

BUILDING A DISCIPLINE SYSTEM OF RELIGION WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

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Abstract: Building a discipline system of religion with Chinese characteristics has important practical and academic values. The author carries out the study from two aspects, the basic idea and overall structure of the construction of the discipline system, and makes concrete analysis from the subject classification of the related two branches, the humanities and social science.

Keywords: Chinese characteristics; Religious study; Discipline system; Subject classification

1 INTRODUCTION

The world today is in a period of major historical transformation. There are many theoretical issues that need to be deeply thought about. China's philosophy and social sciences are also facing new opportunities and challenges in development. President Xi pointed out: "We should follow the idea of basing ourselves on China, learning from foreign countries, exploring history, grasping the present, caring about humanity, and facing the future, and strive to build philosophy and social sciences with Chinese characteristics, fully embodying Chinese characteristics, Chinese style, and Chinese style in terms of guiding ideology, discipline system, academic system, and discourse system." [1] This important instruction pointed out the direction, put forward requirements, and determined the tasks for us to accelerate the construction of the discipline system, academic system, and discourse system of religious studies with Chinese characteristics.

Since its inception, religious studies has been an interdisciplinary research system. Therefore, it is crucial to maintain the openness, inclusiveness and comparative nature of this discipline. President Xi emphasized that in the construction of our philosophy and social sciences, we must "include many disciplines, including traditional disciplines, emerging disciplines, cutting-edge disciplines, interdisciplinary disciplines, and unpopular disciplines" [1], "adhere to the principle of making use of the past for the present and foreign knowledge for China, and integrate various resources", "including the positive achievements of philosophy and social sciences in all countries in the world" [1], study and draw on "all useful knowledge systems and research methods" [1], and make "innovations in knowledge, theory and methods" to make them "beneficial nourishment for the construction of philosophy and social sciences with Chinese characteristics" [1]. These insightful discussions have provided us with important inspiration and basic ideas for the development of contemporary Chinese religious studies, enabling us to establish a development orientation that reflects our characteristics and embraces all rivers in the construction of a discipline system, academic system and discourse system of religious studies with Chinese characteristics. This article only discusses the preliminary thoughts and relevant insights on the construction of a discipline system of religious studies with Chinese characteristics, in order to achieve the effect of throwing out bricks to stimulate jade.

2 BASIC CONCEPTION OF BUILDING A DISCIPLINE SYSTEM OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, religious studies has developed for more than 70 years. People have had various ideas and theoretical explanations on its research direction and basic form, forming a corresponding research atmosphere and academic characteristics. In this process, Chinese religious studies have experienced two major breakthroughs. First, under the direct guidance of Chairman Mao Zedong, the Institute of World Religions of the Chinese Academy of Sciences was established in 1964, marking the formal establishment of the construction of the discipline system of Chinese religious studies, thus having the institutional foundation of this discipline system in China; second, since China's reform and opening up in 1978, religious studies have developed comprehensively. Since then, Chinese religious studies have been unique in the international academic community and have achieved gratifying achievements. However, due to different perspectives on thinking about problems and differences in theoretical understanding, the current Chinese religious studies discipline system still has the problem of unclear positioning: in the series of philosophy and social science research, religious studies is regarded as an independent discipline, so it has its independence in the standard positioning of national discipline classification and the field of national social science funds; but in the series of national education degrees, religious studies is only regarded as a second-level discipline under the scope of philosophy, and does not yet have the status of a first-level discipline. As a result, the discipline of religious studies has been restricted in the allocation of its research topics, the training of college students and graduate students, and the establishment of discipline construction. Obviously, this positioning of religious studies as a secondary discipline of philosophy is not conducive to the construction of its disciplinary system, nor is it conducive to meeting

the specific requirements of President Xi that “ we must speed up the improvement of disciplines that support philosophy and social sciences, such as philosophy, history, economics, political science, law, sociology, ethnology, journalism, demography, religious studies, psychology, etc., and build a disciplinary system with Chinese characteristics and universal significance” [1]. Therefore, it is imperative to establish religious studies as a first-level discipline in philosophy and social sciences with Chinese characteristics.

President Xi summarized the three main characteristics of philosophy and social sciences with Chinese characteristics: first, "inheritance and nationality", second, "originality and timeliness", and third, "systematicity and professionalism". This has put forward clear ideas and basic principles for building religious studies with Chinese characteristics. The inheritance and nationality of Chinese religious studies are based on the profound and excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation. China's long and widespread religious history has left behind a wealth of historical documents and field cases, which are worthy of in-depth exploration and careful research. Its originality and timeliness require us to pay attention to the changing times, keenly capture new problems and new trends in the development of religion, put forward original ideas, and produce original scientific research results. Its systematicity and professionalism fully illustrate the need to pay attention to disciplinary norms, adhere to academic principles, and establish a scientific disciplinary research system. Chinese tradition emphasizes that "without rules, there can be no square or circle" [2], where "rules" refer to the requirements of social behavioral norms and "rules" refer to the standard setting at the technical method level. Chinese culture regards rules as the standard rules for behavior and conduct. If a discipline deviates from its systematicity and professionalism and does not abide by its industry "rules" (norms and rules), it will lose its scientific nature.

