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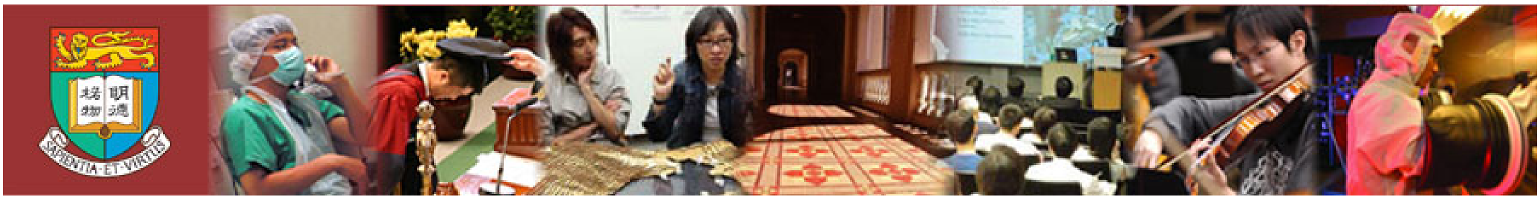

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Heretical Doctrines, Reactionary Secret Societies, Evil Cults : Labelling Heterodoxy in 20th-Century China

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Since the repression of Falungong in 1999, the question of "cults" has become a critical issue in the Chinese religious field, leading Chinese scholars and ideologues to elaborate a new discourse on the category of "evil cults" *xiejiao* 邪教 -- a term from imperial times which had fallen into disuse, but was now reactivated to replace the concept of "reactionary secret societies" (*fandong huidaomen* 反動會道門) which had been used in the 1950's in the campaigns to exterminate unorthodox religious groups such as Yiguandao. This discourse draws equally on references to a genealogy of sectarian rebellions going back to the second century CE, and on Western sources on "cults" associated with Christian apologetics and the academic discipline of the sociology of religions. This paper attempts to trace the contours of the evolution of discourses on stigmatised religious groups in 20th-century China – a discourse which has reinvented itself twice, defining itself first within the context of revolutionary struggle, and then as part of the contemporary worldwide anti-cult movement. Although it was the Falungong case which stimulated the production of the contemporary general anti-*xiejiao* discourse discussed in this paper, this discourse is distinct from the specifically anti-Falungong propaganda deployed during the repression campaign, which we will not consider here[2].

Unlike the introduction of other modern paradigms such as the science-religion-superstition dialectic, which led to the tearing apart of China's traditional cultural fabric and to the reshaping of its politico-religious landscape, the use of modern categories to label "cults" appears to have only served to mask the redeployment of the classical Chinese paradigm of the conflict between the State and the Sect. But the current recourse to universalist discourses of the social sciences could, in the long term, have unpredictable consequences for the Chinese state's legitimizing of its anti-cult campaigns.

The field of Chinese "cults" or "sects" is a mined one, in which it is difficult to draw a clear line between a category deployed by the Chinese state's ideology and propaganda, be it imperial or communist, which has always had little relationship with the reality on the field, and what appears like a specific and widespread form of Chinese religion which, lacking a name of its own, has always been situated outside of traditional China's ritual and orthodox order. To the problem of categorization which already exists in the Chinese language, is added a further element of confusion when Western terms such as "cult", "sect", "sectarian tradition", "sectarian milieu" or even "new religious movements" are used to designate these groups, in spite of all the caveats and well-argued sociological justifications used by scholars, including the author of these lines (Jordan & Overmyer 1986; Seiwert 2003; Palmer 2003; 2005: 421-429; 2006; 2007: 285-290). Indeed, their translation and their use in China has led to a new form of "translingual practice"- the invention of new categories based on Western concepts which take on a new meaning in the Chinese context (Liu 1995; Asad 1986).

In the case which interests us here, the Western family of terms "sect", "cult", "new religious movement", which make possible a constant and ambiguous oscillation between anti-cult polemics and a neutral scientific idiom, lends itself perfectly to the needs of the Chinese authorities who, through the elaboration of a discourse circulating between ideologues, scholars and officials, seek both to provide an *a posteriori* justification for the harsh repression of some groups, and to develop a more objective understanding of the religious phenomenon in order to better manage it in the future.

Discourse is not merely a reflection or representation of the reality being talked about: by defining and producing the objects of our knowledge, it shapes and orients our interactions with the world; it is thus inseparable from the exercise and circulation of power (Foucault 1980). The case of *xiejiao* described here can be seen in two ways. On the one hand, we see how the Chinese state has used the production of discourse to control the religious field, adapting to changes in ideology and political regime by using different idioms (cosmological, revolutionary, social scientific) to elaborate and legitimize an unchanging dichotomy between groups that reinforce or submit to the political and ideological order, and those which undermine it or cannot fit into it. Thus we can trace the discursive shifts which follow the transitions from one regime to another: the late imperial (to 1911), with its pretension to integrate the civilized world within a grand cosmic order revolving around the Emperor, Son of Heaven, who promoted and demoted the gods within the celestial bureaucracy, and under whose protection a plurality of gods and teachings could flourish, but in which rival universal cosmologies could not be tolerated; the republican (1911-1949), marked by a concern for reinventing China into a modern nation as the solution to foreign encroachment and internal instability, and during which the nation's backwardness and weakness was blamed on tradition and superstition; the revolutionary (1949-1979), during which all groups not falling under Chinese Communist Party (CCP) control were to be exterminated; and the reformed socialist (1979-present), in which the CCP attempted to reassert its power and authority while leading China towards greater integration with the international community.

On the other hand, however, the picture is not one of neat and tidy correspondences between discourses and historical phases. Discourses linger from one era to another, new twists and interpretations arise, elements from seemingly incompatible sources are combined, and unexpected affinities come to light, such as Maoist historians inscribing White Lotus rebels in revolutionary genealogies, or the contemporary CCP identifying itself with the Qing dynasty and Christian orthodoxy. As discourses are constantly adjusted and revised to match political and social realities, we also see that they have a life of their own, sometimes contributing to unintended reconfigurations. Thus, in the case of the contemporary *xiejiao* discourse, they open an unresolved tension between social scientific relativism, which undermines the anti-*xiejiao* campaigns, and the upholding of Religion as a normative standard, which undermines the secular foundations of the socialist State.

The sectarian rebellion paradigm and the problem of the White Lotus

In traditional Chinese thought, the proper "upright" order (*zheng* 正) embodied by the state (and its Confucian orthodoxy) is opposed by the evil, "crooked" forces of chaos (*xie* 邪). The notion of heresy (*yiduan*) appears for the first time in the *Analects* of Confucius, which argues that hererodox ideas must be resisted to reduce their menace to society. His disciple Mencius used the term in his attack on the egalitarian ideas of Mozi, claiming that in periods of decline, when the orthodox way is weakened, "heretical sayings" (*xieshuo*) proliferate and destroy the authority of sovereigns and fathers.

