential in Korea and China.²² In the former country, Chinul (1158–1210) drew on Zongmi in constructing a form of Zen practice that could be harmonized with the doctrinal (i. e., *jiao*) approach of other schools.²³ In the case of China, it is possible to trace the study of Zongmi's *Prolegomenon* down to the nineteenth century, when *zong* and *jiao* first became embroiled with European meanings, since in the early nineteenth century the reformer Gong Zizhen (1792–1841) specifically commends it, and notes the edition currently availa-

¹⁹ On this important figure one may consult the excellent monograph of Peter N. Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification of Buddhism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

²⁰ *Chanyuan zhuquanji duxu, Prolegomenon to the Collected Expressions of the Zen Source*, in the translation of Jeff Broughton, who gives a good overview of the traditional and modern scholarship relating to it in "Tsong-mi's *Zen Prolegomenon*: Introduction to an Exemplary Zen Canon", in: Steven Heine/Dale Wright (eds.), *The Zen Canon: Understanding the Classic Texts*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004, 11–51.

²¹ For these references, see respectively Zongmi, *Chanyuan zhuchuanji duxu*, 1, 398b23 (by Zongmi's patron, Pei Xiu); 2, 409a3; and 1, 405b16, in the edition of the Taishō Canon, volume 48, text number 2015. The last type of usage also occurs in another text on Zen by Zongmi, according to Komazawa daijiten hensanjo (ed.), *Zengaku daijiten*, Tokyo: Taishūkan, 1978, 481d. For Zen 'patriarchs', see n. 14 above; the different branches of Zen were also commonly referred to as 'families', *jia*.

²² For Zongmi in Japan, see Broughton, "Tsong-mi's *Zen Prolegomenon*", 40–41, which draws on work by Kamata Shigeo.

²³ Robert Buswell, *The Collected Works of Chinul*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1983, 25.

ble.²⁴ This makes the use of Zongmi’s terminology by Gong’s friend and fellow-reformer Wei Yuan (1794–1856) particularly interesting. Wei contrasts “emphasizing one’s own spirit within, concentrating on the perfect and sudden”, which he terms *zong-jiao*, with “looking up to the Buddhas without, and using one’s spiritual power to trigger their power”, which is how he understands the devotional practices subsumed under the name of Pure Land; both of these he declares to be sustained by a further element, the observance of the Buddhist precepts (*vinaya*).²⁵ In another passage in praise of Pure Land piety, he states that the Buddhist clergy is composed of the two groupings concerned with *zong* and *jiao*, but then commends one great exegete and one great Zen master who combined their approaches with Pure Land practice as well.²⁶ Since the Zen master in question, Yanshou (904–975), a later admirer of Zongmi, in one of his works also explicitly follows him in using the terms *zong* and *jiao* both together and in apposition to represent respectively the lineage of Bodhidharma and the doctrinal school to which he adhered (again, like Zongmi, that of Fazang), one might suspect that Wei had read Yanshou’s remarks too.²⁷ But though Gong Zizhen was demonstrably at least aware of this work by Yanshou, he does not specifically commend it, so there is less likelihood that Wei Yuan had been encouraged to tackle it.²⁸ It is indeed hard to judge how readily available the work would have been. However, it must be noted that the Morrison Collection, based on materials gathered at the start of the nineteenth century in the Canton area by China’s first Protestant missionary, does include a short work by Yanshou, but not this much more substantial treatise.²⁹ For even if Wei Yuan had attempted to read it, unlike Yanshou’s writings on Zen and Pure Land, the text is unusually voluminous (twenty-five times the bulk of Zongmi’s work), with the relevant material over one third

²⁴ Gong Zizhen, *Gong Zizhen quanji*, Part 6, Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1975, 405.

²⁵ Wei Yuan, *Wei Yuan ji*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976, 247.

²⁶ Wei Yuan, *Wei Yuan ji*, 249.