Although religious studies originated in the West and has research theories, doctrines, concepts and methods that belong to the Western academic tradition, it is still in the process of development and is far from mature. Therefore, when constructing a discipline system of religious studies with Chinese characteristics, although we can refer to and learn from Western research systems, theories and methods, we must get rid of the shroud of Western thinking patterns and form our own unique ideological and theoretical patterns, discipline systems and methods, reconstruct in reference, and innovate in comparison. Looking at the discipline system of Western religious studies, it can be divided into two levels: narrow religious studies and broad religious studies. Narrow religious studies is its initial principle and research direction, that is, it emphasizes the "descriptive" nature of the discipline and does not advocate value judgments on religion. Therefore, it is limited to the description and comparative study of the "history" and "phenomenon" of religion, mainly religious history, comparative religion, religious phenomenology, religious sociology, religious anthropology, religious geography, religious ecology, and religious psychology. Broadly speaking, religious studies emphasize that religious research should cover all fields and should not miss related disciplines that have value judgments on religion. Therefore, it advocates that its discipline scope should also include religious philosophy, religious criticism, religious theology (world theology) and other disciplines. Due to differences in viewpoints and different positioning, Western religious studies have not yet established a universally recognized name for religious studies, and even abandoned the term "Science of Religion" (Science of Religion or Religionswissenschaft) used when religious studies was first established. Its international academic organizations have also been using "History of Religion" temporarily. Therefore, the construction of a discipline system of religious studies with Chinese characteristics not only has a huge space in its discipline field, but can also make its beneficial contribution to the development of international religious studies.

3 THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE DISCIPLINE SYSTEM OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

Religious studies with Chinese characteristics should form its own independent system based on the development of the discipline system and academic research results of Western religious studies, and reflect its unique characteristics. Chinese cultural tradition emphasizes holistic thinking, emphasizes pluralism and unity, and advocates the co-construction of duality (yin and yang); these thinking characteristics also affect our discipline conception and design, forming the organic and integrated characteristics of our research. Philosophy and social sciences with Chinese characteristics generally cover two major fields: humanities (also known as humanities) and social sciences. Its "humanities" pay more attention to the ideological and cultural aspects, while its "society" clearly emphasizes the social structure and relationship level, but the two are complementary and not differentiated, thus forming an organic overall structure of its discipline system. This cultural tradition and thinking characteristics can enable us to scientifically construct the discipline system of religious studies with Chinese characteristics, and on the basis of absorbing the structure of the Western religious discipline system, we can make up for its shortcomings and surpass Western religious studies with the perfection and completeness of the Chinese religious discipline system.

Generally speaking, Chinese religious studies can be divided into two major systems: religious studies in the field of humanities and religious studies in the field of social sciences. The two systems are complementary and interactive, and are not completely separated. Among them, the sub-disciplines of religious studies that belong to the scope of humanities (i.e., the secondary disciplines of religious studies) can include religious history, comparative religion, religious literature, religious archaeology, religious linguistics, religious philosophy, religious phenomenology, religious psychology, religious literature and art, religious geography, religious ecology, etc.; while the sub-disciplines of religious studies that can be attributed to the scope of social sciences can include religious politics, religious law, religious economics, religious sociology, religious anthropology, religious ethnology, religious criticism, religious communication, etc. Many of the above-mentioned sub-disciplines are disciplines that Western religious studies have

not yet touched upon or paid insufficient attention to, and their system structures have not been established or are imperfect, but they should and can be constructed in the Chinese social and cultural context.

The discipline system of Chinese religious studies must of course be in line with China's national conditions, and should also actively respond to the theoretical and practical needs of Chinese society. Therefore, we should have a broad vision, but be specialized, give full play to our advantages, and highlight our characteristics. In addition, the discipline system of Chinese religious studies is not an isolated construction, but must be consistent with the construction of the entire Chinese philosophy and social science system. In this way, as an emerging interdisciplinary system, Chinese religious studies needs to integrate and interpenetrate with other disciplines, conduct comparative dialogues, keep pace with the times, and grasp the cutting-edge and innovative nature of disciplinary development. These creative ideas for the construction of the discipline system of Chinese religious studies should be fully reflected in the construction of its various branch disciplines.

4 CLASSIFICATION OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES AS A FIELD OF HUMANITIES

As mentioned above, the discipline system of Chinese religious studies in the field of humanities can include branches such as religious history, comparative religion, religious literature, religious archaeology, religious linguistics, religious philosophy, religious phenomenology, religious psychology, religious literature and art, religious geography, and religious ecology. Now we will discuss its basic structure and discipline content separately.