But it was during the Eastern Han (CE 25-220) that appeared for the first time a discourse specifically stigmatising politically heterodox religious groups, following the millenarian movement of the Way of Supreme Peace (*Taiping dao*), whose leader, the charismatic healer Zhang Jue, launched the Yellow Turban rebellion in 184, which mobilised tens of thousands of fighters and, though crushed after bloody battles, durably weakened the reigning dynasty, which collapsed a few decades later (Stein 1963, Seidel 1969-70; Seiwert 2003: 23-80). This revolt inaugurated the paradigm of the conflict between the state and the sectarian rebellion, whose master has the ambition of becoming emperor, destroys social order, and threatens the survival of the dynasty: the Chinese state has always had its sectarian rebels, and the struggle against them is constitutive of the self-definition and legitimacy of the imperial state.

For the entire subsequent history of imperial China and once again today, the Yellow Turbans are invariably invoked to justify the suppression of religious groups judged to be heterodox. Later, the rebellions of Faqing (515), Han Shantong (1351), Xu Hongru (1622), Wang Lun (1774), the White Lotus (1796), the Eight Trigrams (1813), and the Taipings (1851-1864), which were all associated with religious movements, successively enriched the discourse on the danger of the "heretical doctrines" or *xiejiao*.

Starting in the 14th century, the name "White Lotus teachings" (*bailianjiao* 白蓮教) was often used to designate this type of heretical group, to the point where Chinese and Western historiography has long believed in the existence in a "White Lotus sect", an error which has been exposed in Barend ter Haar's study of the history of the White Lotus (ter Haar 1992). Ter Haar shows that a lay Buddhist movement which called itself the « White Lotus Society » (*bailianhui*), which existed in the Song (960-1279) and expanded rapidly during the Yuan (1271-1368), was the target of a petition submitted to the imperial throne accusing the society of "meeting at night and dispersing at dawn", "indiscriminately mixing man and women", and "practicing vegetarianism and worshipping demons". This petition led to the banning of the White Lotus by Emperor Wuzong in 1308. But the movement was respected by the elites and the edict was revoked five years later (ter Haar 1992: 74). However, Zhu Yuanzhang, who founded the Ming dynasty in 1386 with the remaining forces of the Maitreyanist rebellion of Han Shantong, and was thus acutely aware from his own experience of the potential power of religious movements, in 1397 banned almost all forms of popular religious activity – the "heterodox ways" or *zuodao* – with the exception of seasonal sacrifices and a few Buddhist and Taoist monasteries. This law, which can be seen as the model and foundation of all subsequent legislation and policy on religion in imperial China and to a great extent the Peoples' Republic as well, specifically bans four named groups: the White Lotus Society, the White Cloud Society, Maitreyanism, and Manicheism (de Groot 1976 [1901]: 137-148). As ter Haar has shown, from then on the "White Lotus" name would become a label which was indiscriminately used to stigmatise lay Buddhist associations and eventually any unorthodox group. *Xiejiao* and "White Lotus" became virtually synonymous terms, and no group dared to identify itself as affiliated to a "White Lotus" tradition: the history of the "White Lotus sect" since the Ming is in reality the history of the usage of the White lotus label and its associated stereotypes to denounce and persecute certain groups.

The end of the Empire and of the discourse on heretical doctrines

With the fall of the Qing in 1911 and the founding of the republican regime, the anti-*xiejiao* and "White Lotus" discourse seems to have petered out, eclipsed by debates around the new categories of "religion" and "superstition" (Goossaert 2003; Nedostup 2001), and on the place of "secret societies" in the Chinese revolution. In the midst of the confusion around these concepts, and of the general political instability, several groups and networks which, under the Qing, would have been banned and persecuted as "White Lotus" *xiejiao* emerged from obscurity or formed themselves anew, openly expanding and even dominating the religious landscape in some cities and regions. Around the same time that the first generation of religious Associations was born in 1912, as described by Vincent Goossaert in his contribution to this volume, several of these groups also founded national modern-style associations which registered with the state as religious, philanthropic, or public interest associations, with a head office, a national organization with provincial and municipal branches, and a doctrine which attempted to modernise the Chinese syncretic tradition with the aid of a more modern, academic language and by incorporating

Christianity and Islam to the traditional Union of the Three Teachings. Thus the Zailijiao (Teaching of the Abiding Principle) incorporated itself in 1913 as the All-China Association for Promoting Abstention from Opium and Alcohol; followed by the Daode xueshe (Society for the Study of Morality) in 1916; the Tongshanshe (Fellowship of Goodness) in 1917 ; the Wanguo daodehui (Universal Morality Society) in 1918; the Daoyuan (School of the Way)in 1921 ; The Zhongguo sanjiao shengdao zonghui (Association of the Sagely Way of China's Three Teachings) in 1924 ; the Jiushi xinjiaohui (Association of the New Teachings for World Salvation) in 1925 ; the Guiyi daoyuan (School of the Way of the Return to Oneness) in 1927, the Zongjiao zhexue yanjiushe (Society for the Study of Religious Philosophy) in 1930, etc (Shao Yong 1997: 165-194). These associations, which often had their own scriptures, a philosophical system, a simplified ritual, a congregational mode of participation, and a hierarchical national organization, actually conformed as much, if not more, to the model of the Christian church which had become the new paradigm of "religion" in China, than the ancient Buddhist, Taoist or Confucian institutions: it is not surprising, then, that several of them obtained the status of religious associations in the first years of the Republic, and appear not to have been specific targets of the first waves of polemics against superstition.

The Guomindang nationalist government, established in Nanjing in 1927, was much less favourably disposed toward these groups than the Beiyang regime, and the largest organizations, notably the Wushanshe, Tongshanshe, and Daoyuan, tainted by their close ties with the leaders of the deposed warlord regime, were, in the edict "On banning *xiejiao*" officially outlawed as "superstitious organizations" (迷信機關), accused of being tools of warlords and local gentry to increase their influence under the cover of religious and philanthropic activities, and of spreading superstition and retarding progress (Lu Zhongwei 2002: 173-74; She Jingzhen 1997: 227; Lin Benxuan 1990: 325; Wang Jianchuan 1995). Rarely applied, the ban seems to have had little effect; many groups counted high-level political and military officials among their members. Some groups continued to operate legally under the front of their charitable branch, such as the Daoyuan's Red Swastika Society, which drew inspiration from the International Red Cross Society (Nedostup 2001: 145-153). The relationships between these groups and the Guomindang regime have not yet been studied in detail, but the use of the *xiejiao* label does not seem to have been systematic or supported by an elaborate discourse; rather, criticism of the groups was couched in the more general terms of the struggle against superstition and against obstacles to progress (Duara 2003: 109).