²⁷ For the passage in question, note Yanshou, *Zongjing lu* 34, 614a13–21, in the edition of the Taishō Canon, no. 2016, vol. 48; note also earlier *Zongjing lu* 29, 588b24. Broughton, “Tsung-mi’s *Zen Prolegomenon*”, 38, observes that this treatise by Yanshou was also used by Chinul, and briefly had an influence in Japan, though this had waned long before the nineteenth century.

²⁸ Gong Zizhen, *Gong Zizhen quanji*, 390.

²⁹ Andrew C. West, *Catalogue of the Morrison Collection*, London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1998, 195.

of the way through. We hesitate to assume that Wei Yuan read that far, and so had Yanshou's recapitulation of Zongmi in mind as well in the two passages in which he discusses *zong* and *jiao*, though it is of course a distinct possibility.³⁰ These sections in Wei's writings on Pure Land Buddhism even so may be taken to show that Wei considered the business of clerical Buddhism, beyond the pietism suitable for both clergy and laity, to be summed up in the two terms, which to him appear to indicate the *zong*, or ancestral lineages of the Zen school, and the *jiao*, or doctrines of the other schools. This usage still appears to be somewhat *ad hoc*, suggesting not a regular compound but two terms with semantic affinities that tended to bring them together. But although the two may perhaps have been brought together elsewhere accidentally, in China as in Japan, the precedent of Zongmi's text does appear to be the relevant one in Wei's case. It is, indeed, Zongmi's usage that appears to have engendered the most consistent appearance of the compound bringing together both the elements *zong* and *jiao* in later Zen texts composed during the thousand years separating the two men, as a term (by no means the only one) for the totality of the Zen tradition. At the same time, Zongmi's contrast of the Zen line with other traditions concerned with doctrinal teaching (*jiaozong*) no doubt suggested to readers like Wei the type of combinations and contrasts that are in evidence in Wei's Pure Land writings.³¹ We cannot claim that Wei's specific formulations had any consequences in themselves. Though Wei's pioneering works on the geography of the western world were widely circulated, and were especially influential in Japan, his writings on Buddhism, penned in 1854, were initially little known.³² Rather, his use of terminology is most useful as evidence of how educated Chinese persons who were not Buddhist monks themselves could construe the totality of the Buddhist religious tradition in his time. Specifically, *zong* and *jiao* seem to be used by Wei to cover those activities that were proper to the Buddhist clergy, terms that

³⁰ For some account of Yanshou on Pure Land covering the type of material that Wei Yuan probably did read, see Heng-ching Shih, *The Syncretism of Ch'an and Pure Land Buddhism*, New York: P. Lang, 1992.

³¹ The use of the term *zongjiao* in Zen texts of the Song and Ming periods is readily attested by the works in the Taishō Canon: see volume 47, 937b22.942c5 (text number 1998); volume 48, 1103a16 (text number 2024); cf. also Suzuki, *Meiji shūkyō*, 14.

³² Wei Yuan's much greater fame as a geographer is covered in Jane Kate Leonard, *Wei Yuan and China's Rediscovery of the Maritime World*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984.

might be brought together to constitute a sort of shorthand summary of the intellectual world of the religious professional.

It is this usage, we believe, that must be kept in mind when we go back to consider the involvement of *zong* and *jiao* in translation from European languages at a slightly earlier point. In 1838, the pioneering missionary Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff (1803–1851) was seeking to convey in his Chinese-language periodical, the *Dong-Xiyang meiyue tongjizhuan*, some elements of European history to a Chinese readership.³³ Faced with the need to characterize the unusual status of the Papal State in the Italy of those days, he chose to describe them, fatefully, as constituting a *jiao-zong* state. This is unlikely to reflect the technical use of the term by Zongmi to indicate a doctrinal lineage, but rather something much more vague, closer to the sort of layperson's characterizations used by Wei Yuan. Perhaps the combination of characters was intended to mean specifically 'clerical' rather than more broadly 'religious', for later on, in an explanation of the rise of the influence of the Catholic Church in European affairs, he speaks of the influence of "persons of *jiao* and *zong*" (教宗者).³⁴ Some interesting evidence to support this possibility was to emerge over two decades later, and will be considered shortly. By contrast, however, the immediate impact of missionary publications of this sort was in all probability very slight. It is therefore, we believe, inconceivable that Wei Yuan, for example, for all his interests in the West, could have derived his vocabulary in a Buddhist context from this missionary source, and that is why we have preferred to construe his work as evidence of the sort of Buddhist usage that a missionary translator or a convert advising him may have had in mind in writing this passage concerning Italy. But as the First Opium War and other pressures forced the reformers to learn more about the West, another geographer, Xu Jiyou (1795–1873), picked up either from this passage or something like it the epithet in question describing the Papal States, and used it in his