4.1 Religious Historiography

Religious history is the most basic construction of the entire discipline of religious studies. Its main content is the historical description of religion, including the general history of religion and the history of religion by period, the general history of world religions and the history of national religions, etc., which reflects the characteristics of longitudinal retrospection and description of religious history. In general, its research scope should include prehistoric religion (history of primitive religion, including the study of the corresponding history of indigenous religions), ancient religious history (the study of various ancient religious histories in the world, and the research that highlights Chinese characteristics should be the study of ancient Chinese religious history), Hindu history, Buddhist history, Zoroastrian history, Jain history, Jewish history, Christian history, Islamic history, Confucian history, Taoism history, Chinese folk religion (belief) history, Chinese ethnic minority religious history, Shinto history, Sikh history, new religion history, etc. Religious history is a discipline with a relatively long history and relatively mature system in Western religious studies. Therefore, the construction of religious history with Chinese characteristics must focus on the in-depth exploration and dedicated research of Chinese religious history, so as to provide novel and unique materials and put forward unique insights.

4.2 Comparative Religion

The research characteristics of comparative religion are to highlight horizontal comparison and to conduct dialogue and communication between different religions, so as to seek common ground while reserving differences or to live in harmony and diversity, and to make each religion beautiful in its own way and share the beauty of the world. Its research scope should include the comparison between world religions and national religions, the comparison between Eastern religions and Western religions, the comparison between Chinese religions and foreign religions, the comparison between native religions (natural religions) and creative religions (artificial religions), the comparison between monotheism and polytheism (including dualism), the comparison between constructed (institutional) religions and diffuse (dispersed) religions, the comparison between national religions (state religions) and patriarchal religions (ethnic religions), the comparison between mainstream religions and marginalized religions, the comparison between official religions and folk religions, the comparison between orthodox religions and heresies (cults, lewd temples), the comparison between abstract gods and personal gods (natural gods), and the comparison between gods and religious leaders. Chinese religious traditions and beliefs, words and deeds are obviously different from those of foreign religions. The value and significance of this "difference" deserves special attention in the comparative research of comparative religions with Chinese characteristics.

4.3 Religious Literature

The study of religious literature refers to the excavation, compilation, translation, annotation, research and publication of various religious documents. One of the major academic projects of the founder of Western religious studies, Friedrich Max Müller (1823-1900), at the beginning of the establishment of this discipline was to translate, compile and publish *The Sacred Books of the East*, a religious literature work. The collection and compilation of documents in the history of major religions also provided rich materials for this discipline and laid a solid foundation. However, the theoretical explanation of this discipline and the formulation of academic norms are still lacking, and Western religious studies have not formed a specialized discipline related to it. Therefore, in today's Chinese society where "the prosperous times are compiling classics", the establishment of religious literature is a natural outcome and has great potential. A prominent manifestation of current religious studies with Chinese characteristics is the compilation and publication of various religious Chinese (including minority languages) documents, as well as the Chinese translation

and publication of important documents related to world religions. Therefore, the classification and categorization of religious documents, the standards and principles for compiling religious documents, and the norms and regulations for organizing and publishing are what Chinese religious literature studies must consider.

4.4 Religious Archaeology

Religious archaeology is also an important basic discipline of religious studies, that is, to confirm and explain the existence and development, role and influence of relevant religions in history through the results of archaeological excavations. Many religious archaeological contents are involved in archaeological research around the world, such as ancient Egyptian archaeology, Mesopotamian archaeology, Indian archaeology, Hebrew archaeology, etc. On September 28, 2020, the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee held a collective study on the theme of archaeology. When presiding over the study, President Xi emphasized the need to build archaeology with Chinese characteristics, Chinese style, and Chinese style, pointing out that this research can extend the historical axis, enhance historical credibility, enrich historical connotations, and revitalize historical scenes, so as to better understand the long-standing and profound Chinese civilization, and demonstrate brilliant achievements and major contributions to world civilization. Religious archaeology is an important component of archaeology. Its interdisciplinary nature helps us to understand the excellent Chinese civilization tradition more clearly and correctly, and to analyze the position, proportion and important significance of religious culture. At present, Chinese archaeology has unique conditions and occupies an important position in world archaeology. Therefore, it is an excellent opportunity to build Chinese religious archaeology. Religious archaeology can promote the organic combination of natural science and social science in religious research, and help us to more correctly understand the historical value and cultural influence of religion. Moreover, although Chinese religious archaeology is based on Chinese archaeology, it can also pay attention to and participate in religious archaeological research around the world with an open perspective.