In any case, the Japanese invasion made it virtually impossible to enforce the suppression of these groups. The nationalist regime now gladly approved their charitable works; in fact, it began a policy to systematically re-organize, infiltrate and control them as tools for anti-Japanese resistance. In Shandong, for instance, each branch in a given area was to be renamed as the "self-defense association against the enemy of the XXX society of XXX county, Shandong province", to accept instructions in anti-Japanese defense from government agents assigned to work with each group, and to receive regular military training. This policy was attempted on the Red Swastika Society and was quite thorough in case of the Zailijiao (Lu Zhongwei 2002: 213-216; 234-235).

In the areas under Japanese control, although some Japanese saw in these associations an expression of authentic religion and a means by which Asian spiritual values common to Japan and China could be promoted to resist Western materialism, the puppet regime in Manchuria was also suspicious of the "superstitious" character of these associations. But instead of banning them it attempted to coopt them and make them instruments of its social policy: they thus enjoyed unprecedented growth in Manchukuo and, later, in the occupied parts of China (Duara 2003: 103-122).

After the Japanese defeat, as the Guomindang tried to re-establish its control over the country, it began to move to suppress Yiguandao, a network of salvationist congregations whose worship of the Unborn Mother and apocalyptic eschatology of the three kalpas continued a tradition which had been persecuted as "White Lotus doctrine" under the Ming and Qing. The Yiguandao lineage had been founded in Shandong at the end of the 19th century, but it was under the leadership of Zhang Guangbi (1889-1947) [3] starting in the early 1930's that the congregations began to multiply throughout China, especially in the areas under Japanese occupation, of which the minister of foreign affairs was himself an initiate (Jordan 1982: 435-462). After the end of the Sino-Japanese war, between 1945 and 1949, Yiguandao continued to experience spectacular growth, with a presence, according to a study of the mentions of Yiguandao in local gazeteers, in 81% of China's prefectures at the beginning of the 1950's (Fu Zhong 1999: 47). According to police reports in the early 1950's, the number of members had reached 178,000 in Beijing and 140,000 in Tianjin, and even the majority of the residents of a large number of villages (Shao Yong 1997: 470; DuBois 2005:

134). A detailed estimation of the number of Yiguandao members in China remains to be done, but if we remember that this growth occurred during a period of only fifteen years in conditions of extremely difficult communication during the Sino-Japanese and then civil war, the exponential expansion of Yiguandao can be compared to that of Falungong in the 1990's – a growth which appeared to go unchecked at a moment when both the GMD and the CCP had were struggling to establish a tenuous hold on the nation.

In Tianjin, where the police acted against Yiguandao and other groups, tracts were distributed labelling Yiguandao as a *xiejiao*, stressing that it descended from the White Lotus and the Boxers (Li Shiyu 1975[1948]: 34). The CCP conquest of the Mainland occurred before the GMD could do much against Yiguandao, however – a change that, as described below, would offer little respite to the movement – but the hostile policy would continue in Taiwan. The imperial-era *xiejiao* discourse was explicitly used to justify the continued banning of Yiguandao on the island, with the White Lotus connection repeatedly evoked to warn against Yiguandao as a politically subversive group possibly infiltrated by Communist agents. This rhetoric was amplified by Buddhist polemics against Yiguandao as a heterodox *xiejiao*, which had begun as early as 1935, and were reiterated in several tracts through the 1970's (Li Benxuan 1990: 335).

Alliances between revolutionaries and "secret societies"

If the Japanese had wanted to coopt these "redemptive societies", to use Duara's term, it was partly to prevent them from going underground and becoming, as in the Guomindang-controlled areas, harder to control (Duara 2003: 116). Indeed, while the imperial-era anti-*xiejiao* discourse was only sporadically employed during the Republican period, the redemptive groups were increasingly seen as belonging to the ambiguous category of "secret societies" (*mimi shehui* 秘密社會).

The discourse on Chinese secret societies goes back to the legislation against sworn brotherhoods, which was enacted in the 17th century during the first decades of the Qing dynasty. The term used for these groups in legal documents of the time, *jiebai dixiong*, implies the creation of inverted relationships between elder and younger brothers, which was contrary to Confucian notions of hierarchy (Antony 1993: 192-193, 206). In the 18th century, mutual aid societies based on fictive kinship, which David Ownby calls "brotherhood associations", proliferated in Southern China in a context of social dislocations and weak state authority in the region, and evolved a complex form of organization with initiation rituals and a secret language, and gave themselves names such as "Father and Mother Society", "Peach Garden Society", etc (Ownby 1993: 15). During this period, official discourse increasingly linked these brotherhoods to banditry and the threat of rebellions, and the law became increasingly harsh towards them. Following the rebellion of Lin Shuangwen, the first occurrence of the "Heaven and Earth Society" (*Tiandihui* 天地會) – the notorious Triads – in official reports of the 1780's, treats the group as a *xiejiao*. But according to research by Robert Antony, officials subsequently stopped identifying South Chinese secret societies as *xiejiao*. Thus it seems that what texts called "creating associations and forming cliques" (*jiehui shudang*) constituted, in the eyes of the Qing, a distinct category from that of the "heretical doctrines" (Antony 1993: 197, 206). The only thing the two categories had in common was the fact that they were seen as threats to social order and potential sources of rebellion[4].

Around the end of the Qing regime, both of these types of groups began to be called "secret societies" (*mimi shehui, mimi jieshe*), borrowing the term used by British colonial administrators in Malaysia. Indeed, in the late Qing both the brotherhood associations and the salvationist societies were illegal and had been driven underground, and were perceived as rebellious and opposed to the Qing. We know that Sun Yat-sen, founder of the Chinese Republic and himself a leader of the Tongmenghui 同盟會, cultivated relationships with the secret societies of the overseas Chinese, and that China's first revolutionaries heavily relied on them to provide troops and mobilise the people. Among some of these associations circulated a "nationalist" ideology which called for the overthrow of the Qing (Manchu) dynasty and restoration of the Ming (Chinese) ; the radical intellectuals' task with these groups was to convince them to modernise their thinking and support the establishment of a republican regime. Thus a new discourse on "secret societies" emerged, which described them as proto-revolutionary associations which had existed since the early Qing to oppose the imperial regime (Ownby 1993: 6; Borokh 1972).

