



# **Current Trends and Thoughts**

English Abstracts of Selected Works  
by CASS Scholars, Vol.4

**Bureau of International Cooperation  
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences**

Social Sciences Academic Press (China)

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# **PART 1**

## **Religion and Philosophy**



# **Sacredness and Secularity**

## **—Politics and Religions of Countries of Southern Buddhism**

Song Lidao

*Religion and Culture Press, May 2000*

Religion is concerned with spiritualized, heavenly or after-death matters, which is the general meaning of “sacredness”. “Secularity” refers to the natural instincts of human beings and their social production and ways of consumption. Both “Sacredness” and “Secularity” are related with human existence. Buddhism, as one of the great historical religions, has played, and will still play a significant and creative role in the Asian societies. Its integration with the inherent culture of various ethnic groups has formed different Buddhist movements. This paper studies the Southern Buddhism which is considered to be a doctrine closest to Buddha himself. However, objectively and historically speaking, the pure religious prototype does not exist in reality. The lasting vitality of Buddhism in South Asia and Southeast Asia originates in its cultural applicability and social service function. Buddhism provides social ethical values and moral standards, satisfies people’s psychological and spiritual needs and furnishes authoritative proof of theology for the state power of secular countries and for various kinds of social and political movements. Buddhism not only maintains the existing society but also criticizes the actual society.

The author has been studying the functionally interactive relationship between religion and the society. The paper observes the following basic principle: to explain the symbols and slogans of religions through the needs of the actual society and to restore the historical spiritualized ideas to the actual demands for political and economic interests.

**Song Lida**o, male, studied for 6 years at the Religion Department, the Graduate School of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) in the 80s and obtained a Ph. D. degree. He is currently research fellow of the Institute of World Religions. His present main research field is the Southern Buddhism in the contemporary society. His main publications include the monograph *A Retelling and Reinterpretation of Nyaypravoshatarakashstra*, and translations *Buddhist Logic*, *Mahayana Buddhology*, *Hinayana Buddhology* and some papers such as “A Review of the Thought of Buddhadasa”, “My View on the Tiantai School and Saddharmapiundar I kasutra”, “Buddhism and the Political Viewpoints of Southeast Asian Countries” and so on.



# Religious Sociology

Dai Kangsheng and Peng Yao

*Social Sciences Academic Press (China)*, June 2000

China is a multinational and multi-religious country, religion has a profound and widespread influence in society. With the development of opening-up policy and the advent of the new century, religious issues become the hot spots which attract more and more attentions. As a comparatively complicated and special social and cultural phenomenon, religion is a multi-level compound system which needs to be understood holistically and multi-dimensionally rather than blindly and one-sidedly to avoid simplification and ideologization. As a newly interdisciplinary subject of religion and sociology, religious sociology has rather limited research achievements in China.

This book is a new attempt in this field. Using Chinese religions as the main objects and adopting sociological research methods, the author raises several issues on the relations between historical and contemporary Chinese society and religion from the social dimension and explained them theoretically and uses domestic investigation materials and data in China to truly reflect the historical course of Chinese religion in this transformation period. The main purpose is to show the inner necessity for Chinese religion to adapt itself to the socialist society.

In the first part (chapters 1 ~ 6) of this book, the author elaborates emphatically the nature, scope, characteristics and methods of religious sociology and briefly reviews its one-hundred-year development. Linking those with the theories of western religious sociology, the author also expounds systematically the religion and its characteristics, religionist and their religious activities, religious organizations and systems, social functions of religion and the relations between religion and changes of modern society with his own comments. In the second part (chapters 7 and 8) of this book, the author theoretically probes into religions in China's traditional society and