4.5 Religious Linguistics

The study of religious linguistics is a special exploration of religious language and an interdisciplinary study of religious studies and linguistics. From the worship of spirits in ancient languages to the emergence of language taboos (such as spells, amulets, etc.), as well as the application and expression of language in religious invocations, prayers, thoughts, worship, etc., it fully demonstrates the importance of studying religious linguistics. The use and development of religious language reflects the complex process of the emergence, development, and change of religion, as well as cultural signs and characteristics; and the formation of a large number of religious language vocabulary, and the secularization of religious discourse (such as relevant Buddhist terms and Christian terms in Chinese history) into ordinary discourse used by the public in the process of evolution, are issues that are very worthy of special research. Religious language can cover two major areas: "explicit language" and "secret language". "Explicit language" is mainly based on religious scriptures, which can be directly understood and analyzed; "secret language" is embodied in spells, etc., which is relatively mysterious and needs to be "deciphered". Therefore, religious language can be divided into broad and narrow senses. The broad sense refers to the relevant content that can be regarded as "religious language symbols", which has a wide range, including its language and writing, religious entity rituals, physical objects, expression movements and behavioral symbols, such as "totem" symbols and other "symbolic languages". The narrow sense refers to the special language and writing used within the scope of religious activities, especially the language and writing used in religious scriptures, which is characterized by fully demonstrating the expression of religious doctrines, canons and beliefs. In addition, religious linguistics can also classify religions in a linguistic sense, and find out the complex relationship between language and religion among various ethnic groups. Since the reform and opening up, Chinese scholars have made corresponding attempts to construct religious linguistics, thus exploring a path and providing experience for the establishment of religious linguistics with Chinese characteristics.

4.6 Philosophy of Religion

Religious philosophy is a controversial and divergent discipline in Western religious studies because it involves value judgments such as "the essence of religion" and "the definition of religion" and the "meaning" of religion. However, religious studies with Chinese characteristics will highlight the study of value judgments such as the concept and definition of "religion", and will not avoid exploring and answering questions such as the "essence" of religion and the "truth" discussed by religion. Religious philosophy studies various forms of expression or existence of religion based on the "nature" or "essence" of religion to distinguish its nature, such as natural religion, folk religion, humanistic religion, revelation religion, elite religion, popular religion, positive religion, absolute religion, philosophical religion, ethical religion, patriarchal religion, legal religion, etc. Religious philosophy will explore various theories or theological systems related to religion from the core of religious beliefs and their concept of gods, such as the immortality of the soul, animism, animism, polytheism, dualism, absolute monotheism, deism, personal theism, pantheism, cosmology, process theism, universal theism, virtual theism, atheism, etc. In addition, the "philosophy of God" in Catholicism and the "philosophical theology" that emerged in the development of modern Christianity also fall within the scope of religious philosophy research. In the historical development of religious philosophy, the study of the history of religious philosophy will be formed, and in the regional distribution of religious philosophy and its cultural inheritance, there are Western religious philosophy and Eastern religious philosophy, religious philosophy of various countries (the focus of

my country's research is of course Chinese religious philosophy), and religious philosophy within each religion, such as Indian religious philosophy, Buddhist philosophy, Taoist philosophy, Confucianism (Confucian philosophy or Confucian philosophy), Jewish philosophy, Christian philosophy, Islamic philosophy, etc. The basic categories of religious philosophy research can also include religious epistemology, religious truth theory, religious ontology, and related theories of religious essentialism, methodology, metaphysics, semantic analysis, theological hermeneutics, etc. Chinese-style religious philosophy can deeply explore the Chinese people's understanding of "religion" to answer the question of whether China has religion, explore the "heaven" of the unity of heaven and man and the concept of "virtual gods" in Chinese tradition to answer the understanding of gods in Chinese culture and whether Confucianism is a religion. In the study of "atheism", the unique advantages of the Chinese academic community should be reflected.

4.7 Phenomenology of Religion

The study of religious phenomenology is closely related to comparative religion and religious philosophy. Western religious phenomenology holds the perspective of comparative religion, and takes the "suspension of judgment" and "essential insight" of philosophical phenomenology as its principles. Our research can focus on the systematic study of religious phenomena and scientifically classify them, and then explain the complex interweaving of subjects and objects touched by the observation of religious phenomena, find out their "truth" from their objective "appearance" and subjective "imagination", and explain their characteristics. In this regard, we should focus on the description and study of ancient and modern religious phenomena in China, and explore the religious "impressions", "images", "images" and "abstractions" related to religious phenomena based on Chinese experience. Western religious phenomenology based on the theory and methods of philosophical phenomenology has reached a decline after its heyday, and religious phenomenology with Chinese characteristics should use new perspectives, theories and methods to explain Chinese religious phenomena and summarize Chinese research experience.

4.8 Psychology of Religion

Religious psychology research is also a discipline system that spans natural sciences and social sciences. It must integrate theoretical methods and research results such as observational psychology, experimental psychology, depth psychology, and social psychology. In addition to retaining the corresponding reference and selection of Western religious psychology in theory and method, Chinese-style religious psychology must also strengthen the psychological analysis and research of Chinese religious believers in practice and application, pay attention to observing and analyzing the effects, characteristics, limitations, and various issues that need to be treated with caution in religious psychological comfort and psychological treatment. Our research characteristics can be reflected in the exploration of Chinese people's religious psychology. In addition, the study of religious psychology also needs to be compared and expanded to other aspects of social spiritual comfort and treatment, such as combining with music therapy, ecological therapy, drug therapy, sports therapy, etc. The exploration of national psychological temperament, cultural nature and characteristics can also be organically related to religious psychology research. Grasping the balance between theory and practice is the key link in the development of Chinese-style religious psychology.