During the civil war between the Guomingdang and the CCP, and also during the Sino-Japanese war, the three sides tried to enlist the "secret societies". The communists continued to elaborate a discourse on their popular nature and revolutionary potential, which was not without ambiguity. On the one hand, in 1921, Chen Duxiu, Marxist intellectual and founding secretary-general of the CCP, had written of the Fellowship for Goodness (*Tongshanshe*) that the working and student masses did not believe in these heresies which recalled the humiliation of the Boxers and the political oppression and social decadence of China (Nedostup 2001: 97). But in spite of this critique of the backward nature of this type of association, superstition was not to be an obstacle for tactical alliances : elsewhere, Chen Duxiu wrote of the Red Spears (*hongqianghui* 紅槍會)– a form of self-defence militia which practiced magical invulnerability rites similar to those of the Boxers, and which had millions of practitioners in North China (Perry 1982, Tai 1985) – that despite the superstitious coloration of peasant thinking, the barbarian and destructive nature of their struggle against the ruling classes should not be opposed (Li Shiwei 1996: 198). Zhu De, one of the Red Army's top generals, was also a member of the Elders' Society (*gelaohui*) (Schram 1966: 6; Smedley 1956: 88-89), and Mao's thinking was not without a certain romanticism for the bandit heroes and wandering knights of the popular novel *The Water Margin*, whose mythology was maintained in the brotherhood associations. In 1926, Mao described the secret societies – of which he enumerated a list which made no distinction between brotherhood associations, armed militias, and redemptive societies (Triads, Elders' Society, Big Swords, Morality Society, Green Gang, etc.) – as mutual help associations of floating populations in their economic and political struggle (Schram 1966: 4). The CCP's second enlarged congress (1926) specifically discussed the question of the Red Spears, and passed a resolution stating that "the Red Spears are one of the most important forces in the national revolutionary movement", proposing to give them the means to organize and unify themselves in a systematic fashion, and stressing that "we should not oppose the superstitious beliefs of the Red Spears. They are the basis on which the association organizes and fights. Although they are only relics of ideas which the peasants cannot abandon, we must ensure that these superstitious activities are beneficial for the revolution" (Quoted in Tai Hsuan-chih 1985: 106). Ten years later, Mao published an "Appeal from the Central Soviet Government" to the "Brothers of the Elders' Society", in which he warmly praised its anti-Qing tradition and called on them to join the anti-Japanese front (Schram 1966: 11-13; Munro ed. 1989: 99-101.)

But the CCP's embrace of secret societies was purely opportunistic; the ultimate goal was to coopt their leaders and make them useless by creating grassroots revolutionary associations which could better meet the needs of the people. CCP cadres did not hesitate to establish secret society shrines which were but fronts for Party cells (Chen 1986: 488-492). Secret society associations defended purely local interests and could just as well be manipulated by the Guomindang and the Japanese: there were clear limits to their revolutionary potential. In the Wuxi area, for instance, the Xiantiandao (Way of Anterior Heaven) was infiltrated by both the CCP and Japanese – whose praise for the "religious faith" of the believers turned into denunciation of the group as a *xiejiao* deluding the masses, once the CCP had managed to spur several of its lodges into violent anti-Japanese action (Shao Yong 1997: 378-379). Furthermore, groups like the Fellowship for Goodness, the Elders' Society, and the Red Spears were very different types of association in terms of their membership, their structure, their beliefs, their rituals, and their objectives. A thorough study of discourses on these groups during the Republican era remains to be done, but it seems, based on the sources available, that no fixed category existed: many terms such as *banghui*, *huimen, jiaomen, daomen, daohui* were used without systematically distinguishing between them, but usually with connotations of shady underground or secret associations. This indetermination is the result of the absence of an effective central state during this period and of an unstable dynamic in which these groups could impose themselves sometimes as potential allies, sometimes as enemies, and thus eluding unilateral objectification.

Secret societies become "reactionary sects"

Everything changed with the founding of the Peoples' Republic in 1949, and even before that in some areas already controlled by the CCP. On 4 January 1949, the Peoples' Government of North China banned secret societies- the *huimen* and the *daomen*, stressing that these organizations were not only feudal and superstitious, but also "instruments of the counter-revolutionaries" and "enemy spies" who "propagate rumours", "agitate popular sentiment", "organize armed revolts" and "disturb social order". The leaders of these organizations were summoned to turn themselves in to the authorities and to repent if they wanted to avoid a harsh punishment. Meanwhile the ordinary followers, who had been "fooled" by the reactionary societies, were ordered to withdraw from these associations and to cease any activity if they wanted to avoid being prosecuted, and were promised a reward if they provided information on these associations and their acts of "sabotage' (Shao Yong 1997: 405-406).

Other regional governments did the same later in 1949. Official discourse crystallized: the groups in question became "reactionary secret societies"- *fandong huidaomen*- this term being a conflation of the *huimen* and *daomen*; they were to be ruthlessly exterminated in the national campaign against counter-revolutionary activities launched at the end of 1950, which called for the death sentence or life imprisonment for those who used "feudal secret societies" (*fengjian huidaomeni*) to engage in counterrevolutionary activities. The campaign against these groups reached its climax in 1953 and 1954, during which, according to police reports, 820,000 leaders and organizers, and 13 million followers were implicated (Shao Yong 1997: 452, 455).

By far the largest of these societies, and hence the principal target of the campaign, was Yiguandao, which thus found itself at the centre of the struggle against reactionary forces. All forms of propaganda were deployed against it, from editorials and speeches by Mao published in the *Peoples' Daily* and the rest of the press, to posters, comics, exhibits, denunciation assemblies and even theatrical performances. The name Yiguandao became a synonym of the counterrevolutionary sect and even a favoured insult used by children in schoolyards (Shao Yong 1997: 465; DuBois 2005: 148). One wonders to what extent "Yiguandao", like the "White Lotus" centuries earlier, became a stigmatizing label used to demonize any suspect individual or group during the revolutionary fervour, even with no real link to Yiguandao. Indeed, according to a Daoist monk I interviewed in July 2004 at a temple in Chengdu, the anti-Yiguandao campaign was a pretext to arrest most of that city's Taoists in the early 1950's, thereby circumventing the "freedom of religion" which was supposed to protect Daoism as an official religion. According to newspapers at the time, 30% of Sichuan's population was a member of Yiguandao: a fantastical figure which allowed one to see the Yiguandao danger everywhere (Deliusin 1972: 232).