³³ For a brief introduction to this figure and his publishing ventures in China, see Jessie Lutz, "Karl F. A. Gützlaff, Missionary Entrepreneur", in: John K. Fairbank/Suzanne Wilson Barnett (eds.), *Christianity in China: Early Protestant Writings*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985, 61–87. For a more recent assessment, see Thoralf Klein/Reinhard Zöllner (eds.), *Karl Gützlaff (1803–1851) und das Christentum in Ostasien: Ein Missionar zwischen den Kulturen*, Nettetal: Institut Monumenta Serica, Sankt Augustin, Steyler Verlag, 2005.

³⁴ Aihanzhe (i.e. 'Philosinensis', Karl F. A. Gützlaff) (ed.), *Dong-Xiyang kao meiyue tongjizhuan* 1984.3., 48; as reprinted in Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997, 342.

Yinghuan zhi lue of 1848.³⁵ In this case, too, as with Wei's writings, the new information was avidly taken up in Japan, where Xu's work was reprinted in 1861.³⁶ Here, though, we find an additional interlineal gloss, apparently from a *rangakusha*, or Japanese scholar of Dutch, giving also the still standard Dutch equivalent of 'Papal State'.³⁷ The gloss in Dutch, *kerkelijje staat*, might perhaps be rendered into English with an attempt at literalism as 'churchly state', but meanings such as 'ecclesiastical', 'clerical', or maybe even more loosely 'religious' might, we understand, also fit. Dutch studies in Japan, as the main medium through which knowledge of the West entered the country from mid- to late Tokugawa times (eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries), had resulted by this point in a certain tradition of lexicography, though given Japanese sensitivity at this time to Christian influences, religious vocabulary surely lay outside the scope of this tradition, and is unlikely to have been at all fixed.³⁸ The source of the glossator's knowledge remains therefore mysterious. As far as we are aware, moreover, the history of the compound *jiaozong* in Japan in the next few years is as yet unexplored. But we do know when the same compound in reverse came into use, namely during the course of 1867, as foreign powers sought to secure religious tolerance for their missionaries. At first the meaning of *shûkyô* seems a little unstable, perhaps indicating Christianity as such, and in one case certainly it translates the word 'faith'.

³⁵ For Xu, see Fred W. Drake, *China Charts the World: Hsü Chi-yü and his Geography of 1848*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975.

³⁶ For the dissemination of Chinese language works on the West in Japan, including that of Xu, see Masuda Wataru, tr. Joshua Fogel, *Japan and China: Mutual Representations in the Modern Era*, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000, 16–22.23–27, deal also with the dissemination of Wei Yuan's work.

³⁷ Xu Jiyu, *Yinghan zhilue* 6.25a, in: Beijing: Zhongguo quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi chongxin, 2000, reprint of 1861 Japanese edition. Note that the *Jin Xiandai Hanyu Xinci Ciyuan Cidian*, Shanghai: Hanyu da cidian chubanshe, 2001, quotes the passage from Gützlaff/Aihanzhe on Italy in the entry on *jiaozong* (p. 127) but is clearly wrong in saying that it means 'Pope' here, even if it does mean that in some other texts, because he uses *jiaohuang* (教皇) to mean 'Pope' slightly later on the same page. *Jiaozong* may not mean 'religious' exactly, but it must mean, as in the Dutch gloss on this passage as incorporated in the Japanese edition of Xu, 'clerical', 'churchly', or something approaching 'religious'. Note also that the passages on Europe and Italy in the *Haiguo tuzhe* normally have *jiaohuang* for 'pope'. Today, both forms are used but there seems to be a slight preference among Chinese writers for *jiaohuang*. In Vatican sources the term 'encyclical' is rendered as *jiaozong tongyu* (教宗通諭).