4.9 Religious Literature and Art

The study of religious literature and art refers to a specialized discipline that explores the relationship between religion, literature and art, and is an important part of religious culture research. Its discipline construction focuses on the literary and artistic expression of religion, such as religious literary creation, religious poetry, religious music, religious drama, religious dance, religious painting, religious sculpture, religious crafts, religious architecture, etc. This study can also be refined into a special exploration of the literature and art of each religion, such as Hindu literature and art, Jewish literature and art, Buddhist literature and art, Christian literature and art, Islamic literature and art, etc. The exploration, description and analysis of Chinese religious literature and art should be the top priority of the research, thus reflecting the characteristics of the research. Here, our research scope can be traced back to the relationship or connection between the origin of literature and art and religion, the means of literary and artistic expression and its effects in the development and dissemination of religion; from a horizontal perspective, it can describe the literary and artistic characteristics of various regions and ethnic religions. In the study of Chinese religious literature and art, in addition to paying attention to the literary and artistic expressions of major religions, it is also necessary to pay special attention to the religious implications and symbols in the forms of Chinese folk literature and art, and find out its relationship with local culture and cultural heritage. Religious literature and art research will shift from abstract thinking at the philosophical metaphysical level to more vivid and lively figurative thinking and image thinking, reflecting more perceptual factors and empathy, while its imagination and creativity will more often show the aesthetic intentions and tastes unique to literature and art. In this study, we should also be good at distinguishing between religious literary and artistic expressions that are mainly religious, and the use of religious elements or creativity in general literary and artistic creation, and make a scientific distinction between the two.

4.10 Religious Geography

Religious geography is based on the interdisciplinary development of modern social geography, political geography and

human geography. In the contemporary era, it has absorbed the research concepts and academic achievements of landscape geography and tourism geography. The development of religious geography with Chinese characteristics requires the abandonment of the theories and methods of Western religious geography, especially the analysis and criticism of the "geographical determinism", "cultural circle theory" (the political geography basis of Huntington's "clash of civilizations") and "catastrophism theory" that were once popular in the Western theoretical community. The construction of contemporary Chinese religious geography, on the one hand, should explore the geographical trend of historical development of religion in the sense of time from the perspective of historical geography; on the other hand, it should analyze and describe the geographical distribution of religion in the sense of space from the scope of general geography, and combine social management, demography and other theoretical methods to draw a regional distribution map of religion, pointing out the distribution status of different regions and different religions, such as the corresponding distribution density of religious believers and their proportion in urban and rural populations. Here, the regional distribution of Chinese religion should be the research focus, and the geomorphic characteristics, regional trends, and geographical characteristics of religious worship of Chinese religion should be explained clearly. The research of religious geography with Chinese characteristics can be traced back from the worship of sacred mountains, rivers, oceans, grasslands, and holy cities in ancient religions to the geographical distribution of religions after entering agricultural society and capitalist society, and the migration of religious groups in the process of urban and rural development, industrialization, and modernization, and scientifically analyzed and explained. In addition, unique research can be carried out on China's religious sites, pilgrimage sites, and the "feng shui" phenomenon and predictions that Chinese traditional culture pays attention to, and scientific conclusions can be drawn.

4.11 Religious Ecology

Religious ecology studies focus on the relationship between the earth's ecological balance and religion, exploring the religious attitude towards natural ecology, as well as the position and role they hold in ecological protection. The development of religious ecology has not yet matured in the world today, so religious ecology with Chinese characteristics still has great potential. In addition to observing and studying the development trend of religious ecological issues on an international scale, religious ecology with Chinese characteristics should consider the following two aspects: First, it should trace back to the emphasis on ecology by ancient Chinese religions, deeply explore the Chinese religious thought of "valuing life", and understand the profound implications of the "great virtue of heaven and earth is life" [3], and explain the Chinese religious dynamic understanding of "life is called Yi" [3], "all things are transformed into life" and "life is endless" [3]. Here, the Chinese religious view of life and ecology are organically connected, highlighting the view of ecological balance between man and nature in the theory of the equality of all things, "heaven and earth are born together, and all things are one with me" [4]. Second, we should pay attention to current ecological issues and the role and significance of religion in the construction of modern ecological civilization; in this regard, its ecological view encompasses natural ecology, social ecology and spiritual ecology, from which we can see their universal connection. We should promote the positive role of religious circles in modern ecological protection based on President Xi's idea that "green waters and green mountains are gold and silver mountains", give full play to the ecological consciousness of Chinese religions of "loving and nurturing all things without being their master" and the simple spirit of "following the laws of nature", and take a protective attitude towards nature of "grow it, nurture it, mature it, nourish it, restore it, give birth to it without possessing it, and act on it without relying on it" [5], so that China's religious ecology can make outstanding achievements in both theory and practice.

Among the various branches of religious studies in the above-mentioned humanities, many studies are not limited to the scope of the humanities, but are inextricably linked to religious studies in the social sciences. For example, religious psychology, religious geography, and religious ecology all touch upon many issues in the social sciences and have the nature of interdisciplinary research.