The campaign against the *huidaomen* and Yiguandao appears to have been largely successful : in the region of Hebei studied by Thomas Dubois, Yiguandao was already little more than a memory by the end of the 1950's (DuBois 2005: 148-151). But the "threat" resurfaced after the Cultural Revolution, as many societies took advantage of the freer political climate to reconstitute themselves. The number of *huidaomen* cases, most of which concerned Yiguandao, dealt with by the police was reported to have increased by 79% in 1981, 31 % in 1982 and 30% in 1983 (Gong'an bu 1985: 60). The anti-*huidaomen* discourse was reactivated in the press in the first half of the 1980's. Reports emphasized that the groups were organized and recruited followers; they "fabricated apocalyptic rumours", "sabotaged the Four Modernizations", "proclaimed themselves emperor" and "ambitioned to change dynasties"; they "abused of superstition" to "swindle their followers' money"; they "put lives in danger" by "prescribing superstitious remedies", they "seduced and raped women", "printed reactionary tracts", "diffused superstition and heresy" and "constantly changed activities and methods", and were "infiltrated" by "foreign forces" including the Taiwan Guomindang regime's spy network (Gong'an bu 1985: 67-80). In a phrase which could have been taken directly from Ming imprecations against White Lotus followers who "congregated at night and dispersed at daybreak", *huidaomen* leaders were said to "keep a low profile in the daytime, going out only to call meetings at night" (Gong'an bu 1985: 78). In his study of the Way of the Temple of the Heavenly Immortals (*Tianxian miaodao*), repressed in the 1950's but which resurfaced in the 1980's, David Ownby notes that police documents reveal an obsession for those group teachings and slogans which could be interpreted as signs of an ambition to found a new imperial dynasty, although such allusions, while present in the group's literature, are relatively rare and can be interpreted in different ways depending on the context (Ownby 2001: 84-85).

Paradoxically, while the anti-*huidaomen* propaganda repeated many of the same themes as the old discourse against the White Lotus, White Lotus rebellions were described in generally positive terms in the new communist historiography as part of the revolutionary genealogy of peasant revolts against feudal authority and even against foreign imperialist churches (see for example Cai Shaoqing 1996[1990]: 203-268). The Yellow Turbans similarly became a paradigmatic case of a peasant rebellion inspired by religious egalitarianism. A leading historian of peasant rebellions in the 1950's, Sun Zuomin, argued that heretical sects expressed the interests and desires of the lower classes, and opposed the upper-class religion which sought to delude the people. Sun considered that such religious groups provided peasants with the only effective form of organizational and ideological framework to unite the peasantry in the absence of political parties; empowered peasants by giving them a sense of mystical invincibility; and, after rebellions were defeated, provided peasants with the means for the secret transmission of the ideas and resources of resistance – the latter factor being especially evident in the case of the White Lotus, with its repeated uprisings emerging from underground splinter groups (Sun Zuomin 1956)[5]. The role of religion in peasant rebellions was the subject of heated academic debates in the PRC in the 1960's and early

1980's, but overall, the "White Lotus" sects of the Yuan, Ming, and Qing were depicted as having played a positive role of resistance against feudal domination.

It thus became necessary to distinguish White Lotus sects from the "*huidaomen*" societies of the Republican era which, in the revolutionary discourse, had only one objective: to defend feudalism and restore the empire (Lu Zhongwei 2002: 7). At the same time, it became necessary to reconcile the proletarian and proto-revolutionary origins of the *huidaomen* as described in the socialist historiography, with their current counterrevolutionary nature. Thus an internal document published by the ministry of Public Security places the *huidaomen* in direct filiation to the White Lotus, stating that such societies first appeared at the end of the Yuan dynasty; then,

> "In the initial period of the emergence of the secret societies, they played a clearly progressive role in the struggle against imperialist invasion and the corrupt Qing dynasty regime. For example, the famous Boxer movement at the end of the Qing was launched with the « White Lotus sect » and the « Red Yang sect » as its organizational core. Later, the secret societies were gradually coopted and controlled by the reactionary ruling classes, to become counterrevolutionary political groups protecting the dominant class at different periods." (Gong'an bu 1985: 1).

The return of *xiejiao* via Christianity and the West

With the deepening of economic reforms in the post-Mao era, the state gradually distanced itself from revolutionary ideology, going so far as to abandon the theory of class struggle. In this context, as the "reactionary secret society" label began to seem anachronistic and limited to the counterrevolutionary groups of the early years of the Peoples' Republic, the label *xiejiao* – previously used in the Ming and Qing dynasties – resurfaced and entered popular discourse in the mid 1990's, but this time to translate the term "cult" in Chinese press coverage of the tragedies of the Branch Davidians (USA, 1993), of the Order of the Solar Temple (Switzerland, Quebec and France, 1994 and 1995), and of Aum Shinrikyo (Japan, 1995). In 1995, the State Council and the CCP Central Committee emitted a circular banning several groups designated as *xiejiao*, most of which had been denounced as heretical by the official Christian associations: the Shouters (*Huhanpai*), the Complete Domain Church (*Quan fanwei jiaohui*), the New Testament Church (*Xinyue jiaohui*), the Oriental Lightning (*Dongfang shandian*), the Assembly of Disciples (*Mentuhui*), and the Church of Spirits

(*Linglinghui*) ; as well as a Buddhist-inspired group headquartered in Taiwan, the Guanyin Dharma Gate (*Guanyin Famen*). The contemporary reappearance of the *xiejiao* label is thus associated with Christian and foreign groups and translates Western categories of the "cult" disseminated by the anti-cult movement which, in North America, is dominated by Christian interests.

At the same time, journalists and scientists who, in 1995, were in a heated polemic against the "superstitious" and "pseudo-scientific" deviations of the *qigong* movement, noted the similarities between foreign *xiejiao* and some *qigong* organisations, and called for an immediate purge of such groups before they became Aum Shinrikyo-style cults and caused large-scale deaths (Palmer 2007: 170-172). Following this polemic, the political support which had contributed so much to the spread of the *qigong* movement dissipated, and the state attempted to regulate the thousands of *qigong* associations and networks. In 1998, several Buddhist magazines specifically attacked Falungong, which had become the most popular *qigong* form, as a *xiejiao* which drew lay Buddhists away from orthodoxy, and inscribed Falungong in a genealogy which linked it to Yiguandao and the White Lotus (Palmer 2007: 262-263; Chen Xingqiao 1998). Thus, through the combination of scientistic polemics and Christian and Buddhist apologetics, a new Chinese discourse on "cults" emerged, which resuscitated the old imperial model of *xiejiao* and the White Lotus and combined it with fears of the collective suicides and mass murders of Western and Japanese cults. Ironically, this re-appearance of the *xiejiao* discourse on the Mainland occurred just after it had faded in Taiwan, with the end of martial law and the legalisation of Yiguandao in 1987.

