difference, operated as primary ontologizing icons and indexes of social positions, subjectivities, histories, and relationships amidst rapid social change” (288). What left the biggest impression on this reviewer were the ways in which Tibetans narratives revealed the importance of both gender and history, that is, how the present is understood through gendered subjectivity and the ethnic past. Makley’s linguistic analysis of proverbs and discourses demonstrates this in a sharp-eyed way—such as the use of Chinese words for particular terms in otherwise Tibetan sentences. Despite an at-times dense and over-analytical jargon, particularly in the first chapter, the author succeeds in depicting a complex and vivid picture of rapid social change in a Tibetan society. Yet, the author is careful not to generalize the particular situation of Labrang as a parameter for other Tibetan societies. This is most prudent, given the diverse local lay and monastic histories and present social relations and situations among Tibetan nomads, farmers, and urbanites in China.

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In Challenging the Secular State, Arskal Salim analyzes the interaction between shari’a and the Indonesian nation-state from the time of its independence in 1945 to the present day. He points to what he characterizes as legal and political dissonances—by this the author means a spectrum between mild tension and direct contradiction—that characterize attempts by Islamic political parties to Islamize the Indonesian legal system. He concludes that the concept of dissonance characterizes the interaction between shari’a and the nation-state and traces this dissonance to the incompatibility of shari’a, which was developed, he argues, in the seventh and eighth centuries, with the current political context, which is dominated by the nation-state.

In part 1, Salim puts efforts to implement shari’a in Indonesia into a broader historical and geographical context by analyzing the Ottoman Empire’s millet system. He also looks at Muslim countries that have a formal commitment to shari’a such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Pakistan. Salim points out that the implementation of shari’a in a modern nation-state often results in dissonance and that this dissonance lies in the millet system of the Ottoman Empire. He argues that the millet system, with its emphasis upon the religious concept of the nation, is incompatible with the secular idea of the state that is based upon the concept of citizenship and holds that the state possesses the prerogative of lawmaking and law enforcement.

Part 2 discusses the formation of the Indonesian state and deftly describes the ensuing debates between nationalist and Islamic groups about whether Indonesia should give constitutional commitment to the shari’a. Particular
focus is given to the arguments put forward during the debate about the so-called Jakarta Charter, which reads, “with the obligation of carrying out Islamic shari’a for its adherents.” The Jakarta Charter was eventually deleted from the constitution but continues to be a focus of Islamic calls for formal recognition of the shari’a. Salim points out that while the Jakarta Charter was deleted, an ambiguity in the relationship between religion and state has existed since the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), which gave relative autonomy to each religion, was established in 1946. Salim argues that MORA provided a foothold for the Islamization of Indonesia and “actually blocked Indonesia’s path on the track toward a true unitary state” (71).

In part 3, Salim charts the unsuccessful attempts to give shari’a constitutional status since Indonesia’s independence. Like part 2, it provides a detailed and extremely well researched description of the various Islamic political parties (such as Maysumi and Nahdlatul Ulama), their differing agendas and arguments, as well as the responses of secular nationalists who promote the continuation of Pancasila as the basis of the state. It argues that there is a dissonance in Islamic constitutionalism. For example, Salim claims that a secular commitment to dealing with citizens individually and not collectively as religious groups is under threat by the Islamic faction, which he argues, “was less concerned with individual rights ... and more concerned with religious collective rights” (110). Salim discusses an important challenge raised by moves to implement the shari’a, which is that application of the shari’a by the state would require the state to standardize a number of Islamic practices by prioritizing a particular interpretation. This also applies to other religious communities and, as a consequence, he writes that “a citizen would no longer be free to exercise his or her religious liberty” (84). Of the other dissonant issues he presents, Salim argues that the official implementation of shari’a would impact citizens of different religious groups.

Part 4 illustrates the dissonance in legislating for shari’a through the legal system of a modern nation-state by analyzing attempts to centralize and make zakat compulsory in Indonesia. Zakat is currently voluntary but since 1999, the collection of zakat has been organized by government sponsored zakat agencies. Salim argues that moves to centralize the administration of the zakat in the hands of the government apparatus have deepened the process of Islamization and have subordinated the spiritual function of zakat to its political and economic purposes. For Salim, attempts to make zakat compulsory would result in further legal and political dissonances in the formal application of shari’a including inequality between citizens since the zakat law of 1999 “provided that Muslims who pay zakat may be entitled to a deduction from their taxable income, a provision available only to Muslim citizens and not to other religious believers” (170).