5 CLASSIFICATION OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES AS A SOCIAL SCIENCE

The branch of religious studies in the field of social sciences has a closer contact and more direct relationship with the real society, thus forming its typical characteristics of social science research. Its related disciplines are roughly religious politics, religious law, religious economics, religious sociology, religious anthropology, religious ethnology, religious criticism, religious communication, etc.

5.1 Religious Politics

Religious politics studies the relationship between religion and politics, exploring the political positioning, role and significance of religion, and involves the relationship between politics and religion, a major relationship in human society. Religious politics with Chinese characteristics cannot ignore the study of the relationship between politics and religion, and "contemporary China's understanding of religion first lies in the interpretation of its relationship with politics", because "religion, as a reflection of the reality of human social existence, is bound to have a complex relationship with politics" [6]. Therefore, this study must "talk about politics". Western religious studies have not yet formed a complete discipline system of religious politics, and its positioning is usually "Political Science of Religion" or "Politics of Religion". It mainly combines religious studies, political science, public administration, law, economics,

international relations and security studies to carry out interdisciplinary research on the relationship between politics and religion; it has a strong sense of reality and is closely related to contemporary politics. Religious politics explores the relationship between politics and religion in ancient and modern Chinese and foreign history. It not only sorts out the political history of religion, but also analyzes the relationship between religion and politics, political parties, regimes, governments and their administration. In the study of church-state relations, Western academic circles generally focus on the relationship of "unity of church-state", "concordat between church-state", "separation of church-state" (including "separation of nation" and "separation of ethnic religion"), "conflict between church-state" ("conflict between ethnic religion"), etc., but ignore the phenomenon of church-state relations in other Eastern countries. Religious politics will especially define or explain religion from the perspective of political positioning and political understanding, and will also study the measures of "banning religion", "restricting religion", "excluding religion", "non-religion", "pro-religion", and "establishing religion" in relevant countries or relevant historical periods and their consequences. In the history of church-state relations in China, there have also been cases involving church-state relations such as "religious chaos", "religious troubles", "religious cases", and "Chinese ritual disputes", which also fall within the scope of research in religious politics. In the examination of church-state relations in the West, this study will also involve typical topics such as "theological constitution", "divine right of kings", "theocracy", and "Leviathan" (the relationship between the church state and the citizen state). After the Peace of Westphalia (1648) was confirmed in Europe in the 17th century, the great changes in the relationship between politics and religion, and the subsequent development of "religion follows the state", are also one of the focuses of attention. In addition to paying equal attention to the issue of religion and international security, the Chinese-style religious politics should also pay special attention to the issue of religion and China's domestic security, with a focus on the political impact of ethnic-religious relations, religious factors in ethnic and border issues such as Xinjiang and Tibet, and further explore how to effectively prevent and overcome the complex relationship between religious extremism, terrorism, and separatism. In the history of China's political-religious relations, Chinese religious politics should systematically study the unique phenomenon of China's political-religious relations of "politics ruling and religion following" since the ancient times when "the earth and the sky were connected", revealing the characteristics and enlightenment of its relationship of "politics governing religion and religion assisting politics".

5.2 Religious Law

Religious law involves the study of the relationship between religion and law, and discusses whether religious beliefs are legally legitimate. This study will trace the origin and evolution of religious law from the perspective of historical development, such as the "divine judgment law" of ancient religions, the "canon law" and its inheritance in medieval Europe, and Islamic law (Sharia Law); it will also explore the current state of religious laws and regulations or the rule of law in various countries from a realistic perspective. The construction of religious law with Chinese characteristics requires the analysis and study of the two-dimensional relationship between law and religion, that is, the legal protection of religious beliefs by law and the reasonable restrictions of law on religious behavior; thereby deepening the scientific understanding of my country's management of religion in accordance with the law. Managing religion in accordance with the law means that there is both protection of religious public rights and interests, and there will also be necessary restrictions on their social behavior, which is aimed at protecting the public interests of the majority of people in society. In addition, this discipline should also specifically explore China's contemporary religious policies and religious laws and regulations, and systematically sort out and seriously study the content of the Constitution, relevant laws and regulations, and administrative regulations involving religion. In a certain sense, the relationship between religion and law is also an important component of the relationship between religion and politics, and it is necessary to examine the relationship between religion and law from the perspective of social political system. For example, the relationship between "religious law (canon law)" and "national law" discussed in contemporary Chinese society reflects its political and political system issues. It is precisely in China's current social and political system and its legal structure that we emphasize the correct relationship that "national law" is greater than "religious law" and that "religious rules" must obey "legal regulations", so that it is consistent with the relationship between politics and religion in our country.