The PRC's ministry of public security, which in 1997 had begun an investigation on Falungong as an "illegal religion" (*feifa zongjiao*), lauched a new investigation in 1998, this time designating it as a *xiejiao* (Palmer 2007: 265). Starting on 22 July 1999, when the CCP decreed the total suppression of Falungong, the *xiejiao* label, which had now become a mark of political demonization, was repeated *ad nauseam* in the propaganda campaign which saturated the media for several months. Translated in documents published for foreign audiences, *xiejiao* became "evil cult" or "destructive cult" in English and, in French, "secte" or "secte insane"[6]. Scholars and religious leaders were summoned to conferences in which the category of *xiejiao* was defined on the basis of Western cases, applied to Falungong, and distinguished from orthodox religion (Chen Hongxing & Dai Chenjing eds. 1999). On 30

October of the same year, the state retroactively gave itself the legal instrument of repression when the highest legislative body passed a resolution banning *xiejiao* "which act under the cover of religion, *qigong* or other illicit forms", and stipulated the punishment of those who "manipulate the members of *xiejiao* organizations to break the laws and decrees of the state, organize mass gatherings to disturb the social order and deceive the public, cause deaths, rape women, and swindle people of their goods and money, or commit other crimes of superstition or heresy"(Decision… 1999).

The new Chinese discourse on *xiejiao*

A legal framework having been set up, and a flurry of anti-Falungong books and propaganda materials having been released, it was now necessary to produce a more sophisticated discourse to legitimate the repression and to elaborate a general policy to counter evil cults of which Falungong was seen to be but one case of a general phenomenon. An anti-cult association of ideologues, scholars and journalists was founded on 13 November 2000; international conferences of Chinese and foreign "experts" on cults were organized; and a large number of works were published from 2000 onwards. In contrast to the imperial discourse against "heretical doctrines" and the communist discourse against "reactionary" societies, in which groups were condemned according to explicitly political criteria defined arbitrarily by the state itself, the new discourse aimed to be objective and scientific, defining the *xiejiao* as a universal category in time and space, dangerous for society and humanity in general rather than for a particular political regime. Hence many articles drew on the Western sociological and Christian literature to enumerate the characteristics of a *xiejiao*. In the book *On Evil Cults* (*Lun Xiejiao*), which collected the proceedings of the first "International Symposium on Destructive Cults" held in Beijing in November 2000, the first chapter is the contribution, translated into Chinese, of an American anti-cult activist who defined the "cult" as a group whose doctrine contradicted that of its mother religion: for example, it does not admit the doctrine of the Trinity, of the bodily resurrection of Christ, of salvation by grace, etc. The cult uses methods of psychological pressure, forms a totalitarian community, its founder is self-proclaimed, dogmatic, messianic, and charismatic, and considers that the ends justify the means to make money and recruit followers. The author continues by listing the sociological characteristics of the cult: authoritarianism, psychological manipulation, psychopathology, breaking of family ties, communal living, distortion of sexuality, deprivation, fraud, and deception, and gives psychological explanations for joining a cult: the need for love and encouragement, idealism, poverty, intellectual satisfaction, health, etc. (Pei Fei 2002). These criteria, which are a basic summary of the pseudo-scientific Western discourse on cults which combines elements of Christianity, sociology and psychology, were widely referred to, discussed, and debated by Chinese authors, often with quotations from the Bible and references to the history of Christianity, in the new literature on *xiejiao* and even in university textbooks and reference works on the theory of religious studies or of the sociology of religions (Lu Chunben 2002; Chen Linshu & Chen Xia eds. 2003; Sun Shangyang 2001). Other works use psychological methods to analyse the "mental control" which Falungong operated on its victims, and evaluate the techniques used to reconvert them (*zhuanhua*)(Zhongguo kexueyuan 2002). Western terminology is studied and its Chinese equivalents discussed at length: articles are often riddled with English, German, French, Latin and Greek terms -- « kult », « cultus », « sekten », « crazed », « destructive », « heresy », « airesis », « secare », « sequi », « denomination », « charisma », etc (see for example Guo An ed. 2003: 8-13). Indeed, this literature shows a great interest for the foreign experience with cults. The work *The True Face of Cults* (Chen Zhiming & Zhang Xiangqi 2001), for example, devotes its first volume to cults abroad (Aum Shinrikyo, Branch Davidians, Order of the Solar Temple, etc.) and the second volume to the Chinese case (Yiguandao, Shouters, Assembly of Disciples, Falungong, etc.), as if to insist that the Chinese experience is but the local expression of a world phenomenon : indeed, the introduction to *On Cults* argues that the trend of cult activities is one of internationalization, so that "it is impossible for a single country to stop cultic expansion alone. It is thus necessary to reinforce international anti-cultic cooperation" (Shehui wenti ed. 2002: 2). Entire books are devoted to anti-cult movements around the world, giving special attention to the American and French cases and containing chapters presenting the anti-cult policies of countries as varied as Belgium, the Philippines, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Guo An ed. 2003: 292-342; Luo Weihong 2002).

One of the problems encountered by the authors of this literature is how to clarify the relationships between the current usage of *xiejiao*, the imperial meaning of *xiejiao*, the *huidaomen* of the Republican and Maoist eras, the "new religions" *xinxing zongjiao* 新興宗教 which also entered the Chinese academic lexicon in the 1990's, and, of course, the concept of “religion” *zongjiao* itself. In their introduction to a series on Chinese “secret societies”, Qin Baoqi and Tan Songlin note that the term *xiejiao* was used by the Ming and Qing dynastic authorities, but should not be used today to label groups from that period, because that would imply ignoring their positive contribution to popular resistance to imperial dictatorship. Qin and Tan therefore prefer giving them the more neutral term of *jiaomen* or “teaching lineage”. But since the positive value of these groups ends during the Republican period, using a neutral term is no longer justified, and the pejorative label of *huidaomen* should now be used to name groups active during that period. Further on, they note several commonalities between *huidaomen* and foreign *xiejiao*: the political ambition and self-deification of the master, the apocalyptic doctrines, the corrupt life of the master compared to the ascetic denial imposed on followers -- but in order to avoid “conceptual confusion”, they insist on the importance of maintaining a distinction between the *huidaomen* as groups active in China in the first half of the 20th century, and the *xiejiao* as contemporary foreign cults and Chinese groups which “raise the banner of Christianity to carry out anti-social activities” (Qin Baoqi & Tan Songlin 2002: 2-3, 113-121).