In part 5, Salim discusses the application of shari’a law in the Aceh region to further illustrate dissonance between shari’a and the nation-state. Since 1998, the Acehnese ulama, or religious scholars, have managed to gain a special concession from the central government in Indonesia to formalize the
implementation of shari’a in Aceh that has lead to the enactment of many regulations containing shari’a. Salim illustrates that this has resulted in the restriction of constitutional rights, including a restriction of religious freedom. Not only this, but it has also produced dissonance because of a conflict between the different sources of legal authority, that is, the state and the ulama. He claims that the Acehnese ulama have never secured real authority in the legislative body and that this has resulted in a tension of legal authority between the provincial legislature and the ulama. He argues that proponents of the formal implementation of the shari’a mistakenly assume that the modern nation-state is similar to the pre-modern state, in which the ulama played a major role and that they therefore assume that the ulama would have legitimate power to enact the law of the land in accordance with religious injunctions.

This book represents a very important contribution to the literature on Islam and Muslim politics in general and on Indonesia in particular. It is an extremely rich, detailed, and well-researched book not only with regard to Islamization attempts in Indonesia, but also with regard to the Islamic legal and historical background (although more historical background on Indonesia’s legal and political system prior to 1945 would have been very useful). Its overwhelming strength lies in its in-depth description of local complexities. Salim rightly illustrates that any discussion of Islamization has to be done within a particular political and legal context. He skillfully illustrates the divergent and shifting agendas among Islamic groups on how to give shari’a constitutional legitimacy. Salim raises important points relating to the challenges facing the implementation of the shari’a in the modern nation-state. The discussions on zakat and the ulama in Aceh effectively illustrate the challenges involved in implementing shari’a in the contemporary nation-state, central to which are tensions relating to the conflicting realms of legal authority.

One of the many strengths of this book is the sophisticated theoretical discussion of the concept of shari’a and of the complexities of the relationship between religion, state, and the law in Islamic political theory. The book would, however, have been further strengthened by a firmer connection between this discussion and the conclusions Salim makes about the challenges facing implementation of shari’a in the modern nation-state. Salim rightly distinguishes between shari’a—as the immutable and transcendent divine law—and the mutable temporal fiqh or Islamic legal codes. He rightly suggests that proponents of the formal implementation of a kind of authentic application of shari’a are often not clear what they mean by this. However, he uses his discussion of the dissonance that has resulted from attempts to give a formal commitment to shari’a (mostly understood as Islamic legal codes) to argue against any formal recognition of the shari’a. This raises the question of whether there is a point at which his criticism of a formal recognition of shari’a is overly deterministic. On the basis of his argument that what shari’a is depends on the outcome of political debates, it is feasible that the formal recognition of shari’a could elicit the application of very different Islamic legal codes than the ones he describes. Salim rightly states that “a successful
interrelation between Islam and the state depends largely on the extent to which shari’ah is implemented by the state” (59), but it also depends on what version or interpretation of shari’ah is implemented. In calling for shari’ah simply as a collection of principal values with no political commitment attached to them, perhaps the author is too reliant on the notion of the triumphant and unitary secular nation-state. After all, as Salim argues, there is no single relationship between religion and state in Islam and therefore that it is “plausible to have various categorizations of Islam-state relations” (22). This, however, does little to detract from the book that has skillfully captured the complexity of both the Islamization of Indonesia and of the “Indonesianization” of shari’ah.

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Richard Madsen’s book Democracy’s Dharma: Religious Renaissance and Political Development in Taiwan is a welcome addition to the growing corpus of studies on religion in Taiwanese society arising from increased scholarly awareness of the need to analyze Taiwan in its own right and not merely as a derivative, subordinate offshoot of China. He examines the extraordinary religious renaissance in Taiwan led by new, reformist Buddhist and Daoist organizations that flourished with the transition to political freedom at the end of martial law in 1987. Like most nations, Taiwan has its share of potentially divisive ethnic, political, and social factors, from possible conflicts latent in the new middle classes arising from the economic boom, from its unique geographical, historical, and political relationships with mainland China, as well as the presence of varied ethnic and linguistic groups. Against the background of this Taiwanese history, Madsen argues that the religious organizations he studied actually paved the way for the island’s smooth, peaceful transition to democratic modernity by actively fostering civic virtue in its adherents and performing critical roles in the public sphere during the modern era.

Madsen structures his book around four case studies: the first three are Ciji (more commonly transliterated as Tzu Chi, that is, Compassion Relief), Foguangshan (Buddha Light Mountain), and Fagushan (Dharma Drum Mountain), all major modernist Buddhist movements espousing the this-worldly engagement of humanistic Buddhism (renjian fojiao); the fourth is the Enacting Heaven Temple, an expanding Daoist organization combining traditional practices with modern organizational structure. The Enacting Heaven Temple is relatively less known to western scholars and Madsen’s analysis of this organization furnishes a good introduction to the institutional and paradigmatic shifts that