5.3 Religious Economics

Religious economics should be a subject of widespread concern at present, especially the hotly debated issue of "religion as the stage and economy as the show", which has focused people's attention on the relationship between religion and economy. In fact, the construction of the discipline system of religious economics is not mature at present, and there is a huge room for expansion in contemporary academic development. The Western "Economics of Religion" (Economics of Religion) was first concerned by Adam Smith (1723-1790). In his "An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations" (1776), he touched on whether people's participation in religious activities is seeking the result of maximizing their utility, while religious suppliers hope to maximize their profits by monopolizing the religious market. Later, Max Weber (1864-1920) also discussed the impact of religion on economic development from a sociological perspective in his book *The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism* (1905). In this way, people once regarded the Christian church as a religious organization similar to a business, so there was a term "church economics" to study the relationship between the development, rise and fall of its sects and money and power. In contemporary

Western academia, "religious market theory" has also become a hot topic. In association with religious economics, the academic community has further developed the terms Jewish economics, Christian economics, Buddhist economics, and Islamic economics. Therefore, religious economics is to understand religion from the perspective of economics, interpret the economic purpose and consequences of religious behavior, and aims to reveal the economic nature of religious phenomena, explain the inherent connection between religious systems and social and economic systems, and the positive and negative impacts of religion on the economy and society. Here, the research content also includes the economic structure and status of religion itself (i.e., treating religion itself as an economic entity), the impact of religion on social and economic development, such as economic system, financial system, banking, taxation, industrial and agricultural operations, economic lifestyle, etc., and evaluating its restriction or promotion on the economy. The economics of religion with Chinese characteristics has a clear Marxist orientation. According to the Marxist understanding that social existence determines social consciousness, different social existences will affect different social consciousness and its social construction, thus proving that religious forms are inherently related to their social forms and economic structures. Similarly, religion as a social consciousness will also have a counter-effect on its social structure and economic development, including the two aspects of promoting or restricting it. For this reason, the construction of the economics of religion with Chinese characteristics should not only study the relationship between religion and the historical development of human economy and the current international economic situation, but also focus on the unique areas such as the relationship between China's economic structure and contemporary development and religion, and explain the religious situation in the current Chinese economic miracle, so as to form the real Chinese characteristics of our research.

5.4 Sociology of Religion

Religious sociology is one of the fastest-growing disciplines in the current study of religious studies in China. The important reason for this is that the Marxist theoretical system attaches great importance to social issues, which has led Chinese scholars to examine and explain religious phenomena, reveal the essence of religion, and explain religious issues from a sociological perspective. Obviously, religious sociology mainly studies the interaction and relationship between religion and society, traces the social factors and driving forces of the origin and development of religion, explores the religious significance of social groups and the social structure of religious groups, shows the need or rejection of society for religion, analyzes the social function of religion, that is, the restraint or promotion of social development, explains the influence of religious life and social life of religious groups on the values, social outlook and personality characteristics of their believers, and describes the distribution and proportion of religion in various social classes and fields, as well as the status and significance of religion in social communication. Different from the metaphysical abstract exploration of religious philosophy or religious theology, religious sociology mainly explores the social factors and roots of the generation of religious gods and their influence on people's beliefs and thoughts, as well as the social impact of these beliefs. Therefore, the essence of religious sociology is to explain the social problems reflected by religion from its fundamentals. In this way, the construction of a religious sociology system with Chinese characteristics should achieve the systematization of religious social theory and its understanding. Its exploration includes social theoretical research on religion as human social behavior, social historical research on religion as a social and cultural phenomenon, and social practice research on religious social functions and their social impact. In China, this research should also focus on Chinese social history and Chinese social practice, and put forward new ideas and methods that adapt to China's national and social conditions, especially in actively guiding religion to adapt to socialist society in China, and make unique contributions with realistic theoretical and practical significance. An important inspiration in this field is President Xi's new social positioning of Chinese religious groups at the 2016 National Religious Work Conference, pointing out that they are the bridge and bond for the government to unite and connect religious figures and the broad masses of believers. This new positioning fully illustrates the positive role and significance of religious groups in socialist society.

5.5 Religious Anthropology

Initially, religious anthropology in the scope of Western religious studies mainly studied the "primitive religion" of ancient human society without written records or its similar form and "religion of non-written ethnic groups" that has survived to this day. Therefore, it focused on conducting "field" surveys among "indigenous peoples" in the sense of religious anthropology and launching research reports. Therefore, it is also called religious ethnology, religious ethnography, and religious anthropology. Its research field is obviously different from the religious sociology that studies civilized society. However, in its modern development, the scope of this "anthropology" has broken through the limitations of the traditional "primitive religion" or "indigenous" beliefs and entered the field of modern society. Its contemporary "anthropology" has a close relationship with sociology and complements each other, but its traditional "field" research methods and related methods are still retained and have special emphasis. The development of religious anthropology was initially influenced by social anthropology and cultural anthropology, thus becoming one of the earliest interdisciplinary research branches of religious studies. In the course of its historical evolution, anthropology itself has experienced a continuous expansion from physical anthropology, biological anthropology, medical anthropology and ecological anthropology in the field of natural science to the emergence of many disciplines with modern social science significance, such as archaeological anthropology, historical anthropology, social anthropology,

cultural anthropology, psychological anthropology, economic anthropology, philosophical anthropology, theological anthropology, artistic anthropology, urban anthropology, film and television anthropology, etc., and the emergence and development of religious anthropology is related to this progress. Therefore, the modernity of its discipline gives it a broader vision and can use more research methods. Religious anthropology highlights the focus on human society, and is characterized by case studies, exploration of details and micro-examination, while its method emphasizes field investigation of "participatory observation". Therefore, the construction of religious anthropology with Chinese characteristics should also be based on the construction of relevant disciplinary theories and methods, highlight investigation and research, do a good job in case studies of the existence and characteristics of religion in Chinese society, provide "field" experience, and use this as a basis to tell the "Chinese story" well.