But overall, even though some historians stress the different social conditions prevailing at different periods, the new discourse burdens itself less and less with such intellectual acrobatics to separate the various generations of groups having existed under different political regimes. On the contrary, *xiejiao* becomes a universal category including all evil cults at all periods of Chinese history and in all parts of the world. The discourse on the “positive” contribution of these groups to peasant resistance against feudal dynasties is entirely revised: *xiejiao* masters used their organization and their charisma to coopt and exploit popular revolts to further their personal ambition to establish a new feudal theocracy; they thus diverted the imperial authorities from gaining an accurate understanding of the true causes of popular discontent and provoked all kinds of calamities for common people (Liu Xiangyu 2002: 332-334; Liu Ping 2002; Zhao Zhi 2002; Zhang Li 2002). At the same time, there is an interest for the methods deployed by the imperial state to exterminate *xiejiao* -- not to condemn the feudal oppression of peasant rebellion, but to glean lessons from the past and, in one study, to take inspiration from the successful policy of the Jiaqing emperor (1796-1821) against the White Lotus and Eight Trigram revolts (Zheng & Ouyang 2002; Zheng Yonghua 2003; Dong Xiaohan & Zhou Yiwen 1999).

Several articles on the etymology, usage, and history of *xiejiao* in imperial China have been published since 1999 in Chinese newspapers and journals. In a synthesis of these studies, Guo An concludes that in Chinese history, it is the government and the orthodox religions which defined which groups were *xiejiao* on the basis of their "anti-social and anti-orthodox" nature, i.e., that they "opposed the interests of the governing group (*tongzhi jituan*) or "turned their back to orthodox religion" (Guo An ed. 2003: 7). Although the author tries to deny making links with the current situation in China, it is clear that the same criteria are in operation today, under an alliance between political and religious orthodoxy. Indeed, the new discourse on *xiejiao* gives particular attention to drawing a clear boundary between *xiejiao* and "religion", and even between *xiejiao* and "new religious movements", to such an extent that both "traditional" and "new" religions are depicted in a positive light for their contribution to social stability. The demarcation line between "orthodox religion" (*zhengjiao*) and *xiejiao* is not based on heresy in relation to the doctrines and practices of particular established religions, but on general notions of moral and social order, almost identical to ancient Chinese notions of politico-religious orthodoxy, but this time extended to the whole world with the aid of a universalist discourse derived from the social sciences.

Comparing religion and *xiejiao*, Guo An lists several differences. On the object of devotion, religion worships a transcendental divinity, towards which the clergy are mere servants, while *xiejiao* demand the absolute veneration of a man who himself claims to be god. Concerning eschatology, religions do have doctrines on the "end of the world" but without a clear date or seen as occurring in a distant future, and busy themselves with bringing spiritual encouragement to practical life, so that "traditional religion contributes to social stability" – while on the contrary, *xiejiao* predict the imminence of the end of days and try to terrorise their followers with their prophecies. Regarding behaviour, religions propagate "ethical and moral values recognized and accumulated by humanity for millennia", while *xiejiao* force their followers to sacrifice all their possessions and even their family in order to put themselves under the protection of their master. Concerning organization, traditional religions have an open and "relatively democratic" organization which does not contravene the constitution or the law, and the clergy does not intervene in the life of believers – whereas *xiejiao* "establish secret organizations and underground kingdoms, exert a dictatorial control on their adepts, practice forced brainwashing". Finally, in relation to their social and political role, the main religions of secularized countries "take the initiative" to harmonize their relations with the government and "do not have an anti-governmental potential": all the more so in countries which do not separate between the state and religion, where the national religion plays "a crucial role" as a "supporting force" for the government – on the contrary, the "evil nature" of the *xiejiao* is to "destroy social stability, slow down economic development and overthrow the government" (Guo An ed. 2003: 36-42). Though some Chinese authors, following Western categories, consider that *xiejiao* is a form of religion (Dai Kangsheng 1999: 311-315), the consensus – imposed by the CCP's policy, which on the one hand guarantees the freedom of religion but on the other forbids *xiejiao* – sees "religion" and *xiejiao* as two diametrically opposed categories:

> « a demon who wears the mask of a beautiful girl is not a beautiful girl ; a wolf wearing a sheepskin is a wolf and not a sheep. *Xiejiao* organizations which drape themselves with religious language cannot become religions and can only be *xiejiao* gangs of social criminals. In dealing with the evil forces and social garbage of *xiejiao*, they must absolutely not be considered as religions, nor be given a legal social status: they can only be swept into the rubbish heap of history with the iron broom of the law. […] Eliminating *xiejiao* not only has no impact on the rigorous application of the policy of religious freedom; on the contrary, given that the *xiejiao* stain the reputation of religion and distort religious concepts, inverting black and white and sowing confusion in public opinion, to eliminate *xiejiao* signifies to respect and to protect religion» (Feng Jinyuan 2002: 24-25).

At the same time, a clear distinction is also made between *xiejiao* and "new religious movements" or "new religions" (*xinxing zongjiao*), which are beginning to be known to Chinese scholars and religious affairs officials since a decade or so, both through acquaintance with Western academic works on this subject and through the introduction to China, following China's greater opening up to foreign contacts, of certain "new religions" from abroad. Guo An thus insists that although several *xiejiao* were originally new religious movements, one cannot consider all new religions to be *xiejiao*. On the contrary, he affirms that most new religions remain within the realm of "orthodox" religion and have "an internal structure which governs its organization and the relationships between believers and the society which, though different from that of traditional religion, "remains within the bounds of social norms and morals. As products of "religious secularization", new religions propose a "vision of the future and a worldview adapted to social development, whose objective is to enable a given religion to better conform itself to a dramatically changing social reality and respond to the spiritual needs of those who are perplexed by this reality", while the *xiejiao* claim that "one merely needs to join their organization for all one's troubles to be immediately solved" with the sole objective of increasing the number of recruits in order to control their minds, their property and even their bodies, which followers "completely and unconditionally sacrifice to satisfy the selfish and unspeakable desires of the master." While new religions "practice their teachings by exhorting to do good and by bringing benefits to the world, and are constantly developing community applications which are beneficial to society in order to gain the understanding and support of society:", *xiejiao* turn their backs on social morality and the law, and oppose the government, culture, and even material life, disdain the existing social order and collective ethics, and constantly attempt to use various means to destroy state institutions and threaten the life of the people and the security of public property"(Guo An ed. 2003: 51-52).