³⁸ For a brief survey of this lexicography in the context of the development of Japanese knowledge of Western science, see Masayoshi Sugimoto/David L. Swain, *Science and Culture in Traditional Japan*, Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1989, 332–334.

But by the following year the now standard equivalence between the term and 'religion' in English is undeniable.³⁹ This, then, is the term that is reintroduced to China as *zongjiao* towards the end of the nineteenth century, according to current scholarship.⁴⁰

A quick examination of a few lexicons and dictionaries shows that it took some time for *zongjiao* to become the one and only translation of the term religion. In 1903, the Shanghai Commercial Press *English and Chinese Dictionary* aimed at a Chinese readership used *jiao* to designate various religious traditions ('the religion of Jesus, *jesu jiao*; the religion of the Mohammedans, *huihui jiao*; the religion of the Romanists *tianzhu jiao*; the religion of the literati, *ru jiao*; the religion of Buddha *shi jiao*; the religion of Tau, *dao jiao*; to adopt a religion, *jin jiao*; to follow a religion, *xinjiao*; to propagate a religion, *zhuanjiao*; to forsake a religion, *fanjiao*').⁴¹ In 1910, the lexicon *Technical Terms English and Chinese*, glosses 'religion' as *dao* (道), an interesting choice given that the term is certainly one of the most complex and polysemous in the whole of the Chinese religious vocabulary.⁴² Finally, *New Terms for New Ideas: A Study of the Chinese Newspaper* (1917), an anthology of translations of excerpts taken from the Chinese daily press and devoted to 'documenting' the processes of lexical change, has an interesting passage probably written by the public intellectual and Buddhist sympathiser Liang Qichao (1873–1929) that confidently uses *zongjiao* as the translation for 'religion' calling for the creation of a 'new Chinese religion' based on Buddhism.⁴³

³⁹ See Suzuki, *Meiji shûkyô*, 15–16.

⁴⁰ Masini, *Formation*, 222. Note that Masini writes that the famous translator Yan Fu (1854–1921) 'preferred the Buddhist term *jiaozong*' and quotes Yan's translation of *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith (*Yuan Fu*, 1901–1902, reprint Shangwu Yinshuguan, Beijing 1981, 2 vols., 649). He cites the *Zhongwen da cidian*, (Zhang Qiyun [ed.], *Zhonguo wenhua jianji suo*, Taibei, 1973, 10 vols.).

⁴¹ See *Commercial Press English and Chinese Dictionary*, Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1903, 202.

⁴² See Committee of the Educational Association of China (eds.), *Technical Terms English and Chinese*, Shanghai: Methodist Publishing House, 1910.

⁴³ Ada Haven Mateer, *New Terms for New Ideas: A Study of the Chinese Newspaper*, Shanghai: Presbyterian Mission Press, 1917, 49–50. As an example from a widely circulated newspaper, Zhou Xun has pointed out to us that the Shenbao 申報 of 10 May 1912 carries a report from Shanghai on Taoist insistence that anti-queue measures then being enforced in the wake of the Qing fall should not impinge on the Taoists' right to their topknots, which formed part of the outward indicators "that distinguished them from persons of other religions" (區別於其他宗教者).

This, provisionally, concludes our short history of ‘religion’ in its East Asian linguistic garb. We would concede, of course, that further clarification of the origins of the modern word *zongjiao* is possible. Ideally we would wish to know more about the use of its component elements among Chinese lay Buddhists immediately prior to the arrival of the Protestant missionary translators. Given, however, that no one has thought so far to discover anything about Chinese Buddhism at that particular time, we have not attempted to launch an entire new field of research simply in order to uncover a single word. A more systematic search of early Protestant translations, too, might turn up more useful material.