5.6 Religious Ethnology

In contemporary China, religious ethnology is also known as "ethnic religious studies"[7]. It is fundamentally different from the aforementioned religious ethnology or ethnography related to religious anthropology. It mainly explores the relationship between ethnicity and religion, because "the relationship between ethnicity and religion is a major issue for a comprehensive understanding of Chinese and human history and culture, and it has a strong theoretical and academic nature; at the same time, it is also a major practical issue related to national unity, social stability and international peace"[7]. Although religion and ethnicity belong to different categories in terms of disciplines, "ethnicity belongs to the category of social entities, and religion belongs to the category of spiritual culture" [7], the two are closely related and have complex interpenetration and interaction, so it is difficult to separate them in reality. Here, their mutual relationship will at least be developed from the aspects of "religion is limited to ethnicity", "religion transcends ethnicity", "religion assimilates ethnicity", "ethnicity breaks through religion" [7], and its "ethnic-religious integration" or "ethnic-religious conflict" echoes "political-religious integration" or "political-religious conflict", reflecting the complex interaction between religion and ethnic society and the development of ethnic culture. In the construction of religious ethnology with Chinese characteristics, its task is to "study the interactive relationship between ethnicity and religion, explore the religious nature of ethnicity and the ethnic nature of religion, and focus on explaining the status and role of religion in ethnic formation, ethnic evolution, ethnic life, nation-state, ethnic culture and ethnic relations" [7]. Here, the relationship between various ethnic groups in ancient and modern Chinese history and the religious implications involved are our research focus, especially the unique significance of the "pluralistic harmony" model of Chinese religious culture in the history of the development of the Chinese nation and its outstanding contribution to the correct handling of ethnic and religious relations in human society.

5.7 Religious Criticism

Religious criticism in Western religious studies mainly reflects the criticism of Christianity by Western society and its response, which has been expanded to various critical theories of religion in ancient and modern Western society. This criticism includes theoretical criticism and practical criticism, social criticism and sectarian criticism, scriptural criticism and doctrinal criticism, behavioral criticism and psychological criticism, philosophical criticism and theological criticism, theistic criticism and atheistic criticism, etc. Therefore, its criticism has a complex relationship with its society and Western academic tradition, and can be traced back to the apologetics of the ancient Christian church in response to and refutation of the criticism of the church during the Roman Empire. Different from this, the development of religious criticism with Chinese characteristics should of course be based on the standpoint, viewpoint and method of Marxist historical materialism and dialectical materialism, and carry out objective and scientific religious criticism at the social level, cultural level, spiritual level and epistemological level, which should also fully reflect the religious criticism in the sense of scientific atheism. In the development of this kind of religious criticism in contemporary Chinese society, there should be dialogue, exchange and communication to actively guide religion to adapt to China's socialist society.

5.8 Religious Communication

Religious communication studies are a relatively new field in the development of contemporary religious studies. Its characteristic is that it focuses on the scientific research of religious communication, especially on the characteristics, trends and social impact of religious network communication in contemporary society. Religious communication studies the communication issues of various religions, involving the communication of their organizations and the communication of their ideas, their communication channels, communication methods, communication characteristics, communication laws, and communication history. Among them, special attention should be paid to political and geographical factors, ethnic migration factors, sect development factors, social mobility factors, and geographical environment changes in religious communication. The construction of a discipline system of religious communication with Chinese characteristics, on the one hand, requires theoretical elaboration of the basic issues of religious communication and a summary of its laws; on the other hand, attention should be paid to the new characteristics and new development trends of religious communication under the background of "globalization" since the 1980s, and in particular, it should focus on the study of religious communication in the new media field in the information network era.

new models, new trends, and new communication effects, and use them to scientifically formulate policies and methods for governing religion, actively and effectively respond to new challenges under this new situation, and gain insight into and actively guide the possible changes and developments in Chinese religion.

6 CONCLUSION

In summary, the construction of a discipline system of religious studies with Chinese characteristics should be broad-minded, active in thought, self-centered, and inclusive. Through brainstorming and keeping pace with the times, we can form a Chinese system, Chinese school, Chinese style, and Chinese discourse of our religious studies. At present, our creative discipline construction has embarked on the process and we must work hard. The most fundamental and key to embodying contemporary Chinese characteristics is to adhere to the guidance of Marxism and scientifically handle the dialectical relationship between adhering to Marxism and promoting the excellent Chinese culture, so as to make unique contributions to the development of the field of Chinese religious studies for our current important historical mission of actively guiding religion to adapt to socialist society and jointly building the destiny and cultural community of the Chinese nation.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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