Conclusion: the end of modern ideology and the elevation of Religion

The importing of two modern paradigms – the revolutionary model in the mid 20th century and the social science of religions paradigm fifty years later – appears at first glance to have only served to provide new ideological clothing for a category which never changed in its essence, that of *xiejiao*, which became *huidaomen* in the Maoist period and reverted to the *xiejiao* appellation under Jiang Zemin. But the application of modern paradigms reflects an attempt to inscribe the struggle against evil cults into a universal framework: the worldwide struggle against imperialism and feudal oppression in the case of the *huidaomen*, and against the international menace of destructive cults in the case of contemporary *xiejiao*. In the second case, however, the recourse to academic institutions to produce social scientific discourses, in a context when these institutions are increasingly integrated into international research circuits, represents a change in relation to previous situations in which the anti-cult discourse was elaborated entirely in relation to the ideological framework of Confucianism or Marxism.

The new Chinese discourse on *xiejiao* combines traditional notions of heretical doctrines with Western elements derived from Christian apologetics, psychology, and the social sciences. The result is a *xiejiao* category which borrows from imperial Chinese ideology a concept of orthodoxy based on notions of order and social harmony, of which the state is the prime protector with the assistance of religion as an instrument of moral education (*jiaohua*), and from Western discourse a universalist approach which defines "social order", "religion" etc. in general and abstract terms, citing examples from the whole world, without giving a special role of arbiter to the Chinese state or to specific religions recognized as orthodox in China. While anti-*huidaomen* propaganda of the 1950's and 80's defined these groups almost exclusively as a function of their feudal and counterrevolutionary nature, without giving much consideration to the relationship between such groups and religion, the new discourse places a strong emphasis on the relationship between *xiejiao* and religion, practically defining them as an anti-religion. It is striking to note that, if we recall the central role of scientism and anti-superstition campaigns which oriented religious policy in the first half of the 20th century[7] and which structured the polemic around *qigong* until the end of the 1990's, "science" as an absolute value is rarely called on to discredit *xiejiao*, and "superstition" is not the principal charge made against these groups whose cardinal sin is their "anti-social" and "anti-human" nature, i.e. their ambition to destabilize the socio-political order. The discourse of the struggle against superstition and "pseudo-science" which had been the chief weapon of the first polemists to attack *qigong* and Falungong in the mid 1990's (Palmer 2007: 122-126; 160-162; 170-177), indeed seems to have been marginalized since the *xiejiao* label was officially fixed on Falungong in 1999.

A general and universal concept of "religion" has thus become the defining standard. We are far from the doctrine of religion as the opium of the masses, from the Marxist and modernist idea of religion as a relic of the past destined to naturally and gradually disappear, and even from the recent admission in official pronouncements that religion will still last for a long time. What is significant here is the unambiguously positive evaluation of "religion", of which the "orthodox" nature is understood quite broadly, rarely specifically mentioning China's five official religions and even embracing new religions.

We can now begin to discern the possible long-term structural consequences of the Falungong affair on China's politico-religious dynamic. Although the Falungong suppression campaign uses all the classical instruments of propaganda and repression of a communist regime, the discourse on *xiejiao* which has emerged from it marks a complete rupture from 50 years of socialist and secularist ideology, a return to the traditional paradigm of the state as protector of the orthodox Order against the heretical and demonic forces of Chaos, and the entrance of Religion onto the stage as a supportive force for protecting social order and the moral and ethical heritage of society.

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Glossary

Bailianhui 白蓮會 White Lotus Society
Bailianjiao 白蓮教 White Lotus Teachings
banghui 幫會 underworld gang
Daode xueshe 道德學社 Society for the Study of Morality
daohui 道會 cultivation society
daomen 道門 cultivation lineage
Daoyuan 道院 School of the Way
Dongfang shandian 東方閃電 Oriental Lightning
Falungong 法輪功 Qigong of the Dharma Wheel
feifa zongjiao 非法宗教 illegal religion
fengjian 封建 feudal
gelaohui 哥老會 Elders’ Society
Guanyin Famen 觀音法門 Guanyin Dharma Gate
Guiyi daoyuan 歸一道院 School of the Way of the Return to Oneness
fandong huidaomen 反動會道門 reactionary secret societies
hongqianghui 紅槍會 Red Spears
Huhanpai 呼喊派 The Shouters
huimen 會門 secret society
jiaohua 教化 moral education
jiaomen 教門 teaching lineage
jiebai dixiong 結拜弟兄 sworn brotherhood
jiehui shudang 結會豎黨 creating associations and forming cliques
Jiushi xinjiaohui 救世新教會 Association of the New Teachings for World Salvation
Linglinghui 靈靈會 Church of Spirits
Mentuhui 門徒會 Assembly of Disciples

mimi jieshe 秘密結社 secret association
mimi shehui 秘密社會 secret society
Quan fanwei jiaohui 全範圍教會 Complete Domain Church
Taipingdao 太平道 Way of Supreme Peace
Tiandihui 天地會 Heaven and Earth Society
Tianxian miaodao 天仙廟道 Way of the Temple of the Heavenly Immortals
Tongmenghui 同盟會 United Allegiance Society
Tongshanshe 同善社 Fellowship of Goodness
tongzhi jituan 統治集團 governing group
Wanguo daodehui 萬國道德會 Universal Morality Society
xie 邪 evil, heterodox
xiejiao 邪教 heretical teaching, evil cult
xieshuo 邪說 heretical sayings
xinxing zongjiao 新興宗教 new religion
Xinyue jiaohui 新約教會 New Testament Church
yiduan 異端 heresy
Yiguandao 一貫道 Way of Pervasive Unity
Zailijiao 在理教 Teaching of the Abiding Principle
zhuanhua 轉化 reconversion
zheng 正 upright, orthodox
zhengjiao 正教 orthodox religion
Zhongguo sanjiao shengdao zonghui 中國三教聖道總會 Association of the Sagely Way of China's Three Teachings
Zongjiao zhexue yanjiushe 宗教哲學研究社 Society for the Study of Religious Philosophy

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Zhang Tianran 張天然
Zhang Jue 張角
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[2] The latter is examined critically in Ownby forthcoming. For an example, see Chen Hongxing & Dai Zhenjing eds. 1999.

[3] Known as Zhang Tianran by Yiguandao followers.

[4] Picking up on this distinction, much of the historical scholarship has insisted on the difference between the "secular" nature of the former and the "religious" nature of the latter. For a refutation of this point of view, see Ownby 1995.

[5] For detailed discussions of religion in the Mao-era historiography of peasant rebellions, see Man Kam Leung 1989; Harrison 1970: 140-189.

[6] See for example the press releases posted on the website of the Chinese Embassy in France : http://web.amb-chine.fr/dossier/falungong/falungong0301.htm; http://web.amb-chine.fr/dossier/falungong/falungong0220.htm; accessed 5 Oct. 2005.

[7] On scientism, see Kwok 1965; on the anti-superstition movement, see Nedostup 2001.