In addition, we feel that though the history of the term *jiaozong* in Japan after the importation of Xu Jiyu’s work lies beyond the scope of our own interests, it might repay investigation. We note for example that at this point other compounds were similarly unstable, and sometimes ultimately took a different order in different languages: compare, for example, Japanese *dankai* with Chinese *jieduan*, for a stage or level of development. A fuller consideration of the problem would moreover need to move beyond narrow questions of a single etymology to consider more extensively the language used to represent the identities of the various religious traditions involved in East Asia by the nineteenth century, and the ways in which that language situation shifted to accommodate a new, generic term for ‘religion’ – we can already point to some preliminary findings in that area.⁴⁴ But while conscious of the need for further research, we believe that we have established one or two points beyond question. First, the assertion by some in Japan that the modern term and earlier Buddhist usages are “completely different”, implying a radical linguistic discontinuity between the discourse of Buddhist tradition and secular modernity, is in the light of the evidence we have brought forward very difficult to maintain.⁴⁵ Secondly, in terms of the type of argument put forward by Talal Asad, we can be fairly sure of the original connotations of the word used in East Asia from 1868 as an equivalent of the word ‘religion’ in European languages. At the time of its adoption to fit this

⁴⁴ For Buddhist attempts at self-definition see Francesca Tarocco, “The Making of Religion in Modern China”, in: Nile Green/Mary Searle Chatterjie (eds.), *Religion, Language and Power*, New York: Routledge, 2008, 42–56. For Taoist attempts see Vincent Goossaert, *The Taoists of Peking, 1800–1949: A Social History of Urban Clerics*, Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007.

⁴⁵ For an assertion of complete difference, see Mochizuki, as cited above, n. 10.

role, it skewed the meaning of 'religion' for the East Asian language speaker very much in the direction of the beliefs of the professional, clerical groups representing such religions as Buddhism and Christianity, rather than the practices of the many. To the extent that the neologism may implicitly have embodied clerical Buddhists' view of their own tradition, it may also have induced reactions from the many, as well. Since a number of lay practices existed beyond the scope of the Buddhist message, the *Buddhadharma*, and belonged in the clerical Buddhist way of thinking to the secular world, some may either have sensed that the new word was covertly imposing distinctions that devalued their own practices, or else set a standard so high as to lack all appeal for them. This may account both for the problems sensed by researchers in Japanese religion to which we have already alluded, and also to other anomalies noted in research on China.⁴⁶ To say this is not to deny a certain process of convergence with the European conception of religion, especially amongst the most cosmopolitan – though of course a full understanding of the position of the educated would have to take due account of the prevailing notion of 'superstition' also.⁴⁷ Finally, moreover, Talal Asad's main argument is in any case strongly reinforced even by the findings within the strictly circumscribed limits of our present investigation.

Whatever the effects of later developments, the word for 'religion' in East Asia was not invented *ex novo* overnight, as it were, but emerged over the course of a couple of generations of linguistic instability. That phenomenon needs to be grasped accurately in order to construct a reliable 'genealogy of religion' for East Asia. And surely unless we understand the subtly different ways in which speakers of other languages see the world, rather than imagine that they have inadequately assimilated a normative discourse embodied in European languages, we will not have advanced the academic cause of studying what we term religion very far at all.

⁴⁶ For an example of a patent anomaly, see the statistics given (with entirely appropriate authorial comments) in Holmes Welch, *The Buddhist Revival in China*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968, 210.

⁴⁷ Some interesting material to ponder in this regard is provided by Eileen Chang (1921–1995), as translated by David Pollard, *The Chinese Essay*, London: Hurst and Company, 2000, 283–292, giving her views on the religion (*zongjiao*) of the Chinese. See also Francesca Tarocco, *The Cultural Practices of Modern Chinese Buddhism: Attuning the Dharma*, London: Routledge, 2007, 1–39. The forthcoming book by Rebecca Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes, Religion and the Politics of Chinese Modernity*, will certainly contribute to our knowledge of these issues.